

Press release

## 2G AND 3G MOBILE NETWORK SUNSETS

### **As the 2G network shutdown looms, the number of 2G SIM cards still in circulation decreased at a faster, albeit still insufficient, pace in Q4 2025**

Paris, 30 March 2026

As part of the retirement of 2G and 3G technologies in Metropolitan France, whose timetables have been announced by mobile operators, in September 2025 Arcep launched a dedicated quarterly observatory of “2G” and “3G/2G” SIM cards. The purpose is to be able to assess the effect of the actions that operators have implemented with their customers to raise their awareness of the upcoming retirement of 2G and 3G technologies, and to assist them in migrating to 4G or 5G technologies.

A few days before the first wave of shutdowns by Orange of its 2G network in the urban unit of Biarritz, Anglet, Bayonne (announced for 31 March), Arcep is publishing the third edition of this observatory. It includes quarterly monitoring figures as of end of December 2025 for the number of SIM cards installed on devices that are compatible only with 2G or with 2G and 3G, belonging to Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR subscribers, and only in Metropolitan France<sup>1</sup>.

#### **The pace of the decrease in the number of SIM cards in devices that are only 2G or 3G/2G-compatible picked up slightly in Q4 2025**

The pace of the decrease in the number of SIM cards installed on devices that are compatible only with 2G or with 2G and 3G systems, belonging to Bouygues Telecom, Free Mobile, Orange and SFR subscribers, and only in Metropolitan France, increased slightly in Q4 to 7%, representing 394,000 units, compared to a 4.8% decrease representing 285,000 units in Q3 2025. The total base of SIM cards in 2G and 3G/2G-only compatible devices stood at 5.2 million at the end of December 2025.

#### **Base of SIM cards in 2G-only compatible devices, totalling 2.4 million at the end of December 2025, continues to decrease more rapidly than the base of 3G/2G-only compatible SIM cards**

In Q4 2025, the base of SIM cards in devices that are only 2G-compatible decreased by 9.3%, compared to 4.9% for SIM cards in devices that are 3G/2G-only compatible. At the end of December 2025, SIM cards in devices that are only 2G compatible being used for voice/SMS/mobile internet services represented 1.8% of active SIM cards in all of the devices being used to access these services, and SIM cards in devices that are only 2G-compatible being used for M2M services represented 3.9% of the base of SIM cards in devices being used to access M2M services.

The quarterly decrease in the number of SIM cards in devices that are only 2G-compatible, used for voice/SMS/mobile internet services, stood at 9.5% as of the end of December 2025, compared to 4% at the end of September 2025, and the quarterly decrease in the number of SIM cards in devices that are 2G-only compatible being used for M2M services, stood at 9.2% at the end of December 2025, compared to 10.4% at the end of September 2025.

The total number of SIM cards in devices that are only 2G-compatible stood at 2.4 million at the end of December 2025.

As the complete shutdown of 2G networks nears, the pace of the decrease in 2G-only compatible devices in circulation is expected to intensify further still.

Arcep will pay especially close attention to the actions that operators are taking to accelerate the transition to devices compatible with 4G or 5G technologies as the retirement deadlines for 2G then 3G technology

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

approach. The sunset timetables for these two technologies provided by operators are available on the Arcep website (cf. “**For more information, visit the Arcep website**”).

### For more information, visit 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 Press 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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## ANNEX

### 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

#### 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 stood at 2.4 million units at the end of December 2025, or 3% of the active SIM cards used in this type of device.

Between end of September 2025 and the end of December 2025, there was a 9.5% decrease in devices that are only 2G compatible and a 6.6% decrease in devices that are only 2G and 3G compatible.

<i>SIM card base (million)</i>	<b>End of June 2025</b>	<b>End of September 2025</b>	<b>End of December 2025</b>
2G	1.63	1.57	1.42
3G/2G	1.07	1.05	0.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.40</b>

#### SIM cards installed in devices used for Machine to Machine<sup>2</sup> services (excluding SIM cards installed in vehicles by automakers)

The number of SIM cards installed in devices used for Machine to Machine (M2M) services that are only compatible with 2G and 3G technologies stood at 2.8 million units at the end of December 2025, or 11% of the SIM cards used in this type of device.

Between end of September 2025 and the end of December 2025, there was a 9.2% decrease in devices that are only 2G compatible and a 4% decrease in devices that are only 2G and 3G compatible.

<i>SIM card base (million)</i>	<b>End of June 2025</b>	<b>End of September 2025</b>	<b>End of December 2025</b>
2G	1.22	1.09	0.99
3G/2G	1.97	1.90	1.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>2.82</b>

<sup>2</sup> 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.