

Ericsson and Telia demonstrate live roaming between GSM and 3G networks

Ericsson and Swedish-based operator Telia have for the first time demonstrated live roaming between a commercially deployed GSM network and a 3G (third generation) system.

The demonstration connection is set up between Ericsson's WCDMA evaluation system near Stockholm and Telia's commercial GSM network. For the first time, GSM subscribers visiting Ericsson's 3G-demonstration center can "roam" into a 3G network, using their existing GSM subscriber identity and number to receive calls on a 3G mobile terminal, mounted in a test vehicle.

"This is a significant step in the practical evolution towards 3G mobile services," says Mikael Halén, Manager, Product Marketing, Ericsson Wideband Radio Networks. "The test demonstrates the smooth migration path developed for the evolution of second to third generation mobile services, and highlights the interoperability of the two types of networks."

In the evaluation link-up, the GSM user takes the SIM card from their GSM phone and places it into the WCDMA mobile terminal to be able to receive calls made to their GSM phone number. The Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) is the small, removable card used in GSM phones to identify the subscriber. Any GSM SIM card in the world can be used, as long as the operator who issued it has a roaming agreement with Telia. Today, Telia has roaming agreements with 146 operators in 78 countries.

"In the near future, third generation services will work together with existing ones," says Lorentz Engström, Senior Technical Advisor, Telia Mobile. "This test clearly demonstrates the co-existence of GSM with 3G. Operators can build out 3G coverage in line with market demand."

Ericsson and Telia began their formal cooperation on WCDMA 3G development and evaluation in the spring of 1998. The two companies inaugurated the Stockholm WCDMA Evaluation System in the spring of 1999, at the same time as Ericsson inaugurated its WCDMA Demo Center, where operators and others can experience 3G services in a high bandwidth mobile environment.

Ericsson is the leading provider in the new telecoms world, with communications solutions that combine telecom and datacom technologies with freedom of mobility for the user. With more than 100,000 employees in 140 countries, Ericsson simplifies communications for its customers – network operators, service providers, enterprises and consumers – the world over.

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About Telia

Telia is the leading supplier of telecom-based information services in the Nordic/Baltic region. At the same time, “seamless” pan-European and global services are being realized through powerful alliances and partnerships in Europe and around the world. Annual turnover in 1998 reached 51,240 MSEK and the number of employees amounted to approximately 30,600.

About 3G

Ericsson is leading the development of 3G mobile communications. The company is ideally positioned to support any operator anywhere to migrate into 3G systems - regardless of current systems. Ericsson offers a smooth migration path from all 2G systems to 3G systems based on WCDMA, cdma2000 and EDGE. The company offers a 3G portfolio with end-to-end solutions, including terminals, applications and infrastructure. Ericsson has already announced 3G experimental systems in several countries on three continents, leveraging the company's more than 10 years of research in 3G technologies.