



TELECOMMUNICATIONS : CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN FAVOUR OF EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER

475 words

7 February 2007

[Europolitics](#)

3242

English

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The European emergency number 112 is still unknown by the majority of Europeans, and the implementation of the regulation often leaves much to be desired. Supported by MEP **G rard Onesta (Greens/EFA, France)**, the European Emergency Number Association (EENA) has for several months been lobbying to change the situation (see [Europolitics 3192](#)). On 6 February, Mr Onesta launched a campaign, including in particular a petition, in the hope of obtaining a million signatures, and a written declaration to the European Commission.

The objective was to strengthen information to citizens, ensure a coverage of 100% (versus 70% today), offer a multilingual service in the 23 official languages of the EU, and guarantee the protection of personal data.

It is an opportunity for the EU, according to Mr Onesta, to play a visible role play an obvious role and show its added value.

The 112 number was created by a Council decision in 1991. Since then, the regulation has been reinforced by three directives (1998/10/CE- concerning the security of networks and information, 2002/22/CE- concerning universal service, and 2202/58/CE- concerning privacy and electronic communications). At least 5000 victims per year could be saved if the measures were respected.

Now, say its defenders, faced with this incorrect application of the rules, the Commission is responding in a bureaucratic manner, by calling for the submission of the case to the European Court of Justice.

LOCALISATION

On average, two thirds of Europeans are unaware of the existence of 112. And among those who are aware of it, one third does not know that an injured person can be located at any time from his fixed telephone or his mobile phone.

Another obstacle is that some telecoms operators are not playing along and are attempting to bargain over the location information with the emergency services. Olivier Paul-Morandini, founder of the EENA, cites in particular France Telecom, who want to charge for use of its fixed telephone database, and who have not made the service available on their mobile phone network.

In the United Kingdom, «112» should work very well, given its multilingual call centres and effective ability to locate people, but only 21% of the population know about it.

In France, Poland, Germany, and Portugal, less than half of the population knows 112. But this ignorance applies to 57% of Belgians, 68% of Germans, 74% of Italians and 93% of Greeks.

The EENA is asking the Commission for an evaluation of the implementation of the European Emergency Number, financial means from the EU, as well as interoperability criteria to connect telephone networks. Until now, only Portugal has carried out an evaluation exercise on the implementation of the 112 service. EENA also denounces the negligent role played by governments, led by the Belgian and French authorities.

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