

## **CHORIST: a good information people for an efficient alert**

Since June 2006, EENA is involved in the Project CHORIST, a European Commission funded research project in which the main objective is to develop a system made up of the following subsystems:

1. A fully integrated, reliable and performing alert chain delivering alerts to authorities with inputs from heterogeneous sensors, disparate agencies and citizens;
2. Heterogeneous communication means (radio, TV, sirens, GSM) to dispatch messages from authorities to as many citizens as possible within the crisis area and with limited delay;
3. Secured, rapidly deployable and interoperable voice and high data-rate telecommunication systems (incl. ad-hoc networks) for in the field risk response teams.

After one year of activity, the major issues related to the success of CHORIST, as well as the limits and constraints, have been analyzed carefully.

In particular, the impact analysis performed by the consortium shows that both the CHORIST project and the system are strictly connected to a variety of external elements, which can influence, and in some cases also determine, the final results and their future implementation.

From the citizens' point of view, the success of CHORIST lies in two major issues:

1. the possibility of communicating that an emergency situation is occurring;
2. the capability of understanding the alert message and thus behaving correctly.

The first question concerns the actual and tangible implementation of the 112 as single emergency number within the EU, according to the art. 26 of the Universal Service Directive (Directive 2002/22/EC), still far from acceptable levels.

The second one is related to information and training campaigns, that the Member States should realise, following common protocols and similar tools, in order to provide the European citizens with a EU-wide valid know-how, in terms of proper behaviour in case of emergency.

Both these questions are out of the project scope, and they depend on political decisions, first at EU level. However, CHORIST can play a key role to stimulate the political responsibility, as the final product itself will be really efficient, only if it will become a part of a broader system, in which technology goes together with people's awareness and preparedness.

Concerning the 112, CHORIST considers the call centres as one of the sources of information for the risk awareness and assessment, therefore has a strong interest in the diffusion of the use of the single emergency number. On the other hand, the 112 can be significantly improved by the acknowledgement of its role in the alert chain, as demonstrated by CHORIST, if the EU and the Member States will invest in technology, training and promotion.

Concerning the capability of understanding the alert message dispatched through CHORIST, again we are out of the project scope. Yet, there would be useless to send a message, that people would not understand. That is why a good and broad training campaign represents an asset for the CHORIST system, enabling citizens to be really benefited by this new product. And the training must be set at European level, to be effective. CHORIST knows that the mobility within the EU borders is growing, and that the civil protection authorities have to take into account the presence of people from other countries, when an emergency occurs. If the alert messages will follow a European standard, and the people will be trained according to common procedures, the implementation of the CHORIST system will increase the number of lives saved.

The multi-lingual and cultural aspects are the fields in which CHORIST's European value is highlighted. The system can be adapted to the civil protection structure of each country. Its added value is to be adaptable also to the citizens of each country, independently from where they are, when the emergency takes place.

Such feature has to be supported by the consciousness of the authorities, both at EU and national level, and promoted by the CHORIST consortium as a strong potential of the system that we are building.

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