



EU Relaunches 112 Emergency Number

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AHN Staff

Brussels, Belgium (AHN) - The European Union launched for the second time on Tuesday its 112 emergency number, the bloc's counterpart to the U.S.' 911 hotline.

The number has actually been available since 1991, but the service failed to gain continent-wide use and recognition because of technical problems which plagued the system. An EU survey in 2008 said only 24 percent of all Europeans have heard of 112.

Until the relaunch callers to 112 got a recorded message that said the number is not in service. The number is now fully operational in all 27 member-nations of the EU, with the 112 agents speaking European languages.

Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Security and Media, told Deutsche Welle, "All citizens have the right to travel throughout Europe as if they were at home... Europe is a space without boundaries, and as a home for its citizens it should create ways for these people to move throughout it in a safe way. And it's much easier to remember on universal emergency number than 27 different ones."

In 2007, British MEPs pushed for national governments and the European Commission to exert more effort in promoting the emergency number and to improve the service.

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