

Press release

NUMBERING PLAN

Relaxed geographical restrictions attached to numbers starting with 01 to 05, and increased user protection: Arcep adopts a decision to amend the national numbering plan

Paris, 16 July 2019

After a period of consultation in May, today Arcep is publishing Decision No. 2019-0954 on amending the current numbering plan. In particular, its purpose is to relax the geographical restrictions attached to phone numbers starting with 01 to 05, and to enable the introduction of an authentication mechanism to protect users from having their phone number stolen.

This Decision marks another step forward in the numbering plan revamp that Arcep began in 2018, to factor in changes in operators' needs and in users' habits.

Allowing users to keep their phone number when moving to a different area code: a practical matter for consumers; an economic issue for businesses

Up until now, in Metropolitan France, every number starting with 01 to 05 has been attached to one of 412 primary dialling codes (called *Zones de Numérotation Élémentaire*, or ZNE in French). These dialling codes map out the geographical boundaries within which a telephone number can be assigned to a user, and kept by that user when they move. As a result, users – both consumers and businesses alike – are not able to keep their number starting with 01 to 05 if they move outside the primary dialling code area to which this number is attached.

Two stages for gradually relaxing the geographical restrictions attached to numbers starting with 01 to 05 used for fixed calling

To help remedy this “irritant,” and at a time when VoIP architecture is becoming increasingly ubiquitous with operators, Arcep plans to relax the geographical restrictions attached to numbers starting with 01 to 05 in Metropolitan France in two stages:

- As of 1 January 2020, operators will be able to offer their users the option of keeping their 01 to 05 number when moving within the area that corresponds to the first two digits in their phone number (01: Ile de France; 02: North-West; 03: North-East; 04: South East; 05: South-West). This means that a consumer or an enterprise located in the Hazebrouck (North) dialling code, for instance, would be able to keep their number starting with 03 if they move to Beauvais, Strasbourg or Besançon.
- As of 1 January 2023, the geographical restrictions attached to numbers starting with 01 to 05 will be aligned with those attached to mobile numbers (starting with 06 or 07) and numbers with the 09 prefix. This means that operators will be able to offer their business customers in Metropolitan France the option of keeping their 01 to 05 number when moving to any other location in mainland France.

Arcep also plans to merge, first, the two primary dialling codes for the territories of Guadeloupe, Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin, and, second, the seven primary dialling codes for the territory of Guiana, starting on 1 January 2023. The other overseas territories whose numbering plan Arcep is responsible for managing (Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon) will not be affected by this change as each of them has only a single primary dialling code.

Giving users the freedom to choose whether or not to keep their number

With this Decision, Arcep is not obliging users to keep the same number “for life”. They are of course free to subscribe to a plan with a different phone number when they move or switch operators.

Introduction of a number authentication mechanism to protect users against fraud and theft

To increase users' protection against fraudulent use of their phone number, Arcep is also creating a new category of "verified" number, to allow operators – if they so desire – to introduce authentication solutions.

Introduction of the first anti spam call measures on 1 August 2019

To limit the disruptions that robocalls and spam calls cause end users, in July 2018 Arcep adopted two measures whose implementation was moved to 1 August 2019:

1. Forbidding the use of a geographical number (starting with 01 to 05) or a multi-purpose number (09) as the caller ID for international calls or messages, when no authentication mechanism is in place;
2. Forbidding automated systems that make more calls and transmit more messages than they receive from using geographical numbers (starting with 01 to 05), mobile numbers (06-07) or multi-purpose numbers (09) as their caller ID.

Stakeholders seized the opportunity provided by the public consultation that Arcep held on the numbering plan in spring 2019 to confirm that, in their view, the first of these measures was effective for fighting against the nuisance caused to end users. In addition, market players alerted Arcep to the fact that filtering solutions are not yet mature enough to handle the complexity of the second measure, and run the risk of wrongly blocking certain call streams, to end users' detriment. They therefore asked that its introduction be postponed. This additional delay would serve to ensure that the measure is still relevant, in light of the observed consequences of introducing the first measure and, if necessary, to have more time to optimise the associated filtering techniques.

As a result, Arcep confirmed that the first measure would come into effect on 1 August 2019, as would the second measure but only as it applies to mobile numbers (06-07). To allow operators to focus on installing the filters required to carry out these measures, however, Arcep decided to postpone implementation of the second measure – forbidding automated systems that make more calls and transmit more messages than they receive from using geographical numbers (starting with 01 to 05) and multi-purpose numbers (09) as their caller ID – to 1 January 2021.

To protect end users against the nuisance caused by spam calls, Arcep invites operators to adopt the recommendations set out in its amended Decision No. 2018-0881 without delay, to filter out those calls that do not comply with the provisions coming into effect on 1 August 2019.

The 343 contributions received to the public consultation on its draft decision, which ran from 25 April to 7 June of this year, have been published (with commercial secrets deleted) on the Arcep website.

Associated documents

- [Decision No. 2019-0954 amending the decision establishing the national numbering plans and its management rules](#)
- [Contributions to the public consultation](#) (.zip – 21 Mo)

Arcep at a glance

The Electronic Communications and Postal Regulatory Authority (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority, is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile telecoms and postal networks in France.

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