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Press release

## NUMBER PORTABILITY

### Protecting users' ability to keep their fixed, mobile and value-added services numbers: Arcep adopts a Decision to streamline processes for consumers and businesses

Paris, 21 March 2023

Users in France cherish the ability to keep their phone number when switching operators: in 2021, more than three million fixed subscribers and more than seven 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 numbers<sup>1</sup> and the other regarding mobile numbers<sup>2</sup>.

#### **New measures designed to shorten turnaround time and industrialise the number retention process in the business market**

To keep pace with users' changing needs, and drawing on the many reports logged on the "[J'alerte l'Arcep](#)" platform by users who had experienced issues when porting their number, Arcep has been working since 2021 on updating the methods for implementing fixed, mobile and value-added service (VAS) number<sup>3</sup> portability.

The Arcep Decision being published today seeks to reduce the maximum allowed turnaround time between the request for portability and activation of the service with the new operator, for fixed numbers used by businesses (as part of a "business plan"). The aim is to shorten this delay from seven to three business days by 1 July 2027, as is already the case for most consumer fixed numbers and for mobile numbers. The Arcep Decision thus seeks to improve existing number retention processes by streamlining number portability and by unifying the different inter-operator processes.

Arcep has also clarified the terms under which a subscriber can move the numbers attached to a business plan over to a consumer plan when switching operators. It also imposes the supply of "increased quality of service" options for fixed numbers in the business market and for special numbers starting with 08: enabling the customer to schedule the number porting date, cancelling portability requests, switching back after portability has occurred. Regarding mobile numbers, Arcep has made it possible for a business to port only a portion of the numbers it has been assigned.

#### **Obligation to provide and use an "RIO" expanded to all telephone numbers (fixed numbers, mobile numbers and special numbers<sup>4</sup>)**

The operator identity statement, or RIO (*relevé d'identité opérateur*) is a unique 12-character identifier assigned to each "consumer" telephone number and every mobile number, and designed to secure the number portability process. Its use will now be extended gradually to include fixed numbers in the business market and to special numbers.

The obligation to provide and use an RIO for all numbers will be achieved through a three-step process that involves:

- requiring that, as of 1 December 2023, every fixed number systematically has an RIO attached to it, notably in the business market, to facilitate number portability requests when switching from a business to a consumer market plan, for which an RIO has been mandatory since 2015;

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

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

<sup>3</sup> [Arcep press release of 28 June 2021](#)

<sup>4</sup> [List of special numbers](#)

- as of 1 July 2025, extending the obligation to use an RIO to secure fixed number portability requests associated with business market plans whose phone lines are not part of shared line groups with one main line<sup>5</sup>, i.e. for which numbers can be ported separately from the others;
- as of 1 July 2027, extending the obligation to use an RIO to all fixed number portability requests, particularly those contractually bound to a shared line group.

### **Increased security for the RIO and post-cancellation phone line recovery process**

Arcep has extended the quarantine principle – i.e. the 40-day period during which a number that has been cancelled cannot be transferred to another operator – to every number, and is requiring a more secure RIO recovery mechanism, to reduce the chances of its fraudulent use.

The Decision being published today will enter into effect on 1 December 2023, giving operators the time to amend their processes, with the exception of those measures that will enter into effect on 1 July 2025 or 1 July 2027. The Decision's stipulations also take into account the responses received to the second public consultation on the Draft decision, which ran from 9 June 2022 to 13 July 2022.

### **Associated documents:**

[Decision No. 2022-2148 setting out the implementing provisions for fixed, mobile and VAS number portability](#)

[Order of 15 March 2023 approving Decision No 2022-2148](#)

[Stakeholders' contributions to the second public consultation](#)

### **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 communications and postal networks in France.

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<sup>5</sup> A shared line group gives a business the ability to have several independent phone lines with only a single main line.

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