

Press release

2G AND 3G MOBILE NETWORK SUNSETS

Arcep launches a quarterly reporting of the SIM cards used in devices that are only 2G and 3G-compatible

Paris, 19 September 2025

Operators in France deployed 2G and 3G networks in the 1990s then in the 2000s, and have now decided to programme their retirement between 2026 and 2029. After several decades of service, mobile operators announced their respective sunset timetables for these technologies in Metropolitan France, starting in 2022, with a view to a complete switchover to new generation 4G and 5G networks. The reasons that operators have given for shutting down these older systems include security, quality of service and energy consumption. As some equipment still depends on these 2G and 3G systems to operate (mobile phones, lift remote alarm systems, telemonitoring systems...), Arcep wanted to supplement its quarterly reporting on the SIM cards connected to mobile networks with a dedicated reporting on “2G” and “3G/2G” SIM card use. This observatory will be presented today at a meeting that Arcep and France’s Directorate-General for Enterprise (DGE) are hosting with mobile operators and representative trade associations of machine-to-machine (M2M) equipment users.

As of Q2 2025, there were 5.9 million SIM cards in devices that are only “2G” or “3G/2G” compatible

This observatory provides quarterly reporting on the number of SIM cards in the devices that are compatible only with 2G or with 2G and 3G, belonging to the subscribers of French operators Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR, and only in Metropolitan France¹. It publishes the data collected from these operators, with figures broken into two categories of device:

- Devices used for voice/SMS/mobile internet services (and particularly mobile phones and tablets);
- Devices used for machine-to-machine (M2M) services: smart alarm and telemonitoring systems; phone assistance services for home care... excluding SIM cards that automakers install in their vehicles.

The number of SIM cards in the devices that are compatible only with 2G or with 2G and 3G, belonging to the subscribers of French operators Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR, and only in Metropolitan France, has decreased by about a third over the past year.

At the end of June 2025, 2.7 million (45%) of these SIM cards – of which 1.6 million “2G” and 1.1 million “2G/3G” – were being used in devices to access voice/SMS/mobile internet services, and 3.2 million (55%) – of which 1.2 million “2G” and 2 million “3G/2G” – in devices for Machine-to-Machine services. For M2M services, a decrease of more than 18% was observed between December 2024² and June 2025.

Arcep committed to ensuring that operators keep users properly informed

Arcep is especially attentive to the actions that operators are implementing to make their customers aware of the upcoming retirement of 2G and 3G technologies and, when necessary, to help them take the necessary actions to prepare for this sunset. This new observatory will ensure regular reporting on the progression of SIM cards installed in devices that are compatible only with 2G or with 2G and 3G, belonging to the subscribers of French operators Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR, and so also help in assessing the impact of these efforts to keep users informed.

¹ SIM cards belonging to foreign operators’ subscribers installed in devices that are only “2G” and “3G/2G” compatible being used for roaming in France are not included in the scope of this observatory.

² Data as of end of 2024 published by the Fédération Française des Télécoms (FFT) ([2G and 3G network retirement: a crucial step to update telecoms infrastructures \(in French\) - Fédération Française des Télécoms](#)). A similar comparison between data published by Arcep and FFT on devices used for voice/SMS/mobile internet services is not relevant as the scope of inquiry is not identical.

Informative content on the retirement of 2G and 3G technologies is also available on the Arcep website

For consumers (in French): [2G and 3G mobile network sunset: are you ready?](#)

For businesses, local authorities and property managers (in French): [2G and 3G mobile network sunset: are you ready?](#)

Annex: [Data published on the Arcep website](#)

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 electronic communications, postal and press distribution networks in France

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Number of SIM cards belonging to Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR subscribers used in devices that are only 2G or 2G/3G compatible, as of 30 June 2025

SIM cards in devices used to access voice/SMS/mobile internet services

The number of SIM cards in devices used for voice/SMS/mobile internet services that are only compatible with 2G and 3G technologies stands at 2.7 million units as of 30 June 2025, or 3.4% of the SIM cards used in this type of device. Close to 60% of those SIM cards are used in devices that are only 2G compatible and 40% in devices that are 2G and 3G compatible.

<i>SIM card base (million)</i>	As of 30 June 2025
2G	1.6
3G/2G	1.1
Total	2.7

SIM cards installed in devices used for Machine to Machine³ services (excluding SIM cards installed in vehicles by automakers)

The number of SIM cards installed in devices used for Machine to Machine services that are only compatible with 2G and 3G technologies stands at 3.2 million units as of June 2025, or 13.1% of the SIM cards used in this type of device. 37.5% of those SIM cards are used in devices that are only 2G compatible and 62.5% in devices that are 2G and 3G compatible.

<i>SIM card base (million)</i>	As of 30 June 2025
2G	1.2
3G/2G	2.0
Total	3.2

³ SIM cards used for communications between remote equipment (remote management of fixed and mobile equipment, devices and servers). Most of the communication emanating from these cards occurs without human involvement.

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