



**OVERSEAS CALLS:**

**WHY DOESN'T CANADA HAVE  
A SEPARATE TELEPHONE BILLING CODE FOR UKRAINE?**

Three years after Ukraine achieved independence, Canadians calling Ukraine are still finding the designation "CIS" on their bills. This situation is particularly irritating when one considers that the U.S. international carriers and those responsible for billing our American neighbours have been successful in identifying "Ukraine" on their invoices. Needless to say, Canadians have been protesting this situation, and these protests have reached the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in Ukraine.

In a letter of response to the Ukrainian Embassy here in Canada, the Ukrainian Ministry has acknowledged that it is well aware of this situation. The Ministry has been taking all the necessary steps on the official, international level to change a situation which it inherited from the former Soviet Union.

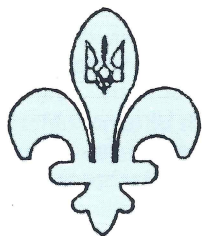
As with many other structures, so too has the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) accepted the Russian Federation as the beneficiary, in this case, of the USSR's obligations and authority regarding telecommunications policy. "By letters dated 15 May 1992 and 31 July 1992, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication of the Russian Federation informed the CCITT that, of the fifteen Republics that have emerged from the former USSR, **ten are to remain in numbering zone 7 for the telephone service and five others are to leave that zone.**" (*bolding by this author*). To date,

separate codes have been assigned to Moldova (373) and the Baltic States (370-372), as well as the Azerbaijani Republic (994).

In its letter dated April 1994, the Ministry of Communications of Ukraine indicates that it has applied directly to ITU to have its own specific international country code, a two-digit number appropriate for a country with a population as large as that of Ukraine. It is expected that negotiations will lead to Ukraine acquiring its own specific telephone codes in the near future.

In its letter, the Ministry also addresses Canadians calling Ukraine who are worried that the present code system may be putting money into Russia's pockets. It assures Canadians that this is not the case. The system dividing Ukraine into 26 internal regional codes is sufficient to allow calls to go directly to/from the country of origin to/from Ukraine, and thereby prevent billing problems.

As for the original question of why Canadians calling Ukraine still see "CIS" on their bills, the answer to that question lies closer to home, in the bureaucracy somewhere between Teleglobe, the international telephone carrier, and STENTOR, the Canadian agency responsible for billing. The problem is currently being addressed, and the agencies concerned have expressed optimism that this technical problem can be resolved shortly.



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