



Electronic Communications Committee (ECC)
within the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT)

ECC RECOMMENDATION (06)03

PRINCIPLES RELATED TO NUMBERING PLANS FOR SMS SHORT CODES

Recommendation approved by the Working Group “Numbering Naming and Addressing” (WG NNA)

INTRODUCTION

Short codes for short message services (SMS) have become popular for providing value added services (VAS). These services comprise: a) electronic communication services in which price per message normally exceeds the basic SMS tariffs, and b) non-electronic communication services provided in combination with a SMS service, offered by third parties, and that are billed normally by a network operator. Examples of VAS SMS include news and weather services and they may be subscription based services.

Traditionally, numbering ranges for SMS short codes have been managed by mobile operators themselves without an NRA involvement. Technically these codes are network specific codes and not E.164 numbers. Growing demands for service interoperability between networks have raised a need for a central management of number ranges for SMS short codes based on regulation. These number ranges in principle consist of codes for VAS SMS services.

A numbering plan for SMS short codes may comprise a part consisting of centrally coordinated codes and a part consisting of codes that are not centrally coordinated but may be unique only within a network. The latter may be fully managed by individual network operators and may be used for network specific services. An advantage of a part of a numbering plan that is centrally coordinated in reference to a part that is coordinated at the level of an individual network is that an end-user of any network operator can use the same code for the same service, if the service is accessible in the respective network.

“The Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations,

considering

- a) the possibility to speed up further growth of the VAS SMS market which would benefit the whole VAS SMS sector;
- b) the increased popularity of VAS SMS;
- c) demands for interoperability between services between different mobile and fixed networks;
- d) demands for tariff transparency regarding higher tariffs for SMS VAS than normal SMS messages;
- e) protection of consumers regarding certain types of service contents, such as adult oriented contents;

recommends

- 1) National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs), if necessary after a prior decision of the competent public authorities, should take the final responsibility over the SMS numbering if according to the public authorities or the NRAs depending on the national legal framework, existing national solutions do not function satisfactorily;
- 2) Consumer protection should be taken into account where short codes are used for VAS SMS services;
- 3) NRAs should consider in cooperation with all stakeholders defining a national SMS numbering plan for SMS short codes;

- 4) NRAs to consider whether part of the administration, management and assignment of the SMS numbering resources is delegated to network operators or to a neutral body distinct from the NRA or to a separate body where all market parties are represented;
- 5) NRAs to consider, whether a part of the number range(s) included in a numbering plan is allocated to network specific services and if so to consider appropriate restrictions to the use of these codes;
- 6) NRAs to consider a structure of such numbering plan that serves consumer protection, suited to their respective national situations, including:
 - a. the creation, in cooperation with market parties, of a mechanism for provision of tariff announcements, based on legislation or self-regulation;
 - b. the creation, in cooperation with market parties, of a mechanism for adequate and flexible barring of incoming and outgoing messages, based on legislation or self-regulation;
 - c. possible inclusion in a numbering plan of tariff and/or content information, based on the leading digit(s) in these numbering ranges, which may facilitate barring of SMS messages;
- 7) NRAs to consider the stimulation of access, interconnectivity and interoperability regarding SMS services between networks using resources from a national numbering plan not allocated to network specific services;
- 8) NRAs to consider, in applicable situations, the stimulation of the portability of short codes for SMS services using resources from a national numbering plan not allocated to network specific services.

Note:

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