

# The European Emergency Number 112

## Summary

Fieldwork: January 2009

Publication: February 2009

This survey was requested by Directorate-General for Information Society and Media and coordinated by Directorate-General Communication

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Flash Eurobarometer Series  
#262

## The European Emergency Number 112

Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization  
Hungary upon the request of Directorate-  
General for Information Society and Media



Coordinated by Directorate-General  
Communication

This document does not reflect the views of the  
European Commission.  
The interpretations and opinions contained in it  
are solely those of the authors.

**THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION**

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Main findings</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Usefulness of the European emergency number 112</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Information about the European emergency number 112</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 Adequacy of information about the European emergency number 112.....	8
2.2 Receiving information about the European emergency number 112 .....	8
<b>3. Knowledge of the European emergency number 112</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 Calling the emergency services from another EU Member State .....	10
3.2 Calling the emergency services from another EU Member State .....	10
<b>4. Experience of calling the European emergency number 112</b> .....	<b>12</b>
4.1 Emergency calls in the past five years .....	12
4.2 Characteristics of the most recent emergency call .....	12
4.2.1 Type of telephone used.....	12
4.2.2 Difficulties encountered when trying to make an emergency call.....	13
4.2.3 Language-related problems when making an emergency call in another EU country .....	14
4.2.4 Information about the location of the emergency .....	14
4.2.5 Follow-up to the emergency call .....	15

## Introduction

The single European emergency number 112 was introduced to enable citizens to call the emergency services (such as police, ambulance and fire brigade) by using the same number anywhere in the European Union (EU). This is especially important as European citizens increasingly travel to other EU countries for work, study or leisure. According to EU legislation<sup>1</sup>, Member States must ensure that users of any type of telephone, fixed or mobile are able to call the emergency services free of charge by using the European emergency number 112. This number is now available in all Member States.

3SRMRIWKH)ODK(KREDURPHWHUMMRQKH(KRSHDQPHUJHQI KEHU1 ° 262)

This Flash Eurobarometer survey R Qjg"Gwtqrgcp"Gogtigpef"Pwodgt"334ö"\*P°262), requested by the Directorate-General for Information Society and Media is part of a trend survey. The results of the previous wave were published in 2008 ±Flash (X U R E D U R P H W H The European Emergency Pwodgt"334ö"\*P°228). The current report presents comparative data between the two waves.

The objectives of the survey were unchanged, i.e. to:

- PHDVXUH (8 FLWLJHQV¶ NQRZOHGJH RI WKH (XURSHDQ HPHU
- study their perceptions on the importance, promotion and usage of that number, and
- compare the experience of calling 112 with that of calling other national emergency numbers.

The report deals with the following aspects relating to the emergency number 112:

- Opinions about the usefulness of the European emergency number 112 and about facilitating access to it for people with disabilities
- Opinion about the adequacy of information on the European emergency number 112, and details about the actual information received about 112 and about other national emergency numbers
- . QRZOHGJH RI DV DQ HPHUJHQF\ QXPEHU DYDLODEOH IU
- travelling to other EU countries
- Usage of the European emergency number 112 and a comparison with usage of other emergency numbers.

### Methodological note on the survey

7KH VXUYH\¶V ILHOGZRUN ZD 11# of January 2009 RW 4ESBOWZHHYQ VHOHFWHG FLWLJHQV DJHG \H DU V DQG RYHU ZHUH LQWHUY were predominantly carried out via fixed-line telephones, with approximately 1,500 in each of the Member States.

To correct sampling disparities, a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented, based on important socio-demographic variables. More details on survey methodology are included in the Annex of this report.

<sup>1</sup> Council Decision of July 29, 1991 (91/396/EEC) and Universal Service Directive of March 7, 2002 (Directive 2002/22/EC).



## Experiences of calling emergency numbers

■ As in 2008, a quarter of EU citizens were seen to have called an emergency number in the last five years. There were fewer of these calls addressed to 112 than to other national emergency numbers.

■ The last time they needed assistance, more than a half of the respondents called a national emergency number (57%), and four in 10 (41%) called 112 for emergencies in their own country where 112 operates along with other emergency numbers, and 31% were calls in countries where 112 is the only/main emergency number.

- The majority of the most recent emergency calls were made from a fixed-line telephone (53%). Compared to 2008, more of these emergency calls were made via a mobile telephone (45% vs. 42% in 2008).

■ A minority of the respondents who called emergency services experienced difficulties in establishing or maintaining the communication (7%, down one percentage point). As in 2008, Polish respondents were the ones that had most frequently encountered such difficulties (17%).

There was a low proportion of problems attributable to the telecommunications operators (1%), 3% of respondents got a busy tone or got no reply from the emergency service, and another 3% reported other problems.

■ Such communication problems were reported more frequently by mobile phone users (9%) than by fixed-line phone users (5%). The respondents who made an emergency call in another EU country were more likely than those who made it in their own country to have encountered technical difficulties.

■ Approximately three out of 10 (29%) respondents who called emergency services when visiting another EU country said they had language-related problems when communicating with the emergency services. This is up 11 percentage points from 2008.

■ Respondents who made an emergency call with a mobile phone were less likely to provide the emergency services with the exact address of the emergency (83% compared to 94% for fixed-line telephone users).

- Respondents who made an emergency call while visiting another EU country were less likely to be able to provide the emergency services with an exact address (70% for calls to 112 and 80% for calls to other emergency numbers vs. 87% -90% of those who called the emergency services in their own country).

■ Regarding the follow-up given to the call, in a large majority of cases an emergency unit arrived on the spot (83%, up two percentage points).





2004 had seen or heard something about 112 or about both the European emergency number 112 and other national emergency numbers, while only 15% of the EU15 respondents stated the same thing.

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. Respondents in the UK, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark, Greece, Italy and Germany (not more than one in 10) were the least likely to say they had received information about 112.

At the EU level, we did not observe any differences between 2008 and 2009 in the proportion of respondents who said they had received information about the 112 number in the past 12 months. In six Member States, the proportion of respondents who claimed to have received information about the European emergency number 112 in the past year increased by more than five percentage points: Slovakia, Finland, Portugal, Romania, Malta and Belgium. In Belgium, more than a third (36%) of the respondents answered they had received information about 112, compared to just one-fifth in 2008.

As in the previous wave of this trend survey, eight out of 10 EU citizens (81%), who reported having received information about the European emergency number 112, said they had been informed through the media (watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers or searching the Internet).

Less than one in 10 respondents (9%) mentioned that they had received information through a telecommunications operator<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> This would be by using a payphone, consulting a telephone directory or by reading information about it on a telephone bill.

### 3. Knowledge of the European emergency number 112

As in the previous survey, we examined how aware EU citizens were of the existence of 112, respondents were asked, firstly, to identify the telephone number they would call in the event of an emergency in their own country (e.g., if someone needed urgent medical assistance or in case they needed to contact the police or fire brigade) and, secondly, to specify the telephone number that enabled them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU.

#### 3.1 Calling the emergency services from one's own country

Compared to the 2008 wave of this survey, we saw an increase of four percentage points in the proportion of those who mentioned that they would call 112 in the case of an emergency in their own country (45%). Even so, the majority of respondents thought of national numbers rather than 112 (54%; down four percentage points compared to 2008).

When looking at the country results, we again noticed great variations in the numbers of respondents who would call 112 or, alternatively, other national numbers in emergency situations in their own country. The proportion of respondents who mentioned 112 for emergencies within their own country ranged from 1% in Greece (as in 2008) to 98% in Sweden.

This variation is partly influenced by the national situation in terms of the available emergency numbers. For example, on average, nine out of 10 citizens (90%) in countries where 112 was the sole/main emergency number said they would call 112 in the event of an emergency in their own country, while only 38% of the respondents in countries where 112 operates along with other emergency numbers said the same.

#### 3.2 Calling the emergency services from another EU Member State

Although the 112 number is available in all Member States, the 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.

The majority of respondents (69%) said they did not know which number would enable them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU.

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. Only 39% of respondents who reported that









86%-88% depending on the occupation), said that they provided the telephone operator with the exact address of the emergency. The above results could be partially explained by the fact that older and non-working respondents were probably more likely to experience an emergency at home.

Similarly, respondents who last called the emergency services with a fixed phone were more likely to say that they provided the emergency service with the exact address of the emergency (83% compared to 94% for fixed-line telephone users). However, those using a mobile phone more often said that they provided the exact address (11% compared to 1% of fixed telephone users).

Providing precise information about the location of the emergency

Type of Telephone	% Yes, I gave the exact address	% Yes, but I could not give the exact address	% No, the operator did not ask but I could have provided this information	% No, I could not state my location	% DK/NA
Fixed telephone	94	1	4	1	1
Mobile phone	83	11	3	2	1

Q9. Did you provide information about your location to the emergency operator?  
 %, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

Finally, respondents who made an emergency call while visiting another EU country were less likely to have provided the emergency service with an exact address. During such trips abroad, eight out of 10 respondents who called 112 in the event of the most recent emergency situation and seven out of 10 who called other emergency numbers were able to state exactly where they were, compared to 87% - 90% of the respondents who called the emergency services in their own country.

4.2.5 Follow-up to the emergency call

Regarding the follow-up given to the emergency call, in a large majority of cases an emergency intervention unit was sent and arrived on the spot (83%). However, as in 2008, an emergency unit was reportedly sent but did not arrive in 2% of the cases. A small proportion of callers received information about what to do (6%), were informed that their call was not an emergency and that no follow-up was necessary (2%) or were given other follow-up information (5%).

In all EU countries, at least two-thirds of the follow-ups to the emergency calls consisted of emergency units that arrived on the spot. Respondents in Lithuania (18%), followed by those in Estonia, Luxembourg and Latvia (all 16%), as well as Sweden (13%) were the ones most likely to say they received information on the phone about the necessary actions to be taken.

