

27 July 2022

Lack of Voice over LTE (VoLTE) interoperability prevents people from calling emergency services

Dear Mr. Romero,

The European Emergency Number Association (EENA) would like to draw your attention to an issue which may prevent people from making voice calls, including calls to emergency services, once 2G and 3G networks are phased out. This problem is currently being experienced by some European citizens roaming on mobile networks in the US and it is now attracting some [media attention](#). The pace of 2G/3G phaseout is slower in Europe which means that the issue is not as evident here yet.

In August 2021, telecoms expert, Rudolf Van Der Berg, [had already warned](#) that current 4G standards do not ensure compatibility and interoperability between all devices and networks for VoLTE services. Consequently, users of these devices and networks are unable to make or receive voice calls based on VoLTE, including voice calls to emergency services. This becomes particularly problematic when 2G and 3G networks are phased out and there is no fallback solution to provide a legacy voice service.

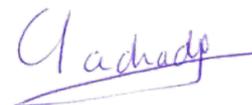
EENA understands that in the last months, several European Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) had informed their customers travelling to the US (where some 2G and 3G networks have already been phased out) that their devices may not be compatible with VoLTE services offered by some US-based MNOs. In such cases, customers would receive a mobile data connection but would not be provided with a voice service.

This problem could seriously harm the electronic communications market and put at risk the safety of its customers. It is hence necessary that MNOs, as well as mobile virtual network operators, handset and chipsets manufacturers, national governments, national telecommunications regulatory authorities and competent standardisation bodies work together to address this problem and ensure compatibility and interoperability of VoLTE services between all networks and VoLTE-capable devices. Until this is addressed and resolved, EENA strongly considers that the phaseout of both 2G and 3G should be put on hold, so as to guarantee continuity of access to emergency services. Otherwise lives will unnecessarily be put at risk.

EENA welcomes ETSI's recent call for expertise¹ to extend the interoperability test specifications for VoLTE to include interworking test specifications for support of emergency services over VoLTE and considers this a crucial step in resolving this issue. As the standardisation body in Europe for telecommunications, EENA would also kindly ask ETSI to take the additional step of raising awareness of this issue amongst the standardisation community and to consider and evaluate what actions could be taken to ensure a swift and effective resolution.

My colleagues and I are looking forward to working with you, as well as other relevant stakeholders in addressing this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



Gary MACHADO
Executive Director, EENA

¹ <https://portal.etsi.org/cfe/#/terms-of-reference/T010>