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45% of Bulgarians used 112 emergency number in 2009

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Sofia. About 4 mln calls have been received at 112 emergency number in 2009, the director of the National 112 System Stoyan Gramatikov said at a news conference, **FOCUS News Agency** reporter informs. In his words, about 11,000 signals were received for 24 hours.

According to a Flash Eurobarometer, Over nine out of 10 EU citizens (94%) totally agreed, or tended to agree, about the usefulness of having an emergency number available anywhere in the EU.

Nine out of 10 (89%) EU citizens agreed (they agreed totally or tended to agree) that access to emergency services via 112 for users with disabilities should be improved, but the individual country responses varied from 75% in the Netherlands to 97% in Greece.

The general public is still generally unfamiliar with 112 as the European emergency number. Only one in four interviewees (24%, up two percentage points) could spontaneously identify 112 as the number to call for emergency services anywhere in the EU. Many more citizens (45%, up four percentage points) said they would call 112 for emergencies within their own country.

Knowledge of 112, as the number to call in an emergency situation anywhere in the EU, still greatly depends on the respondent's own country. It is still the case that having knowledge of 112 as an emergency number to call from one's own country does not necessarily mean that respondents were also aware of this number as the European emergency number.

The proportion of respondents who said they had received information about 112 as the European emergency number in the past 12 months ranged from 7% in the UK to 60% in Bulgaria.

In most EU Member States, slightly more people agreed – in 2009 compared to 2008 – that they were adequately informed about the 112 number. However, in Romania and Bulgaria, there was an increase in the level of agreement about this of more than 14 percentage points. The proportion of Bulgarian respondents who agreed that people in their country were adequately informed about the existence of the Europe-wide emergency number increased from 21% in 2008 to 39% in 2009.

Bulgaria (60%), Romania (57%) and Lithuania (50%) were the countries with the highest proportions who claimed they had seen or heard information about 112, or about both the European emergency number 112 and other national emergency numbers.

It is worth noting that although the European emergency number 112 was recently introduced nation-wide in Bulgaria (September 2008), half (49%) of Bulgarian respondents were already familiar with 112 being the number that would enable them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU.

The survey's fieldwork was carried out between 7th and 11th of January, 2009. Over 40,500 randomly selected citizens, aged 15 years and over, were interviewed in the EU's 27 Member States.