

# Position paper

## ETNO Reflection Document on “Draft ECC Recommendation 12(04): Numbering for VoIP Services”



November 2012

### **Executive Summary**

- ETNO would like to thank the CEPT/ECC (Electronic Communications Committee) for the opportunity to comment on the Draft ECC Recommendation 12(04) “Numbering for VoIP Services”.
- As a general remark, VoIP service providers that get numbers from the National Numbering Plans have to be duly authorized by the National Regulators and satisfy all the obligations related to the geographic number ranges from which they get numbers (such as Number Portability, Emergency Calls and Caller Location determination, Legal Intercept, link with used public network access, etc.), in exactly the same way as all the other service providers getting numbers from the same ranges. The allocation of mobile numbers will inevitably have an impact on the interface with the relevant authorities in charge of those aspects.
- The proposed nomadicity definition is questionable, since it does not reflect the intrinsic characteristics and limitation of the nomadic service, as well as the essential respect for regulation regarding the identity of the national authorized telephone operator to whom the numbering is assigned.
- The evolution of the traditional voice networks towards VoIP should be taken into account when considering this Recommendation.
- In addition, there will be fairness in the market place between all the service providers, because the same obligations will be applicable to the same number ranges.
- Finally, a specific numbering space that is dedicated to the international or national nomadic services is, in principle, the most suitable choice for general end user protection (tariff transparency, etc.), as well as operator and voice calls traceability, legal interception, etc.

## Introduction

The Association of European Telecommunications Network Operators (ETNO)<sup>1</sup> would like to thank the CEPT/ECC (Electronic Communications Committee) for the opportunity to comment on Draft ECC Recommendation 12(04) "Numbering for VoIP Services".

As a general remark, VoIP service providers that can get numbers from the National Numbering Plans, have to be duly authorized by the National Regulators and satisfy all the obligations related to the number rights of use that are associated with the specific numbering ranges (such as Number Portability, Emergency Calls and Caller Location determination, Legal Interception, link with used public network access, etc.) in exactly the same way as all the other service providers getting numbers from the same ranges.

In this way, end users will be guaranteed the same service experience and characteristics, quality of service, etc. related to the specific numbering range from which they get numbers, independently of the service provider offering the voice service.

In addition, there will be fairness in the market place between all the service providers because the same obligations will be applicable to the same number ranges.

The allocation of mobile number will inevitably have an impact on the interface with the relevant authorities in charge of those legal aspects mentioned above.

This proposal of a Recommendation could also have some implications for traditional voice service providers as the networks are gradually migrating to VoIP networks when including the nomadic feature.

We would like to specify that access to numbering resources should remain linked to the present national authorizations (e.g. mobile numbers may only be assigned to mobile networks, etc.).

## Comments on Introduction and Considering

The first sentence reads "*New types of voice services are being developed that use the internet either via fixed and/or mobile connections rather than the traditional circuit switched networks. These services are commonly referred to as "Voice over IP" (VoIP) applications by service providers without control of the underlying network, i.e. the access to VoIP service is location independent.*"

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<sup>1</sup> The European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) is representing 38 major companies, which provide electronic communications networks over fixed, mobile or personal communications systems in 35 countries. ETNO is Europe's leading trade association. More information about ETNO can be found at: [www.etno.eu](http://www.etno.eu)

It has to be underlined that “Voice over IP” (VoIP) applications can be offered by service providers without control of the underlying network as well as by service providers with control of the underlying network. National Numbering Plans usually define the geographic numbering for PATS, that is for publically available fixed telephony services with respect for a set of regulatory requirements, also having to enable legal interception, end user and operator traceability, etc. An international nomadic telephone service has to respect the PATS requirements.

In the second sentence, it cannot be indicated that PATS is only provided through ISDN and PSTN technology, since the EU regulatory framework has defined PATS as technologically neutral, with a set of common regulatory requirements. VoIP technology can be implemented, also following ETSI/3GPP NGN standards, to provide PATS telephony services that are similar to traditional PATS.

Besides, the nomadicity definition is not acceptable, since physical network access used currently by the nomadic end user is to be identified and registered by the national telephone authorized operator. Indeed, this is an essential characteristic of nomadic telephone services in order to comply with regulations. Also the enormous difference of nomadic services with respect to mobile services has to be indicated, since in the case of international access to mobile services, a roaming service is needed, with an explicit agreement between national home and visited mobile operators.

If the ECC proposal is correctly understood, a nomadic service would be accessed through a foreign broadband access without any agreement with a local national authorized telephone operator (i.e. the operator to which national geographic numbers are assigned). This seems a risky scenario, both from a regulatory and competitive point of view.

We would like to stress that access to numbering resources should remain related to present national authorizations (e.g. mobile numbers may only be assigned to mobile operators, etc.).

## Comments on draft Recommendation

The draft proposal to extend the geographic numbering assignment also to international/national location independent nomadic voice services does not seem viable, since it conflicts with the regulatory provisions associated to PATS definition and obligations, at least in the EU.

ETNO believes that more attention should be applied by ECC to the national implications of a draft recommendation on such an impactful and critical subject as VoIP numbering, namely regarding the respect for the legal and regulatory obligations of operators, e. g. operator and end user traceability, lawful interception, etc. Moreover, consideration should be given to the fact that national numbering plans have general rules that must be applied to geographic numbering (i.e. it is associated with geographic services) and to the different types of non-geographic numbering (ie, that have to be associated with non-geographic services, mobile

service or nomadic services), and which do not currently present specific problems in supporting telephone offers in the market.

It should be clarified what kind of specific features would determine the allocation of mobile or fixed numbers. Without any specification or clarification and given the possible implication e.g. localisation, it seems better to refer to national rules and definitions to determine the allocation of mobile or fixed numbers.

Considering the text of draft Recommendation, we propose the following improvements to the final two recommendation bullets:

1. that the NRAs should ensure that voice services, also in the case of VoIP technology based services, can be provided using the existing numbering ranges of the national numbering plans, respecting regulatory authorization prescriptions and the obligations associated with the assignment of numbering rights of use;
2. that, without prejudice to any existing specific nomadic VoIP numbering ranges, the NRAs should assign to nation-wide nomadic voice services ~~either fixed or mobile numbers depending on the specific features of the service in question~~ in accordance with the existing national numbering plan rules and definitions.