



European Emergency Number Association

Making sure your call to the 112 is not your last

Brussels, 18/08/2004

Press release

112 in Greece – inauguration every three years but little real progress

According to Greek media, the deputy government spokesperson Mr. Antonaros, announced that the Greek 112 call centre started operating on Tuesday 10th of August 2004, in view of implementing the single European emergency call number. According to the media, the new call centre is connected with the following centres : 100 (Police), 199 (Fire brigade), 108 (Coast Guard), 166 (Emergency Medical Care) as well as the anti-poison centre and the Emergency Social Care centre. With 30 operators the new centre is capable of handing calls in Greek, English, French, German and Spanish. It is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Order.

However, the introduction of the «112» as the single European emergency call number was foreseen in a presidential decree adopted in early 1999 in the context of the incorporation into Greek law of Community Directive 98/10 on voice telephony. In fact, the same centre has already been inaugurated in July 2001 and the relevant publications mentioned that it worked 24 hours a day and that calls were answered in Greek, English and French, while the centre was connected with four emergency call centres (100, 166, 199 and 108).

Despite the repeated «inaugurations», Greece has not yet fully implemented the relevant Community legislation i.e. the Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service, which should have been incorporated into Greek law since July 2003. Here are the main reasons:

1. The 112 centre is located in Athens and serves fixed telephones and telephone booths located anywhere in Greece. The 112 centre contacts the nearest to the caller 100/199/166 centre and transfers the call, while staying on the line to help in case the caller does not speak Greek. In fact the centre has been conceived to serve mainly tourists and not all Greek citizens as provided by the Directive.
2. Furthermore, calls from mobiles to the 112 do not end up to the 112 centre of Athens but to the nearest 100 or 166 call centre - or simply to any centre which may or may not help at all. For instance if you call the 112 from a mobile at Kamena Vourla (on central mainland Greece) you may end up speaking with an operator at Chalkida or Aidipsos (located on the island of Evia) and you will be waiting until the emergency services are properly coordinated ...
3. Greece has not yet implemented caller localisation, especially for calls originating from mobiles. It is estimated that implementation of caller localisation, which is technically feasible in Greece for petrol stations and restaurants according to several TV

advertisements, will result (at European level) in saving 5.000 more lives and to economies of scale of 5 billion € annually for the emergency services.

4. Finally, Greeks are not informed about the existence of the 112 as provided by the Directive. On the basis of a Eurobarometer survey conducted on 2001 only 5% of the population (one in every 20) would call the 112 in an emergency abroad (the European average is one in every 5, which is also considered unsatisfactory).

For all the above reasons, the European Emergency Number Association – EENA-112 (<http://eena.org>) introduced in early 2004 a complaint with the European Commission against Greece and 7 other member states of the EU for failing to comply with Community legislation in the field of the 112. The Commission is investigating the complaint and will decide in early 2005 whether it will file a case against Greece with the European Court in Luxembourg.

Olivier PAUL-MORANDINI
Founder & President

Additional information about the 112

1. See articles about the inauguration of the 112 in 2001 in the electronic editions of Greek media as follows (all articles are attached in the Greek version of the Press Release)Q
 - 27/01/1999 – TA NEA
http://ta-nea.dolnet.gr/neaweb/neafile.print_unique?e=A&f=16350&m=N22&aa=2
 - 28/07/2001 – in.gr <http://www.in.gr/innews/article.asp?lngEntityID=139299>
 - 30/07/2001 – in.gr <http://www.in.gr/innews/article.asp?lngEntityID=139070>
 - 31/07/2001 – Ελευθεροτυπία
 - 31/07/2001 – TA NEA
http://ta-nea.dolnet.gr/neaweb/neafile.print_unique?e=A&f=17103&m=N15&aa=3

2. Article 26 of Directive 2002/22/EC provides the following:

Article 26

Single European emergency call number

1. *Member States shall ensure that, in addition to any other national emergency call numbers specified by the national regulatory authorities, all end-users of publicly available telephone services, including users of public pay telephones, are able to call the emergency services free of charge, by using the single European emergency call number "112".*
 2. *Member States shall ensure that calls to the single European emergency call number "112" are appropriately answered and handled in a manner best suited to the national organisation of emergency systems and within the technological possibilities of the networks.*
 3. *Member States shall ensure that undertakings which operate public telephone networks make caller location information available to authorities handling emergencies, to the extent technically feasible, for all calls to the single European emergency call number "112".*
 4. *Member States shall ensure that citizens are adequately informed about the existence and use of the single European emergency call number "112".*
3. The results of the Eurobarometer survey are available on the Commission's site at http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/112/112-knowledge_en.htm
 4. In 2001 the European Commission signed two contracts with consumer associations in view of the evaluation of the quality of the 112 services offered to the final user. One contract concerned Portugal and the other concerned Spain, Italy and Greece. The contract for Portugal was completed in 2003 but the contract concerning the evaluation of the 112 in Spain, Italy and Greece was cancelled – the European Commission never communicated the real reasons for this cancellation. Was it because interested parties were not happy with the low quality 112 services? For Portugal which is considered as a model implementation of the 112, the evaluation showed that for 15% of calls in Portuguese and Spanish, 20% of calls in French and 29% of calls in English, HELP NEVER ARRIVED AT THE PLACE OF THE ACCIDENT. Portuguese authorities conducted this evaluation in view of the European Football Championship Euro 2004 and following the results, took special measures (support of additional languages, training of operators, etc.) in order to improve the 112 service chain.
The report on the evaluation of the 112 service chain in Portugal is available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/pdfdocs/deco_report_final.pdf.
 5. EENA organises the Second European 112 Conference and Exhibition on the 1st and 2nd of December 2004 in Brussels. Further information is available at <http://eena.org>.