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**Datasheet for the decision
of 6 May 2024**

Case Number: T 0908/22 - 3.5.03

Application Number: 16895931.0

Publication Number: 3429240

IPC: H04W4/16, H04M1/725, H04M1/2745

Language of the proceedings: EN

Title of invention:
Call processing method and mobile terminal

Applicant:
Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.

Headword:
Call processing during roaming/HUAWEI

Relevant legal provisions:
EPC Art. 56

Keyword:
Inventive step - (no): no credible technical effect



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Case Number: T 0908/22 - 3.5.03

D E C I S I O N
of Technical Board of Appeal 3.5.03
of 6 May 2024

Appellant: Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.
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Representative: Pfenning, Meinig & Partner mbB
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Decision under appeal: **Decision of the Examining Division of the
European Patent Office posted on 25 November
2021 refusing European patent application
No. 16895931.0 pursuant to Article 97(2) EPC.**

Composition of the Board:

Chair K. Bengi-Akyürek
Members: P. Tabery
R. Romandini

Summary of Facts and Submissions

I. The appeal is directed against the decision of the examining division to refuse the present application. In the decision under appeal, the examining division concluded that claim 1 of the sole claim request did not involve an inventive step (Article 56 EPC), having regard to the following prior-art document:

D1: EP 2 306 691 A1.

II. In a communication under Article 15(1) RPBA, the board gave a negative preliminary opinion on the appeal, in particular on the issue of inventive step.

III. In a letter of reply, the appellant stated that it would not be attending the scheduled oral proceedings. It did not submit any comments on the substance of the board's communication.

IV. The arranged oral proceedings were subsequently cancelled.

V. **Claim 1** of the sole claim request reads as follows:

"A call processing method, comprising:
if a dial control instruction specific to a destination number currently obtained by a mobile terminal is detected and the mobile terminal is in an international roaming state, querying (S301) whether a prestored contact database comprises contact information associated with the destination number;
if the contact database comprises the contact information associated with the destination number, determining (S302), according to the contact

information, an international roaming number used to call a target user corresponding to the destination number; and

calling (S303) the target user according to the international roaming number characterized in that,

when the contact information does not comprise an additional information description field corresponding to the destination number and comprising the international roaming number of the target user: the determining, according to the contact information, an international roaming number used to call a target user corresponding to the destination number comprises: determining at least one reference home location identifier for the destination number; generating at least one new international roaming number according to the at least one reference home location identifier and the destination number; displaying the newly generated international roaming number and the destination number in a number selection interface of the mobile terminal; and determining that a selected number in the number selection interface is the international roaming number of the target user; wherein the at least one home reference identifier includes at least one country code corresponding to a number format of the destination number, wherein the number format of the destination number is the number of digits of the destination number and wherein the at least one country code is obtained by the mobile device by determining the number format of the destination number, and querying, by using the number format as a query identifier, a prestored country code list that includes a mapping relationship between number formats and country codes."

Reasons for the Decision

1. The application concerns searching, when a mobile terminal is in a roaming situation, a "contact database" for contact information having an international roaming number and calling the "target user" according to the international roaming number.
2. Claim 1 of the sole claim request comprises the following limiting features (board's labelling):

A call processing method, comprising:

- (a) if a dial control instruction specific to a destination number currently obtained by a mobile terminal is detected and the mobile terminal is in an international roaming state, querying whether a prestored contact database comprises contact information associated with the destination number;
- (b) if the contact database comprises the contact information associated with the destination number, determining, according to the contact information, an international roaming number used to call a target user corresponding to the destination number;
- (c) calling the target user according to the international roaming number, wherein,
- (d) when the contact information does not comprise an additional information description field corresponding to the destination number and comprising the international roaming number of the target user:
- (e) the determining, according to the contact information, an international roaming number used to call a target user corresponding to the destination number comprises:

- (f) determining at least one reference home location identifier for the destination number;
- (g) generating at least one new international roaming number according to the at least one reference home location identifier and the destination number;
- (h) displaying the newly generated international roaming number and the destination number in a number selection interface of the mobile terminal;
- (i) determining that a selected number in the number selection interface is the international roaming number of the target user;
- (j) wherein the at least one home reference identifier includes at least one country code corresponding to a number format of the destination number,
- (k) wherein the number format of the destination number is the number of digits of the destination number and
- (l) wherein the at least one country code is obtained by the mobile device by determining the number format of the destination number, and querying, by using the number format as a query identifier, a prestored country code list that includes a mapping relationship between number formats and country codes.

3. Claim construction

3.1 The term "*international roaming number*" in feature (b) of the claim has no established meaning in the relevant art. According to the example given in the description (see paragraph [0045]), this term is intended to refer to a *permanent* phone number consisting of: an "*international call prefix 00*", a "*country code 49*", and an "*original number*" (in ITU terms: National Destination Code with Subscriber Number). It is the

number to be dialled when initiating an international call from a given country to a subscriber.

3.2 The board notes that, even in light of the present description, this term is notably not to be interpreted as the "*Mobile Station Roaming Number (MSRN)*" specified in mobile communication standards.

4. Inventive step (Article 56 EPC)

4.1 Distinguishing features

The board concurs with the appellant that the difference between the subject-matter of claim 1 and the disclosure of document **D1** resides in **features (h) and (i)**.

4.2 Technical effect

4.2.1 According to the appellant, the technical effect was that a disambiguation of the destination country code was possible even when standard prefixes of a telephone number in the destination country were unavailable, thereby providing a complete, swift disambiguation of the international roaming number of the target user.

4.2.2 The examining division acknowledged the objective technical problem based on the above technical effect to the extent that, in the event that a destination number could not be unambiguously recognised as to which country it belonged, the user was offered the possibility to carry out the last step of verification of the number themselves.

4.2.3 The board considers that although claim 1 recites the action taken in response to the "*international roaming*

number" being selected, it does not specify the case where the "*destination number*" is selected. Moreover, claim 1 specifies displaying the newly generated number having a country code and the "*destination number*" not having a country code. Since only a single country code is presented to the user, the appellant's argument referring to "*a disambiguation of the destination country code*" is not consistent with what is claimed. When only a single selection is possible, it is - by definition - meaningless to carry out a disambiguation, since the latter requires at least two options. The board thus finds that the distinguishing features (h) and (i) do not produce a technical effect which can be credibly achieved over the claimed range.

- 4.3 Therefore, the subject-matter of claim 1 is not inventive over the disclosure of document D1, and the sole request is not allowable under Article 56 EPC.

Order

For these reasons it is decided that:

The appeal is dismissed.

The Registrar:

The Chair:



T. Buschek

K. Bengi-Akyürek

Decision electronically authenticated