



EENA Operations Document

Promotion of Emergency Numbers

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Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Legislation	4
3	General overview	4
A.	Objectives	4
i.	Save lives and properties.....	4
ii.	Reduce hoax calls and improve cost efficiency of emergency services	5
B.	Target groups	5
i.	Travellers.....	5
ii.	General public, children in particular.....	5
4	Approaches to promote 112 and educate on its appropriate use	6
A.	General public and children.....	6
i.	Organise a national or regional 112 Day [Yearly]	6
ii.	Teach 112 at school [All year long + European 112 Day].....	6
iii.	Nominate a 112 Ambassador [All Year long + European 112 Day]	7
iv.	Organise a 112 Awards event [Yearly]	7
v.	Broadcast TV and Radio spots [All year long]	8
B.	Travellers	8
i.	Organise airports / train stations campaigns [Summer holidays].....	8
ii.	Get airlines companies involved [All year long].....	8
iii.	Use tourist offices and tourist attractions [Summer holidays]	9
iv.	Get hotels / hostels / camping sites involved [Summer holidays].....	9
v.	Provide information on public websites [All year long].....	9
5	Non exhaustive summary of actions conducted in Europe	9
6	Recommendations	10
7	EENA Requirements	10



1 Introduction

While there are dozens of emergency numbers in the European Union, 112 is the only emergency number that can be used to reach emergency services (ambulance, fire-fighters and police) in any EU country. It can be called from fixed phones, including payphones, or mobile phones and is always free of charge. Launched in 1991 by the Council of the European Union, it was progressively implemented in all the EU Member States and since 2008, citizens can dial 112 to reach the emergency services everywhere within the EU.

Unfortunately, citizens are as unaware of 112 in 2013 as they were in 2008: the average knowledge is stagnating and is even decreasing in some countries. Since 2008, 3 out of 4 European citizens have not been aware that they can dial 112 all over Europe¹. In addition, a large number of hoax and false calls hamper emergency services from focusing on the "genuine" calls.

This document aims at helping national and regional authorities better understand the issue and the existing solutions to improve the knowledge of 112 and reduce the percentage of hoax calls. While independent and uncoordinated promotional actions are helpful, countries' experience shows that only an integrated plan structuring the promotion of 112 to core target groups via defined channels in a dedicated time frame will help reach the objectives.

The present document contains several practical examples of information activities that have been successfully implemented by authorities responsible for 112 in the EU Member States.

2 Legislation

Communication and dissemination of the European emergency number 112 is an obligation for each Member State according to Directive 2009/136/EC (Universal Service Directive)²: "Member States shall ensure that citizens are adequately informed about the existence and use of the single European emergency call number "112", in particular through initiatives specifically targeting persons travelling between Member States." In addition, the European Parliament has repeatedly requested more efforts to publicise the 112 number, for instance in the European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2011 on universal service and the 112 emergency number (2010/2274(INI))³.

The Roaming Regulation⁴ provides that Mobile Network Operators⁴ have the obligation to inform citizens about 112 when they go from an EU country to another EU country: they should receive an SMS with information about the European emergency number 112 when they cross the borders.

On 11 February 2009, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission signed a Tripartite Convention establishing the "European 112 Day" to be celebrated on 11 February each year⁵.

3 General overview

A. Objectives

i. Save lives and properties

Only 27% of European citizens are able to identify 112 as the European emergency number. The lack of awareness on 112 also correlates with the lack of information provided by authorities to citizens. As reported in the Eurobarometer, only seven out of ten respondents had not received any information about the 112

¹ Flash Eurobarometer 368, European Commission, February 2013 - http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf///document.cfm?doc_id=1675

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:337:0011:0036:En:PDF>

³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0306&language=EN>

⁴ Article 6 of the Regulation No 544/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council (18 June 2009),

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:167:0012:0023:EN:PDF>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/docs/decl/en.pdf



emergency number in their country over the last 12 months in 2012⁶; This result is the same as that obtained the year before... Even in countries where 112 is the unique number in place and where a large majority of citizens would use 112 for an emergency in their country, the level of awareness about 112 being the European emergency number does not exceed 50% (e.g. in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, almost 100% of citizens know 112 as the national emergency number whereas only 47%, 41%, 24% and 54% know it as the European emergency number⁷). It is obvious that a lack of knowledge of the emergency number may hamper citizens from reaching Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) or delay the warning of emergency services and thus the intervention time. The consequences are well-known: delay may cause more time at hospital or death, handicap and destruction of properties. Although figures are not available at EU level, it is obvious that intervention times have human and financial consequences.

In countries where 112 co-exists with other national emergency numbers and is often largely unknown, authorities are faced with two options. They can maintain the status quo, take the risk that their citizens going abroad will not be able to reach emergency services and accept to receive in their country a large number of hoax calls. They could also engage the necessary processes to inform citizens on 112 and how to use it, and therefore contribute to saving lives and reduce the share of hoax calls.

ii. Reduce hoax calls and improve cost efficiency of emergency services

The level of awareness of 112 also has an impact on every country's emergency services system. With the introduction of 112, it has been made clear that there is a correlation between the level of awareness of 112 and the level of hoax calls.

In the "False Emergency Calls" EENA Operations Document⁸, it is highlighted that all emergency services are affected by false emergency calls:

- They delay the response to real emergency calls and therefore increase the intervention times;
- They are a source of costs for authorities that have to employ a large number of call-takers to manage these calls while less call-takers could focus on real calls only;
- They are a source of stress for call-takers who may spend most of their shift informing callers that they have reached an emergency centre rather than any other information service (e.g. for information about addresses);

One of the recommendations defined by the above mentioned document is to educate citizens on the existence of the 112 number and how to use it correctly.

B. Target groups

i. Travellers

Every year, more than 150 million Europeans travel between EU Member States for business or leisure. While a majority of Europeans feel less safe when they are in another EU country, only 27% are aware of 112 as the number to call for emergency services anywhere in the European Union. It is obvious that citizens are unable to know all emergency numbers available in the EU when travelling and thus 112 should be the number taught to ensure access to emergency services. Informing incoming and outgoing travellers that a simple 3-digit number can be dialled everywhere in the EU to reach all emergency services will help save more lives and reduce risk to properties.

ii. General public, children in particular

Large scale information campaigns should focus on children since they are a main source of false and hoax calls. They should be informed and educated on how to use 112 and why they should call 112 only in case of real emergency. Investing on children's education will improve today and tomorrow's emergency response. Children also have the ability to inform their families about emergency numbers: families are therefore indirectly targeted. In addition, media pay special attention to promotional actions involving children as well as lives saved thanks to the action of children, as demonstrated by the case of Krystian Drozdek, a 3-year old Polish child who saved his mother by dialling 112 in 2007⁹. For many years, Finland focuses 112 promotion and education on children and teenagers. Nowadays, this country gets benefits of higher level of awareness (54%) than most other EU countries (EU average = 27%).

⁶ Flash Eurobarometer 368, European Commission, February 2013 - http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf//document.cfm?doc_id=1675

⁷ Flash Eurobarometer 368, European Commission, February 2013 - http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf//document.cfm?doc_id=1675

⁸ http://www.eena.org/ressource/static/files/2012_05_04-3.1.2.fc_v1.1.pdf

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoGaPvGC3JU>

4 Approaches to promote 112 and educate on its appropriate use

A. General public and children

i. Organise a national or regional 112 Day [Yearly]

Since 2009, 11 February (11/2) has been established by the European Union as the European 112 Day. This day is dedicated to provide a platform for any organisation willing to inform and educate citizens on 112.

From the evidence of previous European 112 Day events¹⁰, it was shown that well-thought low-cost actions to promote 112 were successful. Although countries and regions are invited to organise their own promotional events, there are some key elements for success.

- Children are fascinated by fire, EMS and police vehicles and personnel. An easy and inexpensive action is to place the vehicles and staff in the streets or main squares of relevant cities, drawing the attention of the media (especially if the vehicles are equipped with "112" signs on their sides).
- Schools can organise visits to the place of promotion so that pupils can be taught about what 112 is and how it should be used.
- Emergency rescue demonstration, first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, simulation of emergency calls can also be organised in order to maximise the impact of the action¹¹.
- Visits to emergency call centres are also recommended

In addition, relevant authorities are also invited to organise a press conference related to the European 112 Day's events in order to ensure appropriate coverage and dissemination to a large part of the population.

NB: All other actions detailed below can also be used for the European 112 Day.

ii. Teach 112 at school / at the 112 call centre [All year long + European 112 Day]

Emergency services regularly visit schools and welcome pupils in emergency call centres. However they usually provide a general presentation of their activities and do not mention the importance of how to call emergency numbers or the existence of the European emergency number 112. In order to make pupils associate 112 and emergency services, children should always be addressed with a standard explanation about the use of emergency numbers, including 112. Pupils should be fully aware that the inappropriate use of 112 (or any other emergency number) can hamper the handling of a real emergency call and this can imply troubles for other citizens. Expected result of this action will be a better knowledge on how to use emergency numbers, and therefore a decrease of hoax calls.

Before meeting fire-fighters or policemen, teachers could be invited to provide children with some basic information on 112 so that they will be more receptive to the emergency services' speech. A 112 teaching package¹² can be provided to teachers, with key information and a set of tools allowing teachers to teach 112 to their pupils.



¹⁰ See a summary of the past European 112 Days: http://www.112foundation.eu/view/en/vertical/Best_practices/112_day.html

¹¹ 112 call centre visit and CPR training: http://www.112foundation.eu/ressource/static/files/european_112_day_programme.pdf

¹² http://www.112foundation.eu/view/en/vertical/Best_practices/112_at_school.html



Sweden's experience: testimony of Mr A. Klarström, SOS Alarm (organisation in charge of 112)

"An essential issue in the majority of activities was to involve teachers. It was very valuable to listen to their point of view on the children and young people's campaign. Schools were encouraged to carry out the activity on SOS Alarm's young people's website and via letters directly to teachers. Together with the National Agency for Education and the Swedish Schoolnet, SOS Alarm produced teaching material for children and young people in years 3-7 covering the questions "112 What?", "What is an emergency situation?" and "When should you call?"

Over 4 000 schools, equivalent to 15 000 classes and 350 000 pupils, received information materials, including stickers, a pocket folder and the video "112 What?" A nation-wide survey, conducted among 300 children and young people (2003), shows that almost 72% of children received information concerning SOS Alarm and/or the emergency number 112.

Amongst other activities organised in the schools up to today, there were also two poster competitions where school classes were invited to illustrate why 112 should only be called when it is needed. Like most of the activities, this was also run on SOS Alarm's young people's website which was the hub for the information campaign."

iii. Nominate a 112 Ambassador [All Year long + European 112 Day]

National and regional authorities in charge of 112 should consider nominating a "112 Ambassador"; an individual who would be very well-known (in a positive and non-controversial way) at the national level. Thanks to this major visibility, the 112 Ambassador will use his/her talents and profile to promote 112 in his/her country in the best possible way.. Regarding the target group (general public), the selection can be especially adapted to someone particularly famous among children such as sporting icon or a musician. Citizens will better remember 112 if they associate it with someone they admire.

Monica Anghel, the Romanian 112 Ambassador

In Romania, the Special Telecommunications Service - STS (organisation in charge of 112 calls handling) considered many public personalities (sportsmen, actors, journalists and singers) and a selection based on the reputation and good public image was made. STS examined their acceptance, willingness to undertake voluntary actions in order to promote the European emergency number 112 and their desire to engage in activities to inform citizens. At the end, the notorious Romanian pop singer and actress, Monica Anghel, was selected.

On her morning show at "FM Europe", a Romanian national radio station, in press interviews and in radio and TV shows, she frequently speaks about the 112 number and explains the necessity to use it in the right and appropriate way. Monica Anghel also participates in actions conducted in Romania during European 112 Day and in various activities in schools and extra-curricular clubs for pupils. The Romanian 112 song, performed by Monica, has a music video that is promoted on the main television channels.

[Listen to the Romanian 112 song](#)

iv. Organise a 112 Awards event [Yearly]

National or regional authorities should organise a 112 Awards event: it can be a ceremony at the Ministry in charge of 112 with the Minister. Awardees can also be rewarded at the occasion of a conference dealing with emergency services issues. The event would foster the promotion and improvement of 112 in the whole country by rewarding best practices and exemplary behaviours. Every individual and organisation showing evidence of extraordinary behaviour and/or results and/or achievements in categories such as Outstanding Citizen, Outstanding Education on 112, Outstanding Emergency Call Centre, Outstanding Call Taker can submit a testimony and apply for a 112 Award. Each year, categories are defined by the European Emergency Number Association (EENA) which organise the European 112 Awards Ceremony since 2007¹³. A national round of 112 awards would foster promotion of 112 via national media, especially if a national award is then rewarded at the European level.

¹³ <http://www.eena.org/view/en/112events/Awards.html>

v. Broadcast TV and Radio spots [All year long]

National and regional authorities should negotiate a partnership with publicly owned mass media (TV & radio). The promotion of 112 to citizens can be introduced as part of their public service obligations. Regular broadcast of video/audio spots on radio and TV will contribute to inform citizens about 112 at a very large scale, with limited costs. Publicly owned mass media could also relay news related to actions previously presented (European 112 Day, 112 at school, 112 Ambassador, 112 Awards). This will also help to create a feeling of safety for citizens who will also be more familiar and confident with the appropriate use of the 112 number.

B. Travellers

Actions towards travellers should especially be held during the tourist seasons such as the summer holidays, skiing season and when Erasmus students are moving, . A majority of travellers will get the message if information is displayed in strategic places such as tourist attractions, accommodation facilities and airports/train stations. Transportation companies should also participate to spread the word with the use of on-board announcements, display information on tickets, boarding passes and point-of-sale areas.

i. Organise airports / train stations campaigns [Summer holidays]

During summer holidays, many Europeans travel by train and plane. Informing citizens in airports and main train stations will ensure the information of most potential users of 112. National and regional authorities can closely cooperate with airports and train stations authorities which should enjoy providing for free an additional service to their customers.

Campaigns at Brussels’ airport

You can view [here](#) the campaign that was conducted in Brussels’ airport in 2011: hostesses informed passengers on 112 and offered them “112” postal cards to be sent during their holidays. In 2012, 112 information was displayed next to all gates located in the terminal dedicated to EU destinations.



ii. Get airlines companies involved [All year long]

Major rail, air and other transport companies are invited by European Commission Vice-Presidents Neelie Kroes and Sim Kallas in a campaign to make people travelling in the EU aware of 112. Whether for skiing holidays, family days out and about, work-related trips or visits to mass sporting events such as the Olympics Games, the EURO Football cup or the UEFA Champions league games, hundreds of thousands tourists and visitors travel across Europe every year, and need to be informed about the life-saving number. National public authorities should push national companies to join this initiative¹⁴.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/companies/index_en.htm



Vice-Presidents sent a joint letter¹⁵ to most transportation companies and related associations in Europe. They invited them to promote 112 on electronic tickets/boarding passes, in their in-flights magazines, on their websites. In 2012, many transportations companies such as Air France, British Airways or Deutsche Bahn committed to promote 112.

[View the list of transportation companies that committed to promote the 112 number](#)

iii. Use of tourist offices and tourist attractions [Summer holidays]

Strategic areas such as tourist offices and touristic sites could provide travellers with information on the existence of 112 e.g. in 2010, the Special Telecommunications Service (STS) in Romania signed a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Tourism to provide thousands of posters and leaflets (in Romanian, English, French and German) that were distributed in tourist areas. In order to display posters in public areas, they collaborated with local authorities.

iv. Get hotels / hostels / camping sites involved [Summer holidays]

National or regional authorities should consider utilising accommodation facilities such as hotels and guesthouses as well as hostels and camping sites.

Inform travellers in hostels and camping sites

Information on 112 can be easily provided to travellers in hostels and camping sites, which can display posters in common rooms, as well as in welcome offices. National and regional authorities should cooperate with national federations of hostels and camping sites. They could also request the contribution and support of the Ministry of Tourism or similar organisation.

Inform travellers in hotels

National and regional authorities should work in cooperation with hotels located in main touristic areas. The action could be introduced to these entities as an additional service provided, for free, to their customers. Each customer would benefit from tailored information about 112 in his/her room. Tourists are more receptive to information provided in their room, especially if it can contribute to make their stay safer. In the Canary Islands, it was negotiated with a hotel chain to inform tourists about 112 on TV... everyday!

v. Provide information on public websites [All year long]

Authorities in charge of 112 should cooperate with other agencies to promote 112 via their websites. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' websites is usually very consulted by travellers who want to get crucial information about the country they are going to. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could provide information on 112 in its section related to advices for citizens going abroad.

5 Non exhaustive summary of actions conducted in Europe

Action	Target	When?
National or regional 112 Day	General public	- Yearly: 11 February (11/2)
Teach 112 at school	Children	- All year long - European 112 Day
Nominate a 112 ambassador	General public	- All year long - European 112 Day
Organise a 112 Awards event	General public	- Yearly
Broadcast TV & Radio spots	General public	- All year long - European 112 Day
Organise airports / train stations campaigns	Travellers	- Summer holidays - European 112 Day
Get airlines companies involved	Travellers	- All year long
Use tourist offices and tourist	Tourists	- All year long in very touristic

¹⁵ http://www.112foundation.eu/ressource/static/files/112_day_2012_official_letter_from_the_european_commission.pdf



attractions		areas - During holidays in other touristic areas
Inform travellers in camping sites and hostels	Tourists	- Summer holidays
Inform travellers in hotels	Travellers	- All year long - Summer holidays
Provide information on public websites	General public	- All year long

6 Recommendations

Stakeholders	Actions
European Authorities	Mandate Member States to conduct promotional activities regularly. Support Member States in promoting 112 via EU-wide initiatives.
National Government	Secure budget for promotion of the 112 number and assign responsibility for its promotion to a specific competent authority
National / Regional Authorities	Promotion of the European emergency number 112 at national/regional level following the guidelines provided above.
Emergency services	Promotion of the European emergency number 112 at national/regional level following the guidelines provided above.
National telecommunication regulator network operators	Ensure that all Mobile Network Operators comply with their obligation to send a message with information on 112 to all citizens going across EU internal borders (Obligation for MNOs under the article 6.1 of the REGULATION (EC) No 544/2009 on Roaming)

7 EENA Requirements

Requirements	
Regularly (at least during the European 112 Day and the summer holidays) promote the European Emergency Number 112 toward citizens	Compulsory
Regularly (at least during the European 112 Day and the summer holidays) educate citizens on how to use emergency numbers	Compulsory