

GSM and UMTS Milestones 1982 – 2009

By Friedhelm Hillebrand, 25 March 2010

1982	CEPT allocates 900 MHz spectrum for the use by a Pan-European mobile communication system, forms the "Groupe Spécial Mobile" (GSM) and recommends the reservation of frequencies in the 900 MHz band for the future Pan-European cellular system.
1982 - 1984	Agreement on strategic targets in GSM
1984 (August)	Agreement of France and Germany to introduce networks based on the standardised Pan-European digital system
1985 – 1987	Agreement on principles for services (including SMS), network architecture, radio and speech coding in GSM
1986	Trials of different digital radio transmission schemes and different speech codecs in several countries, comparative evaluation by GSM
1987 (February)	CEPT GSM#13 meeting in Madeira: agreement on the basic parameters of the GSM system. Finalisation in May 87
1987 (June)	The European council agrees to the issue of a Directive reserving 900 MHz frequency blocks.
1987 (September)	GSM Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement to support the development of GSM and to implement it in 1991, signed in Copenhagen by 14 operators from 13 European countries.
1988 (I Quarter)	Completion of first set of GSM specifications for infrastructure tendering purposes
1988 Autumn	Ten GSM infrastructure contracts signed by ten network operators
1988 (October)	Public presentation of the first set of GSM specifications at a conference in Hagen (Germany), which attracts 600 participants from Europe, USA and Japan and where copies of the specifications could be bought
1989	Standardisation work transferred from CEPT to ETSI. CEPT GSM becomes ETSI Technical Committee GSM (TC GSM)
1990	GSM Phase 1 Specifications (including SMS) 'frozen' in ETSI TC GSM.
1990 (October)	Promotion seminar for Eastern European Operators in Budapest
1991 (October)	ETSI TC GSM put in charge of UMTS specification activities in addition to the GSM work and renamed " TC SMG" (=Special Mobile Group).
1991-1992	Search for a system name leads to "Global System for Mobile Communications"
1992	First commercial GSM networks come into service. First hand-portable terminals become available. International roaming becomes available.

1993	1 million GSM users reached, first commercial use of SMS
1993	Australian operators are first non-European operators who decide to implement GSM and to sign the MoU
1993	ETSI Technical Committee SMG agrees objectives and methodology for an open evolution of GSM beyond phase 2, to be implemented as phase 2+.
1993 (September)	First DCS 1800 (now GSM 1800) personal communication network opened in the UK
1994 September	Promotion seminar for Indian authorities in New Delhi in August 94, for China in Beijing in September 94
1994	Data capabilities launched in GSM networks.
1995 (Autumn)	10 million GSM users in 100 GSM networks on air in 60 countries world-wide
1995 (October)	GSM Phase 2 standardisation frozen in ETSI Technical Committee SMG
1995 (November)	The first North American PCS 1900 (now GSM 1900) network opened in Washington, DC
1995 December	GSM promotion seminar for South America in Buenos Aires
1995	Every GSM network capable of SMS, international roaming for SMS
1995	Fax, data and SMS services started, video over GSM demonstrated.
1996	Every new terminal also capable of SMS point-to-point mobile originated, national interworking available, substantial traffic
1996 (March)	UMTS Task Force Report on a UMTS strategy for Europe completed
1996 (Spring)	Creation of the UMTS Forum as a world-wide body, dealing with market, regulation and spectrum aspects of UMTS.
1997 (February)	GSM release 96, the first release of phase 2+, completed by ETSI TC SMG (CAMEL, EFR, SIM toolkit)
1997 (February)	Consensus on UMTS strategy achieved by ETSI TC SMG
1997 (autumn)	100 countries on air (70 million users in 200 networks)
1997 (End)	GSM release 97 completed by ETSI TC SMG (GPRS)
1998 (I Quarter)	Agreement on the basic concepts of the UMTS standard including services, radio and network aspects in ETSI TC SMG
1998 (Mid)	100 million GSM users world-wide
1998 (End)	GSM release 98 completed by ETSI Technical Committee SMG (AMR, EDGE, MNP)

1998 (December)	Creation of the Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), transfer of the UMTS standardisation work to 3GPP
2000 (March)	GSM/UMTS release 99 (LCS, UMTS fundamentals, UTRAN) completed by 3GPP, ETSI TC SMG and ANSI T1P1
2000 (June)	Transfer of the remaining GSM specification work to 3GPP, closing of ETSI TC SMG, creation of a new Technical Committee MSG (=Mobile Standards Group) responsible for European regulatory standards.
2001	GSM/UMTS Release 4 frozen by 3GPP (mainly enhancements of Release 99)
2002	GSM/UMTS Release 5 frozen (IMS, HSPDA, WAMR, evolution)
2003	1 000 million GSM users world-wide
2005	GSM/UMTS Release 6 frozen (evolution)
2007	GSM/UMTS Release 7 frozen (evolution)
2008	GSM/UMTS Release 8 frozen (SAE, LTE, evolution)
2008	3 – 4 trillion short messages sent and a revenue of 80 to 100 billion \$ worldwide
2009	GSM/UMTS Release 9 frozen (evolution)
2009 October	4 000 million GSM/UMTS users worldwide (90 % of world market)
2009 end	409 million UMTS users (WCDMA and HSPA)
2009	First LTE trials