



Telecom Order CRTC 2023-328

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Ottawa, 28 September 2023

Public record: Tariff Notice 536

Télébec, Société en commandite – Destandardization of residential call management services

Summary

The Commission **approves** Télébec, Société en commandite’s application to destandardize six residential call management services.

Application

1. The Commission received an application from Télébec, Société en commandite (Télébec), specifically Tariff Notice (TN) 536, dated 12 May 2023, in which the company proposed changes to item 3.3.18 – Call Management Services of its General Tariff. Specifically, the company proposed to destandardize the following six services: “Number Display,” “Name Display,” “Speed Calling,” “Call Trace” (as a monthly subscription service), “Simultaneous Ring,” and “Intercom.”
2. Télébec indicated that customers with existing residential services will be able to retain these services until they move, cancel, or change their subscription. Some services are seldom used, while others have thousands of subscribers. Télébec requested an effective date of 16 October 2023.
3. Télébec provided the Commission with copies of the notices provided to customers, who had until 14 July 2023 to file comments with the Commission. The Commission received 22 interventions from Télébec customers.
4. Télébec also proposed to introduce a new call display service for residential customers that would integrate the number and name display functionality for a single rate. It proposed a price scale for this new call display service. The company noted that it had already filed on 6 March 2023, as part of TN 531, an analysis demonstrating that the minimum rate it is proposing for the “Call Display (Number and Name)” service meets the Commission’s price floor criteria. It added that it is implementing maximum rates that reflect market rates by aligning its maximum rates with those included in Bell Canada’s General Tariff. According to Télébec, since call management services, which are optional local residential services, are uncapped services, the proposed maximum rates comply with the applicable tariff rules set out in Telecom Decision 2007-60.

5. Télébec specified that the new option includes the same features that residential customers currently subscribe to, but for a single, lower rate. In addition, the “Call Trace” service would remain available, but only on a pay-per-use basis, with a maximum monthly fee of \$10. Finally, customers could reproduce the features provided by the “Speed Calling,” “Simultaneous Ring,” and “Intercom” services by other means, such as devices generally available on the retail market, or even via mobile or Internet applications.
6. Télébec filed a reply on 24 July 2023.

Interventions

7. Some interveners seemed to believe that Télébec was going to withdraw residential landline telephone service. They consequently expressed their concerns about this issue and indicated the reasons why they wanted to keep this service (e.g., security alarm service or inability to use a cell phone).
8. Interveners also shared their concerns about (i) wireless coverage in their region, (ii) the deteriorating quality of service offered by Télébec, (iii) the high prices of telecommunications services, and (iv) the lack of competition in the market.
9. The vast majority of interveners indicated that the services included in Télébec’s application are essential and useful to them, particularly the “Name Display” and “Number Display” services, to protect against fraudulent calls and prevent harassment from telemarketing companies.
10. Some interveners were of the opinion that services should be available for new customers and for people who are moving, out of consideration for newcomers and for seniors who are more likely to move because of their health condition.
11. Finally, other interveners expressed concern about having to pay more for services if they had to make changes to their subscription.

Reply

12. Télébec replied that there had been a misunderstanding regarding the vast majority of comments, since it was only proposing to destandardize the above-mentioned call management services. For the “Number Display” and “Name Display” services, it proposed to introduce a new call display service for residential customers that would integrate both number and name display features for a single, lower rate. Télébec added that it will be changing the way these services are provided to new customers or those who change their subscription after 16 October 2023, and that no feature is being removed from these services. Similarly, the “Call Trace” service will continue to be available to all customers on a pay-per-use basis, in accordance with item 3.3.18.4(b)(ii) of its General Tariff. Furthermore, customers with existing residential services will be able to retain these services until they move, cancel, or change their subscription.

13. Télébec specified that it had called these customers and assured them that their services would remain unchanged as long as they did not choose to change them after 16 October 2023. It also explained that the “Call Display” and “Call Trace” services will still be available after 16 October 2023, given that the availability of these two call management services (especially “Call Display”) was what the customers who contacted Télébec were concerned about. According to Télébec, this measure addressed customer concerns.
14. Télébec also noted that no customers expressed direct concern about the three other call management services it proposed to destandardize under TN 536.
15. Télébec indicated that a few customers filed complaints or comments that were not related to TN 536, such as comments on unregulated services. In each case, Télébec still called customers to clarify the impact of its application and to reassure them.

Commission’s analysis

16. Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1 sets out the requirements for the destandardizing of tariffed services. Télébec has provided (i) a description of the services it is proposing to destandardize, (ii) the proposed date of destandardization, (iii) the reasons for destandardization, (iv) the number of customers affected, and (v) a copy of the notice provided to affected customers.
17. Several interveners expressed concern at the prospect of losing residential landline telephone service or call display and call trace services. Residential landline service will continue to be offered, and customers will not be obliged to use mobile wireless services, given that Télébec requested only the destandardization of call management services. Since this is a destandardization, existing customers will not be affected by the proposal unless they want to make changes to their subscription. In addition, for customers who do want to make changes (e.g., due to moving), a new call display service will be offered that can replicate the features of the “Name Display” and “Number Display” services. The “Call Trace” service will also continue to be available on a pay-per-use basis. Intervenors did not comment on the “Speed Calling,” “Simultaneous Ring,” and “Intercom” services, and their features can be reproduced by other means. The Commission also notes that the company confirms that it communicated with intervenors and responded to their concerns.
18. Télébec proposed to introduce the “Call Display (Name and Number)” service, which will be similar to that offered by Bell Canada. The Commission considers that this service will replicate the features of the “Number Display” and “Name Display” services that have been offered to customers to date. The Commission also notes that the minimum monthly fee for this service will be the same as the minimum monthly fee for these two services. As far as the maximum monthly rate is concerned, overall, the service will be cheaper than the combination of the “Name Display” and “Number Display” services, and the rate will be similar to that of Bell Canada.

19. Given that call management services are uncapped services, the maximum rate proposed for the “Call Display (Name and Number)” service complies with tariff rules. With respect to the minimum rate, given that it is based on already approved rates, the Commission considers that it complies with the floor price criteria.

Conclusion

20. In light of all the above, the Commission considers that Télébec’s proposal is reasonable and complies with existing regulatory policies.

21. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** Télébec’s application, effective **16 October 2023**.

22. Revised tariff pages are to be issued within **10 days** of the date of this order.¹

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016
- *Télébec, Limited Partnership – Destandardization of Basic Services Provided Outside the Company’s Serving Area*, Telecom Order CRTC 2011-247, 14 April 2011
- *Follow-up to Decision 2007-27 – Show cause submission related to the application of the price cap regime to Télébec, Limited Partnership*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-60, 30 July 2007; as amended by Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-60-1, 10 August 2007

¹ Revised tariff pages can be submitted to the Commission without a description page or a request for approval; a tariff application is not required.