



**EENA comments**  
**during the Conference on 112 of 11 October 2005**  
**Organised by the European Commission**

EENA thanked the European Commission for the invitation at the Conference. EENA reminded that this was not the first European conference on this matter organised by the Commission but well the third. The Commission's Europa web site contains two previous meetings one in Luxembourg in 2000<sup>1</sup> and one in Sweden in 2002<sup>2</sup> not to mention EENA's two European conferences in 2003 and 2004 in Brussels. The problem is if today's conference will lead to specific actions or not.

EENA agreed with the position expressed by the Commission on the right interpretation of the "Universal Service Directive" i.e. that whatever the Member States decide to do (adopt the 112 as the one single national emergency call number or use the 112 in parallel with other national numbers) this is independent from the quality level of the 112. In fact even if there is no obligation to provide caller location, answering and handling calls to national numbers in an appropriate way, this is well the case for the 112 and therefore the EU has the competence to ask for concrete results from Member States. In EENA's opinion it is important for the Commission to give a definition of the word "appropriate" and link it with specific quality criteria.

EENA agreed with Finland's position on "quality level". The future 112 Committee has to define quality criteria on the basis of a systemic approach of the 112 call. For example how extensive should the knowledge of the public be to ensure compliance with the directive - given the fact that 30% of citizens never travel to another country, maybe 70% could be a reasonable expectation. Then similar standards should be defined for the availability of the network, the time to answer a call (how many rings), the quality of handling the call (multilingual capacities, operator's education), the total response time (depending on caller location with geographical accuracy, time for the transmission data). The Commission should also launch an evaluation of the 112 service-chain based on the DECO evaluation methodology<sup>3</sup> and a Eurobarometer survey to evaluate the knowledge on the 112 amongst the European Citizens<sup>4</sup>.

Concerning multilingual call handling EENA mentioned the French example using emergency interpreters who provide within a few seconds a 3-way on-line conference. They cover some 28 languages and can help the victim and the operator to manage the emergency (for a total amount of 600€ a year). Such a system could be adapted for use between the Member States on the basis of rapid connexions with a call centre for example in Greece or Italy through the Common Emergency Communications and Information System established in the context of the Civil Protection Mechanism.

EENA also considers that operator's education is an essential parameter. The comparison of a 55 or 85 week training schedule for operators in Finland or Sweden with the only

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<sup>1</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/cpactiv/cpact04f.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/cpactiv/cpact04g.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/pdfdocs/deco\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/pdfdocs/deco_report_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/112/112\\_knowledge\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/112/112_knowledge_en.htm)



obligation to read and write in some other regions, is not acceptable. In this area also EENA believes that common standards should be established.

EENA reminded the audience about the European Parliament's comment in the Civil Protection budget line for 2005 in view of financing actions for the evaluation of the knowledge and the performances of the 112 in the EU. EENA will follow closely the implementation of this requirement by the European Commission.

Finally EENA pointed out that the Commission before opening up legal cases against the Member States it should ensure the establishment of standards, protocols, and quality of service levels. If the Commission did not act for 14 years it is not right to take anybody to the Court before defining the rules of the game and a work plan for the next 2 to 3 years.

**Some additional elements on information of citizens**  
(not mentioned during the conference)

EENA believes that "*adequately informed citizens*" should really mean "*educated citizens*" – an information campaign is not really enough. For example in the context of the Belgian Civil Protection campaign on the 112 co-financed by the Commission less than 100 flyers were made available per distribution point and the final report<sup>5</sup> mentions that "it was not possible to check if the knowledge on the 112 has increased". In another example Paris fire fighters were complaining on the TV news about false calls to the 112, which amount to almost 90 % of calls. National emergency numbers get less false calls just because citizens are better informed about them.

EENA also believes that a special effort is needed to inform national emergency services about the 112 and the relevant EU legislation in force. Only a small part of emergency services were represented at the conference while on the field policemen, emergency doctors and fire fighters deal with emergencies daily. Apparently the members of the Civil Protection Committee do not make the necessary effort to disseminate information within their own countries. The Commission has to consider actions of dissemination of its work and its initiatives on the 112 at national level amongst all the emergency services.

<sup>5</sup>

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/act\\_prog\\_rep/112\\_rapport.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/act_prog_rep/112_rapport.pdf)