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EUROPESE VERENIGING VAN STAFARTSEN  
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DEN EUROPEISKE OVERLEGEFORENING  
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EVROPSKO ZDRŽENJE BOLNIŠNIČNIH ZDRAVINIKOV  
EUROPSKA ASOCIACIA NEMOCNICNÝCH LEKAROV  
EUROPSKA UDRUGA BOLNIČKIHI LIJEČNIKA  
ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΑ ΑΣΟΪΑΪΑΪΑ ΝΑ ΣΤΑΡΣΗΤΕ ΒΟΛΝΗΧΝΗ ΛΕΚΑΡΗ**

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## European 112 Day - 11 February 2009

On 11 February 2009, the European Commission signed a joint declaration together with the European Parliament and Council establishing 11 February as European 112 Day. A full program of activities was scheduled for the celebration of the first European 112 Day in Brussels, including a rescue exercise by the firemen of Murcia (Spain) in collaboration with the Parliament's Security Unit and an event organised by EENA where the 112 anthem was released. In addition, events in a number of Member States promoted the simple three-digit number that can save lives.

The Commission has also revamped its 112 website with new interactive games aimed at children and with updated information about the functioning of 112 across the EU.

- **Joint tripartite declaration**

- [bg](#) [cs](#) [da](#) [de](#) [el](#) [en](#) [es](#) [et](#) [fi](#) [fr](#) [hu](#) [it](#) [lt](#) [lv](#) [mt](#) [nl](#) [pl](#) [pt](#) [ro](#) [sk](#) [sl](#) [sv](#)

- **The Commission's press Release :**

**IP/09/240**

Brussels, 11th February 2009

## 112: Commission says EU single emergency number must get multilingual

***Since December 2008, EU citizens can contact emergency services from anywhere in the European Union by dialing 112, the EU-wide emergency number, free of charge from both fixed and mobile phones. But, only one in four Europeans knows that this life-saving number exists in other Member States and almost three in ten 112 callers in other countries have encountered language problems. Today the Commission, along with the European Parliament and the Council, declared February 11 "European 112 Day" to spread the word about 112 and push national authorities to make the EU's single emergency number more multilingual.***

*"The European emergency number should no longer be Europe's best kept secret. We have a single emergency number, 112, that works for every emergency and every Member State and every citizen that needs it. But it is unacceptable that less than a quarter of citizens are aware of 112, or that language barriers prevent travellers calling 112 from communicating with the emergency operator," said EU Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding. "The EU must work to guarantee the safety of our 500 million citizens with the same intensity as we have worked to guarantee their ability to travel freely across the borders of 27 countries. Europe's first 112 day should act as a wake up call to national authorities who*

*need to improve the number of languages available in their 112 emergency centres and boost awareness about this life-saving number."*

An EU-wide survey conducted for the European Commission shows that 94% of EU citizens think it is useful to have a single emergency number available in the EU. The Eurobarometer survey published today also highlighted areas where there is still room for improvement:

**Language problems:** 28% of callers have language problems when they call 112 while abroad, despite the fact that information provided by 21 Member States indicates that their 112 emergency centres should be able to handle 112 calls in English (12 Member States in German and 11 Member States in French).

**Awareness of 112:** Overall, only 24% of surveyed Europeans could spontaneously identify 112 as the number on which they can call emergency services anywhere in the EU. This is a 2% improvement since February 2008 but knowledge of the EU's emergency number varies greatly between countries, from 3% in Italy to 58% in the Czech Republic. Many Member States are informing their citizens and visitors about 112, for example:

- In **Finland** 112 day is celebrated annually on 11 February.
- Visitors to **Bulgaria** receive a welcome text message informing them about 112.
- 112 is publicised on motorways and toll gates in **Austria, Greece and Spain** and at train stations and airports in **Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Greece and the Netherlands**, among others.
- Media campaigns are organised in **Sweden** before the travel season informing citizens about 112.

At least a 10% increase in awareness of 112 was seen in **Bulgaria, Sweden, Romania, Lithuania, and Portugal** in the past year.

The Eurobarometer survey also showed that:

- A quarter of EU citizens have called an emergency number in the last five years.
- The majority of calls still made from fixed lines: while 53% of calls were made from a fixed line, there was an increase in emergency calls made from mobile phones (45% compared to 42% in 2008).

To ensure that 112 is known all over Europe, the European Commission, together with the European Parliament and Council, have declared 11 February 'European 112 Day'. The Commission and Member States will step up their efforts to publicise 112, especially before the summer holiday period.

## Background

The European emergency number 112 was introduced in 1991 to provide, in addition to national emergency numbers, a single emergency call number in all EU Member States to make emergency services more accessible, especially for travellers. Since 1998, EU rules have required Member States to ensure that all fixed and mobile phone users can call 112 free of charge. Since 2003, telecoms operators must provide caller location information to emergency services so that they can find accident victims quickly. EU Member States must also raise citizens' awareness of 112.

To ensure 112 is put in place, the Commission has launched 17 [infringement proceedings](#) against 15 countries due to a lack of availability of 112, caller location or appropriate call handling. Most of these have been closed following corrective measures.

While 112 complements existing national emergency numbers, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and most recently Romania have decided to make 112 their main national emergency number. In other countries, 112 is the only emergency number for certain emergency services (such as Estonia and Luxembourg for ambulances or fire brigades).

**The Commission's 112 website:**

[www.ec.europa.eu/112](http://www.ec.europa.eu/112)

**How 112 works in my country:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/112/ms/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/ms/index_en.htm)

**Kids corner:**

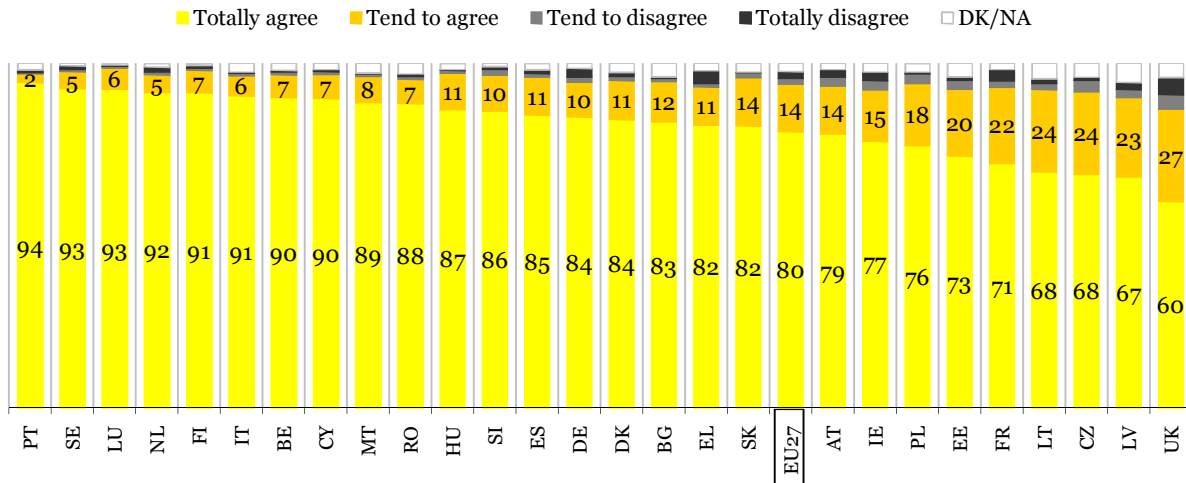
[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/112/kids/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/kids/index_en.htm)

[MEMO/09/60](#)

**Annex:**

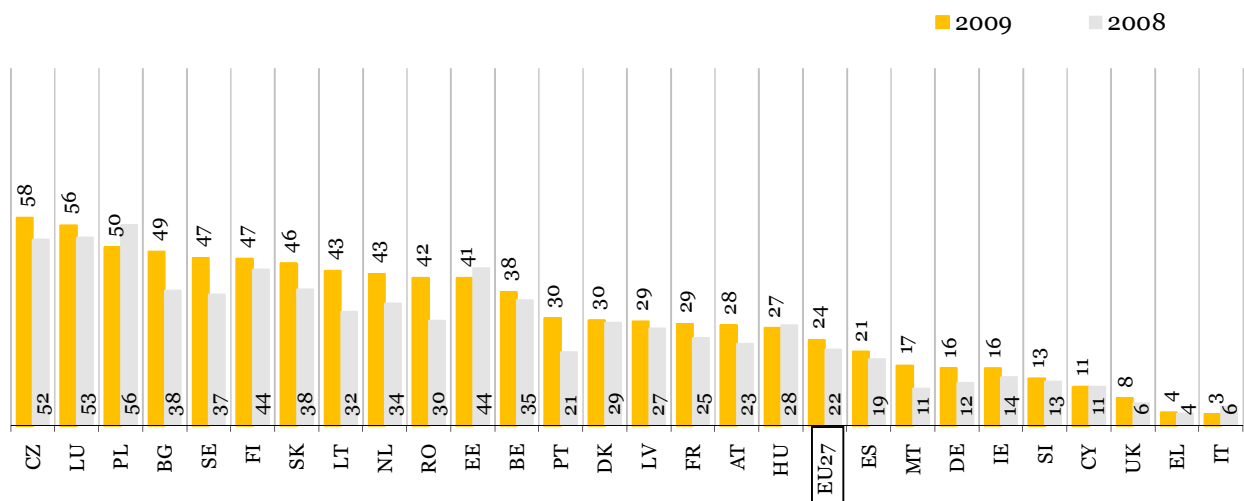
**Opinions about the European emergency number 112:**

It is very useful to have a Europe-wide emergency number available everywhere in the EU



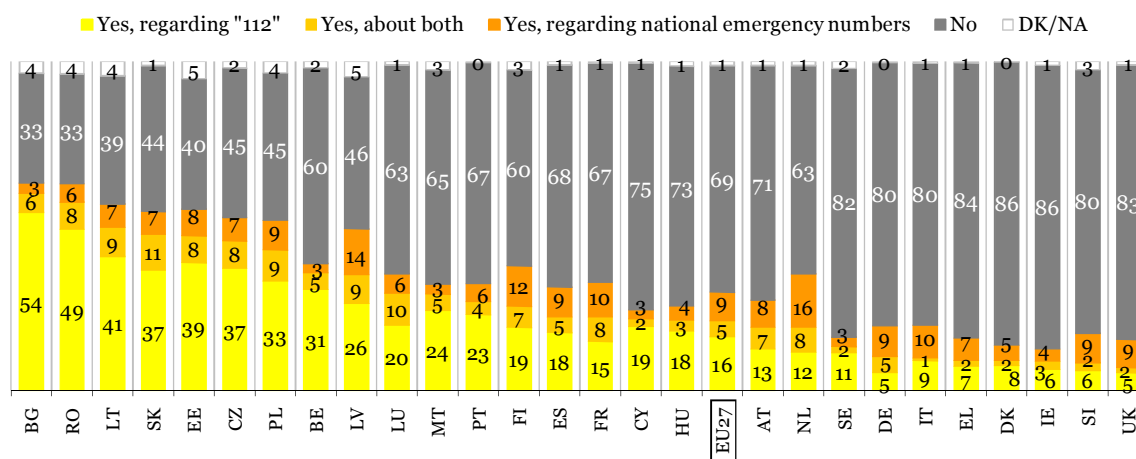
Q4 a. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements...  
%, Base: all respondents, by country

**Knowledge of 112 as the EU-wide emergency number – 2008-2009**



Q2. Can you tell me what telephone number enables you to call emergency services anywhere in the EU?  
%, Base: all respondents, by country

### Information about the European number 112 and national emergency numbers



Q3. During the last 12 months, have you seen or heard any information regarding the European emergency number "112"? And have you seen or heard any information about the national emergency number(s)?  
%, Base: all respondents, by country

### Calls in foreign languages

Among the 23 Member States, which provided information on the language issue, 19 Member States (in addition to the United Kingdom and Ireland) reported on the ability of their emergency call centres to handle calls in English (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden). Of these Member States, Germany, Spain, France and Slovakia indicated that English may not be available in all cases in all emergency call centres and its availability depends on the linguistic resources of the emergency call centres while Bulgaria and Latvia said that calls in English can be forwarded for processing to another (central) call centre where competent staff is available.

**112 calls in French are answered in nine Member States** (in addition to France and Luxembourg) - Bulgaria (by call transfer to another call centre if necessary), the Czech Republic (by transfer to another call centre if necessary), Ireland, Greece, Spain (may not be available in all call centres) the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia (subject to availability of appropriate staff) and Finland (by involving interpretation service).

**112 calls in German are also answered in nine Member States** (in addition to Germany, Austria and Luxembourg) - Bulgaria (by call transfer to another emergency call centre if necessary), the Czech Republic, Denmark (by call transfer to another call centre if necessary), Spain (may not be available in all call centres), Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania (by call transfer to another emergency call centre if necessary), Slovakia (subject to availability of appropriate staff) and Finland (by involving an interpretation service).

**112 calls in Italian are answered in three Member States** (in addition to Italy) – Spain (may not be available in all emergency call centres), Ireland and Romania (by call transfer to another emergency call centre if necessary).

**A number of Member States have indicated the ability of their emergency call centres to answer calls in the languages of their neighbouring EU countries.** Thus, calls in Polish can be handled by call centres in the Czech Republic (by call transfer to another call centre if necessary), Lithuania and Slovakia (in call centres of certain areas); calls in Hungarian – in Romania (by call transfer to another call centre if necessary), Slovenia (in call centres of certain areas) and Slovakia (in call centres of certain areas); calls in Czech - in Slovakia, calls in Italian – in Slovenia (in call centres of certain areas), calls in Portuguese – in Spain (may not be available in all call centres) and calls in Finnish - in Estonia. Languages of the neighbouring EU countries are also catered for by German call centres in border areas.

Furthermore, Spanish emergency call centres can handle calls also in Swedish (may not be available in all call centres), Irish call centres can handle 112 calls also in Polish and Romanian call centres can handle calls also in Spanish (by call transfer to another call centre if necessary).

Finally, the United Kingdom indicated that its emergency call centres can use an interpretation services covering 170 languages, Swedish call centres can also use an interpretation service covering all major EU languages and French call centres can use interpretation services in English and other languages.