



To:
European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society
Günther Oettinger
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 27/05/2015

Subject: European Emergency Number 112

Dear Commissioner Oettinger,

We are writing an open letter outlining our concerns regarding the awareness and functioning of the European emergency number 112, which follows on from numerous letters sent by several Members of the Parliament to the attention of your predecessor.

Since its creation in 1991, the European emergency number 112 represents a major European achievement, not only in terms of symbolic value, but also by its actual impact on the life, safety and protection of EU citizens. 112 should be highlighted as an example of how our citizens can benefit as a society from European legislation and policy.

Since you took office, you have placed a strong emphasis on the need for better regulation and improved dialogue, to allow for a more efficient decision making process in the EU. In this respect, there is much improvement to be done concerning the European emergency number, and we hope you will seize this opportunity to implement your policy.

The European Parliament has strongly supported the European emergency number for years, and we are convinced that better policy making for 112 and the safety of European citizen is possible. In order to advance this issue, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

112 awareness

The barometer published on 11th February 2013 reported that 3 out of 4 EU citizens are unaware of such a number that could save their lives, and 70% did not come across any information about the European emergency number 112 in their respective country in the year before¹.

Awareness of the European emergency number is a key element for the project's success. With increasing numbers of European citizens travelling to other EU countries, EU citizens must be informed about the emergency number that they can reach anywhere in the EU.

The Parliament has repeatedly asked your predecessor to make a concerted effort to ensure that the number is widely promoted and understood. Promotion campaigns should take place in all 28 EU countries, in association with member states authorities and national rescue authorities. These campaigns should be permanent, and not only displayed during the 112 day on 11th February.

Caller location

The last implementation report released by the Commission on 11th of February 2015 explicitly underlines that no improvement is noticed on the implementation of a more accurate caller location in Europe. Still, excessively long time is

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/2013-eurobarometer-survey-european-emergency-number-112>



needed to receive the caller location in France (“several minutes”), Malta (5-10 minutes) and Greece (34 min. 56 s).² Those remaining disparities between Member States are not reasonable.

Also, the data gathered by the Communications Committee (COCOM), a comitology committee set up by the European Parliament and the Council in the Framework Directive for electronic communications, explicitly demonstrates a clear breach of EU law in at least 8 countries, as an obvious lack of compliance with the Article 26.5 of Directive 2009/136/EC³. The Commission should take appropriate measures in order to ensure full implementation of Article 26.5 of Directive 2009/136/EC on Universal Service.

A better caller location is possible, since the technology exists, and is already deployed in the United Kingdom. This Advanced Mobile Location (AML) uses the native smart phone technology to pass GPS or WiFi based location data to the Emergency Services. These technologies can provide a location precision as good as 5 meters, in the respect of the protection of personal data. We believe the European Commission can encourage actions to ensure the deployment of AML all over Europe.

Access for persons with disabilities

Improvement is needed for persons with disabilities to access the European emergency number. Indeed, the 112 service provided by SMS doesn’t work when roaming. What measures will you take to grant access to 112 to citizens with disabilities everywhere in Europe?

Cross-border cooperation

Additionally, we wish to inform you about some difficulties with cross border emergency calls. When an accident occurs on the border of two member states, an insufficient precision on the caller location and therefore inappropriate call routing can dramatically delay the arrival of emergency services. A better collaboration between member states and neighbouring emergency services is therefore necessary.

Regarding the organization of 112 within the European Commission, the Parliament has repeatedly asked your predecessor to invest more resources into the topic. As an example, the Expert Group for Emergency Access (EGEA) has not met since 2013. We ask you to reactivate this working group on regular basis and keep us informed of upcoming meetings.

Many improvements are still to be made in order to guarantee a full access to a high quality emergency service to all citizens Europe wide. We assume you understand the importance of this topic, and look forward to your communication of a timetable for further achievements as regard awareness of the European emergency number 112 and full implementation of the Universal Service Directive.

You can count on our full support, since we believe that no significant improvements could be made without the leadership of the European Commission, and remain fully at your disposal in assisting you with this important work.

Yours sincerely,

Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal
Javier Nart
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Yannick Jadot
José Bové,

² <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/implementation-european-emergency-number-112-results-eight-data-gathering-round>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:337:0011:0036:En:PDF>



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