

## GPRS & Registering Mobile phones in Turkey.

The Pilotage Foundation does not accept any responsibility for the comments below:-

29/3/07 Mobile Phones in Turkey 29th March 2007 . Just had a message as follows:

I read with interest your advice sheet about Turkish SIM cards. I have just returned to the UK after visiting Turkey and was delighted with the New Telsim Blusim SIM cards, which allow users to use a local sim card, benefit from local rates, WITHOUT the need to register the phone and mess around with paperwork.

**(17/1/2007): Mobile Phones in Turkey 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2006 RCCPF Webmaster updated 17/1/2007**

Latest info as at this date is that someone has just flown back to Marmaris from the UK and guess what, the regulations have now changed again as of Jan 1st. You just have to go to a local store with your passport. We even know somebody who has done it this week."

Doesn't say which provider but assume it will be general

Earlier reports until system fully proven.

This is the situation as seen through the eyes of one person. I will try to bring it up to date as information becomes available. Very similar to Matthew Bickertons comments below but with some more twists as the system settles.

1. People with ROAMING telephones using a provider from home such as Vodafone are apparently exempt from the new regulations. Thus the following notes apply to phones which will use a Turkish Chip. (the right way to keep costs down.) See also the article on GPRS.
2. Turkey has apparently identified a problem where stolen phones are being dumped here, hence the new regulations.
3. Mobiles using a Turkish Chip have to be registered wherever they were purchased or they are likely to be cut off.
4. ASSUMING your phone is not registered then read the following.
5. If you purchased a Turkish phone and have the original receipt then take it to your local Turkcell agent together with your passport and they should be able to register your phone.
6. With any other phone purchased outside Turkey if you have the original receipt then take it plus your passport (one person per passport) to a designated agent which means a Turkcell shop in a county. Ie Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya and Mugla, but note Marmaris will not do as you have to go all the way to Mugla. ( an interesting but expensive experience). Then they will register your phone.
7. When you enter Turkey from abroad you should see the customs just before leaving the hall. Insist on them signing an entry form. They will have a stack of forms available. They will note the passport number (one phone per passport), the flight number, phone serial number (\*#06#)

and will give you a stamped certificate to that effect. A receipt does not seem to be necessary. Note only one phone per passport and you must be there as well. (7/9/06) At Ataturk Airport in Istanbul there are signs telling you to register your mobile phone with customs as you come through the airport, and a desk with two people on it who seem to know about what's going on. A straight GSM phone is free but if a radio is incorporated they appear to charge 20YTL.

8. Now take the Customs certificate plus passport (with the person on the passport present) and phone to one of the designated Turkcell offices and they will register your phone. You do NOT need a receipt of original purchase in this case.
9. Marmaris to Mugla is a long way (as I found to my cost) so FIRST check that you are not already registered. Insist at the local office that they check if you are already Turkcell registered. That could be the case if you had a running contract with spare units last Dec 2005. At that time Turkcell will have deducted 50 units to keep the contract running and will have automatically registered your phone.
10. Also ask the local Turkcell office to check if the Government site has registered your phone. Quite likely they will say it is unregistered even if you are registered with Turkcell. So if you then receive a notice saying you will be cut off you have 2 days in which to ask Turkcell head Office to make sure that the Government site is updated.
11. That is the theory but let us see what happens!!.
12. The site address for the Government is <http://imei.tk.gov.tr/> Please let me know if you find out how to access Turkcells records to check the status of your phone. If anyone can translate that would be a great help.
13. I will try to update this note as information becomes available. RCCPF Webmaster

### **6/11/2006 Experience of someone living in Turkey.**

It seems to be best to go to the customs building at Dalaman Airport (It is clearly signposted) and they will give you the paperwork. You need to take a receipt and one passport for every phone you want to register and you will have to pay import tax duty, the amount depends on the value of the phone of course. You then take the paperwork to Turkcell in Mugla (Serdar is the manager) together with the same passports and they will process the phones to be put back on the "White list" to be reactivated. Hope this helps.

### **23/10/06 Experiences of someone using Aveva rather than Turkcell.**

Our experience was as follows:

1. Got the Dalaman customs to give me a "Tutanak" proving my phone had been brought into the country by me.
2. Went to the phone company's shop in Fethiye and gave them copies of the "Tutanak", my passport and the original bill for the mobile (in theory this last should not have been required but they asked for it and I fortunately had it). This was Aveva, not Turkcell, and as the latter have a better shop network I think it would have been preferable to buy a Turkcell sim card.
3. Was told they would now register my phone and all would be well for a year.
4. Four weeks later we were still not connected despite three increasingly irate further visits to the Aveva office and numerous (payphone) calls to their (English speaking) help line.. On every occasion it was just "Please be patient it will be OK in 24 hours". It never was.
5. Eventually I called the Turkish government telecoms Authority (tel no 03122322323 and 03122947400) and got a helpful woman who said that they had no record of Aveva having requested connection and

asked me to send copies of all the documents to her personally and she promised to fix it. I did so. I got a strong impression that there was chaos and I was not alone in making a fuss.

6. One week later, on the day we were leaving, the phone was connected! With hindsight, and for the small number of phone calls we needed to make in Turkey, I think I would have simply used my UK sim card.

My impression is that the Avea people either never sent in the request for connection or delayed a very long time. Rather than getting the telephone company to do it, it might be worth starting off with the Government Telecoms Authority (Telekomünikasyon Kurumu Yesilirmak Sokak No:16 Demirtepe 06430 ANKARA) and sending them copies of:

1. The "Tutenak" obtained from customs at the airport
2. Photograph page of your passport
3. Original bill for the telephone
4. Flight number and date of arrival (even though that is already on the "Tutenak")
5. Phone number of your Turkish sim card
6. Serial number of the phone (even though that is also on the "Tutenak")

The good news is that there is a website where you can check if you are registered or not:

<http://imei.tk.gov.tr> The bad news is that it's in Turkish!

3/8/06 from Matthew Bickerton:

**I understand that the Turkish authorities are saying that only phones purchased in Turkey will work in future. Here are some comments from Matthew Bickerton:** So just to clarify; what follows ONLY refers to handsets not purchased in Turkey and trying to use a local Turkish SIM card. Roaming whilst in Turkey with a foreign SIM card is not affected. Also any handset purchased in Turkey will work. However there are quite a large number of illegally imported handsets on sale in Turkey that will now not work. It was possible in 2005 to register your handset in order to keep it working, when the recent change was made. This is now not possible. So if you purchase a handset in Turkey, stay in the shop until you have seen it working. It is these illegal imports that were the target of these changes. If you only require a mobile for speech, Turcell have a very good offer. A Motorola handset (not GPRS) 106 Lira with 99 Lira of credit included, total cost of phone 7 Lira. This is of no use if you want to get low cost internet access. So for non Turkish handsets the situation is as follows: The handset has a unique number built in the IMEI number (This can be found by pressing \*#06#) if this number is not registered with the network operator you will not be able to use the handset. It is therefore unlikely a "back street" fix will become available.

- 1) Purchased outside Turkey but is older than about 4-5 years depending on the model. This is rather anecdotal and my old phone works with voice only, not GPRS.
- 2) Purchased out side Turkey but has had the phone registered with the mobile phone operator. I have talked to Tukcell who described the procedure as follows: 1) Declare the mobile with customs when entering Turkey, for which you will need the original sales receipt, they will make a charge for the tax. 2) Take the customs form and passport to a Tukcell main sales office and they will enable your phone. ( In Marmaris this requires a 1 hr bus ride to the regional capital). HOWEVER, when returning from Greece, I have just tried to get customs to accept my money and give me the required paperwork, they refused! (see latest on the top article)

So it is probably best to assume you will need to purchase a new handset with GPRS to use a local network operator for low cost Internet access. Matthew Bickerton

**Second Message dated 11.8.06** (Matthew Bickerton. OK so today I went to the main Turkcell office in Mugla. It's a 1hr drive from Marmaris. I spoke with the manager who was very courteous and apologised for the problems I had with the customs officer at Marmaris. This officer had refused to inspect my new Greek mobile phone with receipt and then issue the document required to get the phone registered in Turkey. While refusing to help me the officer told me many other yachtsman had the same problem. He then stated that only "Turkish men can have a Turkish mobile phone in Turkey" and that my mobile was "captured". I was returning from Rhodes after spending the day there to renew my visa. The manager of the Turkcell office phoned the airport on my behalf, they told him they would have given me the correct certificate for the mobile. But THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE when entering the country. So, without taking an unnecessary air flight out of the country, I can not get my phone inspected by customs this way. The airport customs, also

told the Turkcell office manager that I should have been able to get this done at Marmaris sea port. So he is going to try and help me, by sending copies of my passport, visa and mobile phone receipt to the customs office in Marmaris. I await with baited breath!! **In the mean time it is very important for visiting yachts to declare their mobile phones on the transit log when entering Turkey.** I Think if I had been able to show the Turkcell office my transit log with the phone declared on it and the customs stamp, he would have unlocked my phone immediately. I assume you must put the IMEI number (This can be found by pressing \*#06# on the handset) on the transit log, this uniquely identifies the phone to Turkcell.

I have now found a phone with GPRS and Bluetooth for 199 EUR from Turkcell, this is the cheapest phone I have found, so far, that would let you use the low cost Internet access provided by Turkcell. Matthew Bickerton