
Press release

NUMBER PORTABILITY

Arcep proposes further simplifying number portability and harmonising fixed and mobile practices

Paris, 28 June 2021

Users in France cherish the ability to keep their phone number when switching operators: in 2020, more than 2.5 million fixed subscribers and close to 6 million mobile subscribers chose to keep their number when changing operators. Essential to safeguarding market liquidity, number portability is governed by two Arcep decisions: one regarding fixed numbers¹ and the other regarding mobile numbers².

Avenues for improvement identified thanks to reports filed on “J’alerte l’Arcep” and discussions with operators

Reports filed by users on the “J’alerte l’Arcep” platform, and the requests or malfunctions that operators described to the Authority have revealed that the current framework can be improved, and fixed and mobile processes made more homogeneous. Business market procedures should also be more efficient. Without fully dismantling the existing framework, which has proven largely effective, Arcep is publishing a draft decision for consultation whose aim is to further simplify number portability for consumers, but also for operators, by harmonising existing inter-operator processes.

Simplifying procedures and reducing turnaround time for consumers

In a great many cases, a portability request must be accompanied by an operator identity statement, or RIO (*relevé d’identité opérateur*). End users must obtain this code from their existing operator by calling 3179, then give it to their new operator. The new operator then handles all of the contract cancellation and number portability procedures on the user’s behalf, under a one-stop approach.

When it comes to the mobile portability process, however, it may be complicated for users who are overseas to obtain their RIO by dialling 3179. Arcep is therefore proposing to extend the ability to use long numbers accessible in France and abroad, alongside 3179, to enable end users to obtain the operator identity statement needed to port their mobile phone number, particularly when they are in a “roaming” situation.

In addition, Arcep plans on extending to mobile and special numbers the ability for a user or value-added service (VAS) provider to recover and port their old telephone number, within 40 days of having cancelled their phone contract. This is already the case for fixed numbers.

Making number portability a more fluid process in the business market and for value-added services, to increase competition

Arcep proposes extending some of the processes that already exist in the residential market to the business market, and to the value-added services market. It will therefore become mandatory for operators to provide an operator identity statement (RIO) to every telephone number they assign to end users, or to VAS providers. Moreover, mobile business customers and value-added service providers will be able to enjoy a so-called parallel portability service, allowing them to keep only a portion of their numbers.

¹ [Arcep Decision No. 2013-0830 of 25 June 2013.](#)

² [Arcep Decision No. 2012-0576 of 10 May 2012](#)

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Unifying inter-operator processes

Arcep recommends that operators systematically employ the common portability protocol that is already being widely used in Metropolitan France. In the overseas departments, Arcep proposes that all of the information tied to mobile number portability be centralised into a common repository, as it is in Metropolitan France.

Arcep invites all of the parties affected by this decision (operators, consumer associations, service providers, individuals) to share their comments, either directly or through their representatives, before 10 September 2021.

Associated document:

- [Public consultation on the draft decisions setting out the procedures for fixed, mobile and VAS number portability](#)

Arcep at a glance

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