

ERG COMMON POSITION ON VoIP (Draft) ERG (07)56 Rev 1

Please find hereunder the comments of WIND Hellas Telecommunications S.A. a Greek leading operator providing mobile, fixed and Internet services. As operators we appreciate being given the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing discussions on VoIP and look forward to the final position of the ERG as well as to the stances expressed by other market forces. In this respect, we believe that vendors should be definitely included in the ongoing debate.

Access to Emergency Services

Access to emergency services is extremely important for all EU citizens irrespective of how a voice service may be classified for legal and regulatory purposes. We thus agree in principle with the statements according to which telephony service providers should be asked, as technically feasible, to provide access to emergency services (conclusion 3.8.1). At the same time, as recognized in ERG (07) 56 Rev 1, emergency services can only be provided for the 2nd and 4th VoIP scenarios. Furthermore, under the 2nd scenario, due consideration should be given to the fact that this particular VoIP service does not have E164 number (so is not able to provide callback number, or location lookup based on number) and it also constitutes a high risk of denial-of-service attacks given the anonymity of the originating points that the PSAPs will be opening to.

Numbering plans and Number portability

While Member States should endeavor to avoid discriminating between providers as regards the numbers used, we understand this applies only to the providers of equivalent services. In this context, we question the vagueness of conclusion 4.4.2 whereby there seems to be no distinction of treatment between PATS and ECS. The same comment also applies for para. 5.1 in the statement according to which “it seems appropriate to impose number portability obligations to VoIP providers and also allow number portability between traditional telephone services and VoIP services” without further categorization.

The Common statement of the ERG back in 2005 (ERG (05)12) stated that “conditions concerning number portability should be equal for similar services within the scope of national numbering plans in order to facilitate consumer choice and promote effective competition”

We thus have difficulty in understanding how the proposed measures are to apply equally to all existing types of VoIP services, and not depending on which category they fall under, departing thus significantly from the previous position agreed by the ERG. We believe that portability should occur between equivalent services otherwise control will be lost and consumers will be confused.

Last, whereas we agree with the ERG’s position according to which number portability mechanisms should remain decision of each member state (para. 5.1), we would caution against the risk of introducing new burdensome mechanisms so as to satisfy the demands of “new entrants” in the portability market.

Nomadism

As far as nomadism is concerned, we stress the need to further specify both the geographical extent of the concept as well as the duration assumptions (“temporarily”), in absence of which the proposals are not enforceable. Even then, the proposal may be implementable under constraints.

- a) While it may be easier to achieve for some of the population, and provided that the service is enabled through a single operator’s infrastructure (signaling as well as media backhaul and interconnection points), the very nature of the technology and the flexibility of the IP and surrounding protocols allow for easy relocation of the service endpoint, with little opportunity for reliable detection of such a move.
- b) Furthermore, today’s standards allow for multiple instances of the same “user” to be active at any point. This would mean that the same “SIP address” (or phone number) would be reachable on multiple devices, locations, countries, etc. As a result, the very definition of a user’s identity is at stake.
- c) The ability for a VoIP endpoint to relocate freely also poses challenges to the Emergency Services Providers across borders.

Additional comments

Lawful interception is also an area suffering from the flexibility the VoIP platforms offer. In particular:

- a) In all except for the fourth scenario of VoIP use, Lawful Intercept would be problematic due to the lack of common and indisputable user identity for both endpoints.
- b) The first VoIP scenario will not allow the enforcement of LI in a reasonable scale, since the peer-to-peer nature of such services can bypass any centralized, interconnecting elements, at which point signaling and media traffic is being intercepted.

Finally, the categorization by the ERG of a “hypothetic VoIP service” over a mobile connection: (para. 5.1) as falling under the mobile domain portability requires in our view further analysis and adequate justifications, since it entails a whole set of specific rights and obligations.

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