CEPT ECC
Electronic Communications Committee

ECC Recommendation (26)05

Harmonised National Numbering Conventions regarding numbering resources

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ECC RECOMMENDATION (26)05 OF 22 OCTOBER 2026 ON HARMONISED NATIONAL NUMBERING CONVENTIONS REGARDING NUMBERING RESOURCES

"The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations,

considering

a) that harmonisation is important to ensure the most efficient use of numbering resources, such as E.164, E.212, E.118, and Q.708;

b) the adoption of ETO's final report on "Harmonised National Numbering Conventions";

c) that, in a competitive environment, a clearly defined regulatory framework on numbering is needed to ensure non-discriminatory and transparent access to numbering resources;

d) that a certain degree of harmonisation of national numbering conventions, particularly the assignment process, provides support to ensuring non-discriminatory and transparent access to numbering resources;

e) that harmonised national numbering conventions should not preclude national requirements, criteria and conditions, flexibility over time and case by case treatments and should allow room for leaving solutions to market developments;

f) that harmonised national numbering conventions should be presented in a general framework which easily allows future extension to other types of numbering resources, names and addresses for publicly available electronic communications networks and services.

taking into account

i. ITU-T Recommendation E.190 - Principles and responsibilities for the allocation, reservation, assignment, reclamation and management of ITU-T international naming, numbering, addressing and identification (NNAI) resources, February 2025 [1];

ii. ITU-T Recommendation E.164 - The International Public Telecommunication Numbering Plan, February 2026 [2];

iii. ITU-T Recommendation E.212 - The international identification plan for public networks and subscriptions, June 2024 [3];

iv. ITU-T Recommendation E.118 - Numbering resources for Cards to identify accounts for charging telecommunication services, September 2025 [4];

v. ITU-T Recommendation Q.708 - Assignment procedures for international signalling point codes, March 1999 [5];

vi. ITU-T Recommendation E.129 - Presentation of national numbering plans, January 2013 [6];

vii. ITU-T Technical Report TR.EENM – Guidelines for effective and efficient national E.164 numbering plan administration, June 2021 [7];

viii. ECC Report 311 Sub-assignment and number hosting - Implementation models, rights of use and obligations for E.164 numbers across the electronic communications supply chain, May 2020 [8];

ix. that multiple levels of sub-assignment could have a negative impact on the management and monitoring of the use of the numbering resources.

defining for this recommendation

a) National numbering conventions as the whole of:
   - national numbering plans;
   - types of usage for designated numbering resources and number ranges;
   - rules for administration of national numbering plans;
   - rules for management of national numbering plans.

b) Administration of the national numbering plan as the establishment and change of national numbering conventions;

c) Management of the national numbering plan as the whole of:
   - assignment procedure of numbering resources and numbers from designated ranges based on criteria and conditions;
   - audits of usage of assigned numbering resources;
   - withdrawal of assigned numbering resources.

d) Numbering Plan Administrator (NPA) as a national body or competent authority that carries out the national numbering plan administration and management;

e) The NPA could, depending on national considerations, be the NRA and/or another national body or competent authority;

f) Assignment, being the granting of the right of use of numbering resources which may be preceded by their reservation.

recommends

That all CEPT administrations ensure national implementation of the following regulatory framework:

A. General NPA responsibilities

1 National numbering plans and the associated numbering resources should be controlled, administered, and managed by a NPA that operates independently of providers and operators of electronic communications networks and services.

2 National numbering plans and the associated numbering resources should:

- enable fair and open competition to the benefit of end-users;
- enable the provision of public electronic communications networks and publicly available electronic communications services, both existing and foreseeable in the future;
- provide sufficient capacity in both the short term and the long term;
- be in line with the relevant ITU-T Recommendations.

3 Numbering management should be carried out in an objective, non-discriminatory, equitable, proportionate, timely and transparent manner.

B. Consultation by NPAs

4 The NPA should consult all relevant stakeholders or their representatives, such as by means of a consultation body, on important issues and proposed changes concerning numbering conventions and policies, and on large-scale withdrawals of assigned numbering resources by the NPA.

C. Publication

5 Up-to-date information on the following items, if applicable, should be published in an appropriate manner:

- the national numbering conventions and policies;
- the status of each numbering resource (e.g. assigned, reserved, unavailable/not allocated[1]);
- the numbering resources assigned by the NPA, without prejudice to aspects related to national security and privacy;
- the numbering resources sub-assigned, if deemed appropriate by the NPA.

6 The publicity of a change in a substantial part of the active national numbering conventions and policies should be well co-ordinated and started in good time in order to allow market players to prepare for the change.

D. Applications for primary assignment

7 Eligible applicants should be defined.

8 The information required to decide on an application should be based on predefined criteria. Additional information may be required depending on the specific application. The required information should not place an undue burden on the applicant.

E. Primary assignment

9 The procedure for primary assignment should be established in the national numbering policies.

10 Generally, the principle of “first come, first served” should be applied.

11 When assignment is granted, the NPA should inform the applicant accordingly.

[1] Unavailable/not allocated could mean dormant, protected, reclaimed etc.

F. Refusal of primary assignment

12 The NPA should make available the general grounds and criteria that may lead to a refusal of assignment

13 When assignment is refused, the NPA should inform the applicant about the refusal, the reasons for the refusal and the procedure for appeal.

G. Usage conditions after primary assignment

14 Assignment by the NPA should only imply the granting of rights of use of numbering resources, not the ownership of the numbering resources.

15 All applicable usage conditions should be laid down and made clear to the primary assignee; in particular, the conditions needed to control the usage of the numbering resources and to withdraw them if they are not used for the purpose required .

16 Any fees imposed by the NPA as part of the assignment and usage should normally seek only to cover administration and management costs.

17 Notwithstanding paragraph 16, where scarce resources are to be used, these fees may reflect the need to ensure the optimal use of these resources.

18 The primary assignee should not sub-assign, transfer or trade assigned numbering resources without following the numbering assignment policies of the NPA. An exception may be made by the NPA for mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures.

19 The primary assignee is only allowed to use numbering resources which are assigned to it in accordance with the national numbering plan and rules on number portability.

H. Conditions for sub-assignment

20 Where sub-assignment is allowed by the NPA, the responsibility for any sub-assigned numbering resources should be defined by the NPA.

21 Sub-assignment should be in compliance with the national numbering policies, such as in terms of how the sub-assigned numbering resources should be used and how the conditions attached to the rights of use should be complied with between primary assignee and the sub-assignee.

22 Multiple level sub-assignment should be carefully assessed before introduction, particularly due to potential loss of control over who is actually using the numbering resource;

23 The sub-assignee should not sub-assign or trade sub-assigned numbering resources without following the numbering assignment policies of the NPA. An exception may be made by the NPA for mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures.

24 The primary assignee and sub-assignee should be able to provide all the relevant information to the NPA regarding the numbering resources that are sub-assigned.

I. Conditions for secondary assignment

25 Secondary assignment should comply with the national numbering policies and should not imply transfer of ownership of the numbering resources, but only the right for subscribers[2] to use the numbers.

26 When a change of numbering resources that are in use is imposed by the assigning body, the end-users of these resources should have the right to have the disruption minimised.

J. Withdrawal of numbering resources

27 The general conditions and principal reasons for which assigned numbering resources can be withdrawn should be laid down.

28 Before any decision on a large-scale withdrawal is taken, the overall implications of the withdrawal, the impacts on the market, in particular to safeguard end-user's rights, the timescales and the numbering changes involved should be carefully considered.

29 When the NPA intends to withdraw assigned numbering resources, it should inform the primary assignee about its intention, the reasons and the timescales for withdrawal and the procedure for appeal, unless it is the primary assignee that requests the withdrawal.

[2] End-user with the contract

30 When numbering resources that are in use are withdrawn, because of the need for numbering capacity, fair and open competition or international harmonisation, the primary assignee should have the numbering resources simultaneously replaced.

31 When a change of numbering resources that are in use is imposed by the NPA, the end-users of these resources should have the right to have the disruption minimised.

K. Appeal

32 Appropriate procedures should be laid down for appealing to an institution independent of the NPA against management decisions by the NPA.

Note:

This Recommendation supersedes the Recommendation of 25 June 1998 on Harmonised National Numbering Conventions regarding ITU-T Recommendation E.164 numbers ECTRA/REC(98)03.

Please check the ECO Documentation Database https://docdb.cept.org/ for the up to date position on the implementation of this and other ECC Recommendations.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF REFERENCES

[1] ITU-T Recommendation E.190: “Principles and responsibilities for the allocation, reservation, assignment, reclamation and management of international telecommunication numbering, naming, addressing and identification (NNAI) resources”, February 2025

[2] ITU-T Recommendation E.164: “The international public telecommunication numbering plan”, February 2026

[3] ITU-T Recommendation E.212: “The international identification plan for public networks and subscriptions”, June 2024

[4] ITU-T Recommendation E.118: “Numbering resources for cards to identify accounts for charging telecommunication services”, September 2025

[5] ITU-T Recommendation Q.708: “Assignment procedures for international signalling point codes”, March 1999

[6] ITU-T Recommendation E.129: “Presentation of national numbering plans”, January 2013

[7] ITU-T Technical Report TR.EENM: “Guidelines for effective and efficient national E.164 numbering plan administration”

[8] ECC Report 311: “Sub-assignment and number hosting - Implementation models, rights of use and obligations for E.164 numbers across the electronic communications supply chain”, approved May 2020