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Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

on the introduction of a standard Europe-wide
emergency call number

(presented by the Commission)

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**PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A
STANDARD EUROPE-WIDE EMERGENCY CALL NUMBER**

A. SUMMARY

The telephone is the most important means for the notification of emergencies of all kinds and for calling emergency services responsible for public safety. At present, for this purpose, different telephone numbers are utilised in the Member States which causes serious problems in contacting the responsible services for citizens, in particular tourists and business travelers, using emergency services whilst in other Member States.

The past decade has seen a substantial increase in private and business travel within the Community. The fact that more and more Community citizens travel to, and receive services in, other Member States has led to an increased number of them being faced with emergency situations and has led to repeated requests for the establishment of a Community-wide emergency telephone call number. The Council has re-emphasised in its Resolution of 30.02.1989¹, on the new developments in Community co-operation on civil protection, the desirability of a standard Community-wide single call number which will in particular enable the public in an emergency to call the relevant national emergency services. The European Parliament has stressed the importance which it accords to the subject on a number of occasions, in particular in its Resolutions of 12.12.1988 on telecommunications^{2 3}.

In response to the Commission's Communication on the subject of 6.6.1988⁴, the Council of 30.6.1988 invited the Commission to initiate work on the planning for a standard Europe-wide emergency call number, to be introduced in parallel to the existing national emergency call numbers where appropriate. On request by the Commission the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) established a team of experts to undertake the necessary investigations. This work has now been completed and the results and proposals are herewith submitted.

¹ OJC 89/C/44/03

² OJC 89/C/12/66

³ OJC 89/C/12/67

⁴ Communication from the Commission concerning co-ordination and preparatory work in the telecommunications field towards the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number by 1992 (COM(88)312)

The report by the experts confirms that a standard Europe-wide emergency call number can be established if a firm political commitment is taken. The report recommends as the common emergency call number the number 112. The report further notes that the majority of Member States can implement the number 112 by 1992. Full implementation is achievable in all Member States by 1995 at the latest.

While flexibility is required to allow for progressive implementation, and the specific nature of the national emergency systems must be respected, the major condition for successful implementation of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number will be the firm political commitment by the Member States. The provision of adequate emergency call numbers is provided for in all Member States by law, regulation, or administrative action. Continued divergent developments in this area must be avoided in the interest of the European citizen. The Commission therefore proposes the enclosed Decision.

B. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

I) Introduction

With its Communication concerning co-ordination and preparatory work in the telecommunications field towards the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number by 1992⁵ of 6.6.1988, the Commission addressed a long standing issue.

The substantial increase in mobility within the Community resulting from the advance in economic integration, has led to repeated requests for the establishment of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number to help European citizens in particular tourists and business travelers to use emergency services whilst in another Member State.

In its Resolution of 30.6.1988 on the development of the Common Market for telecommunications services and equipment up to 1992⁶, the Council called for the "creation of Europe-wide services according to market requirements and appropriate social needs". At the same meeting, in response to the Communication (88)312, the Council agreed that the "objective of a Europe-wide emergency call number is important for Europe's citizens. The Member States and the Commission agree that work should start rapidly on :

- planning for the introduction of such a number giving automatic access to the national emergency system as soon as a sufficient Europe-wide coverage is ensured. The Europe-wide emergency call number should be accessible via the switched telephone network and the pan-European digital mobile telephone system, as soon as is technically possible, taking into account national situations ;
- planning, under long term aspects, a group of call numbers to provide additional Europe-wide numbers for special emergency calls (fire, medical emergencies) and announcements in the case of disaster."

The Commission has also called attention to this problem in the general context of the efforts to increase Community co-operation with regard to civil protection⁷. The Council recognized the importance of the problem in its Resolution of 25.6.1987 on the introduction of Community cooperation on civil protection. In its Resolution of 13.2.1989 on the new developments in Community cooperation on civil protection⁸, the Council stressed "the desirability of a standard Community-wide single additional emergency telephone number which will in particular enable the public in an emergency to call the relevant national emergency services, and which should be introduced gradually in the Member States"

5 COM(88)312, 6.6.1988

6 OJ 88/C 257/01, 4.10.1988

7 COM(87)161, 8.4.1987

8 89/C/44/03

The European Parliament emphasised the importance which it accords to the subject on a number of occasions, in particular in its Resolutions on telecommunications of 12.12.1988⁹ ¹⁰.

At its meeting of 30.6.1988, the Council invited the Commission to initiate the rapid start of the work on a report making proposals for implementation, including information on area coverage and a time schedule for introduction.

The results of the work and appropriate proposals are herewith submitted.

⁹ OJC 89/C/12/66

¹⁰ OJC 89/C/12/67

II Main results of experts' investigation

Following the invitation by the Council, the Commission, advised by the Senior Official Group on Telecommunications (SOG-T) asked the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) to establish a team of experts, with the following mandate :

- to take stock of present plans of Telecommunications Administrations in Europe with regard to the implementation of a common Europe-wide emergency call number ;
- to identify problems of any kind which might delay the implementation of a common number ;
- to make suggestions to overcome possible problems within a reasonable time frame.

The main results of the report by the experts can be summarised as follows :

- the recommendation T/SF1 of 1976 of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations, recommending the number 112 as the common European emergency number for the whole CEPT area has unfortunately largely *not* been followed.

A survey of the numbers currently used in Europe for emergency services shows wide divergencies. Tables 1 and 2 (drawn from the report) show the numbers currently in use for access to emergency services and the present position on the availability of number 112 ;

- according to the report, number 112 remains the most acceptable number for most Telecommunications Administrations. It will be possible for all Member States to devise a plan to make the number 112 available. Most Member States could achieve implementation of the number 112 by the end of 1992.

For a very limited number of Member States this would pose a considerable burden since they would need to make unplanned changes or to advance plans already made. However, if firm political commitment exists, the implementation of number 112 throughout Europe will be possible even in the few Member States where major difficulties exist ;

- the report calls attention to the fact that in addition to the technical operation and commercial implications of implementing the chosen number within the public telecommunications networks, Member States must make the necessary organisational arrangements, taking account of the specific features of the national emergency systems.

It must in particular be ensured that calls to this numbers are adequately answered and handled. The report in particular recommends that a suitable common Europe-wide number for emergency services should be used in parallel with any existing national arrangements where appropriate ;

- the report further identifies a number of issues for further study which could optimise the use of the standard Europe-wide emergency call number. This concerns in particular the language capability of those answering calls and the use of the number in -house private systems.

The experts make a number of technical and organisational proposals which could substantially minimise the language problem, in particular automatic identification of the calling line and the location of the caller and possibility of automatic transfer of calls to an international operator in case of language difficulties.

A number of other issues are listed for further work. This concerns in particular the provision of additional Europe-wide numbers for special emergency calls (fire, medical emergencies) and the introduction beside number 112 as the common Europe-wide emergency number, of other common codes, as recommended by CEPT in T/SF1 (codes 0, 00, 115, 118). It is suggested that the need for these additional codes should be reviewed in future work.

Concerning the implementation of the standard Europe-wide emergency call number also in private exchanges, it is suggested to recommend to PABX and Centrex subscribers to give access, on a voluntary basis, directly to the public "112" or to the private systems operator.

The report has also revealed that procedures for using emergency call numbers from public pay-phones are different from country to country. Some are coinfree or card free, some demand a coin, which might be returned after dialling or insertion of a card which is not debited. In one country callers are charged for calls to emergency service numbers.

III Proposed solution

The report has confirmed the feasibility of introducing number "112" as a standard Europe-wide emergency services call number within a given time frame.

The major condition for implementation will be a firm political commitment by the Member States. Therefore, the Commission considers that a Decision is the only suitable instrument.

However, the report also shows that a number of considerations must be taken into account for implementation. The proposed Decision has been drafted with these considerations in mind :

1. Continuity of use of emergency numbers

In many Member States, the national emergency service number(s) has a long tradition deeply rooted in the perception of the general public. A re-organisation in the short term of national call numbers currently in use - even if required only in a few Member States - could lead to substantial acceptance problems and will therefore have to be avoided.

A standard Europe-wide emergency call number should therefore be introduced in addition to the national emergency call number where appropriate, without disturbing the use of the national code by those who so wish. This is taken into consideration in Art. 1 of the proposed Decision.

2. Flexibility in introduction

While the report has proven that a standard Europe-wide emergency call number can be introduced by the majority of Member States by the end of 1992 without major problems and the chosen number "112" has been selected unanimously by the Telecommunications Administrations of all 12 Member States in the framework of the CEPT T/SF1 recommendation already 13 years ago, a very limited number of Member States may experience a considerable burden because of unplanned technical changes or advancement of changes in numbering plans, if the possibility for a flexibility in the time schedule is not provided.

A balanced approach must therefore provide for flexibility in the time schedule of introduction for these exceptional cases, while setting a firm target for implementation. This is the objective of Art. 2 and 3.

3. Respecting the specificities of the national emergency systems

The emergency systems in the Member States have developed according to their own national traditions. In certain cases, even within Member States the different emergency organisations are reached via different call numbers. However, in many cases, permanently serviced police stations responsible for public safety accept under their emergency call number all emergency calls and transmit them, where required, to the specific emergency organisations concerned.

The introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number must respect the individual nature of the emergency organisations in the Member States while ensuring that calls to the common number will be adequately answered and handled. This is the objective of Art. 4.

In the overall framework established by the Council Resolutions of 25.6.1987 and of 13.2.1989¹¹ the Member States have pledged to intensify in general coordination on civil protection.

4. A progressive approach

A further important consideration has been the progressive approach in developing an overall solution. While in particular the problem of language is an important consideration, it is not necessary to entirely solve this problem as a pre-condition for progress, nor does lack of full multilingual support diminish the value of the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number as a first step.

The report by the experts has made clear that the decision on the introduction of the common number must be made now, in order to achieve full implementation by the end of 1992, respectively 1995 at the latest. The report has further made a number of proposals for further study which aim at progressively minimising the language problem, in particular by automatic calling line identification and location of the caller and possibility of automatic transfer to an international operator in case of real language difficulties.

The solution for the language problem must be progressive. This is the objective of Art 5.

A progressive approach is also the strategy proposed by the Commission concerning the points listed for further work by the expert group. The Commission considers that at this stage, efforts should focus on the introduction of the standard Europe-wide emergency call number

¹¹ Resolution of 13.2.1989 on the new developments in Community cooperation on civil protection, 89/C/44/03

IV Conclusions

The provision of emergency call numbers is provided for in all Member States by law, regulation, or administrative action. In the past, the different emergency call telephone numbers in the Member States, have caused serious problems in using emergency services whilst in other Member States.

The studies requested by Council and carried out by an expert group of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations on a broad European basis have proven the feasibility of introducing number "112" as a standard European-wide emergency call number, in parallel with existing national emergency services call numbers where appropriate.

The attached draft Decision on the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number will substantially benefit the European user.

The Council is therefore requested to adopt the attached proposal for a Decision.

Table 1 :**Current national emergency numbers and present use of numbers "1", "11", and "112"**

COUNTRY	NATIONAL EMERGENCY CODES	PRESENT USE OF CODES 1,11, or 112
Belgium	100/101	11XXXX Freephone customers, IX Services
Denmark	112	112 Emergency
France	17/18	11 Electronic Directory
Germany	110/112	112 Fire or spare
Greece	100/166/199	112 Spare
Ireland	999	112 Spare
Italy	113/115	112 Military Police
Luxembourg	012	112 Spare
Netherlands	0611	1 Customers
Portugal	115	112 Spare
Spain	006	1 Customers
United Kingdom	999	112 Spare

Table 2 :**Availability of code "112" for use as the standard Europe-wide emergency call number**

COUNTRY	AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION NOW ?	CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE ?	CANNOT BE MADE AVAILABLE ?
Belgium	No	Yes	-
Denmark	Yes	-	-
France	No	Yes	-
Germany	Yes	-	-
Greece	No	Yes	-
Ireland	No	Yes	-
Italy	Yes	-	-
Luxembourg	No	Yes	-
Netherlands	No	Yes	-
Portugal	No	Yes	-
Spain	No	Yes	-
United Kingdom	Yes	-	-

Council Decision

on the introduction of a

standard Europe-wide emergency call number

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100a thereof ,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission ¹ ,

In co-operation with the European Parliament ² ,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee ³ ,

1. Whereas the telephone is the most important means for the notification of emergencies of all kinds and for calling emergency services responsible for public safety ;
2. Whereas at present for this purpose different telephone numbers are utilised in the Member States ;
3. Whereas the effect of such differences is to create problems in contacting the responsible services for citizens, in particular tourists and business travellers, facing emergency situations in other Member States ;
4. Whereas the substantial increase in both private and business travel within the Community has created a demand for the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number ;
5. Whereas the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number would therefore promote the establishment and functioning of the internal market ;
6. Whereas the introduction of new technologies into the public telephone networks and the co-ordinated introduction of advanced telecommunications infrastructures present a unique opportunity for the implementation of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number, in parallel to the existing national emergency call numbers as appropriate ;

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7. Whereas the Commission has called the attention of the Council to this problem⁴ ;
8. Whereas the Council at its meeting of 30 June 1988 has recognised that the objective of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number is important for Europe's citizens ;
9. Whereas the Council in its Resolution of 13 February 1989 on the new developments in Community cooperation on civil protection⁵ has stressed the desirability of a standard Community-wide single additional emergency telephone number which will in particular enable the public in an emergency to call the relevant national emergency services ;
10. Whereas the European Parliament has emphasised repeatedly the importance of the introduction of such a number, in particular in its Resolutions of 14 December 1988 on telecommunications^{6 7} ;
11. Whereas the European Conference of Post and Telecommunications (CEPT) has recommended in its Recommendation T/SF1 of 1976 the use of the number 112 as the standard Europe-wide emergency services call number ;
12. Whereas this recommendation has only been followed by very few Member States ;
13. Whereas the number 112 remains the most suitable number for most Telecommunications Administrations ;
14. Whereas for all Member States it will be possible to devise a plan to make the number 112 available ;
15. Whereas most Member States could introduce the number 112 by 1992 ; whereas, however, for a limited number of Member States this would pose a burden since they would need to make unplanned changes or to advance plans already made ;

⁴ Communication from the Commission concerning co-ordination and preparatory work in the telecommunications field towards the introduction of a standard Europe-wide emergency call number by 1992 (COM(88)312).

⁵ OJ No C 44, 23.2.1989, p.3.

⁶ OJ No C 12, 16.1.1989, p.66.

⁷ OJ No C 12, 16.1.1989, p. 69.

16. **Whereas, therefore, flexibility is needed in the time schedule for introduction in these Member States ;**
17. **Whereas the introduction of number 112 will be possible by 1995, even in the few Member States where difficulties exist ;**
18. **Whereas, in addition to the technical, operational and commercial implications of introducing the chosen number within public telecommunications networks, Member States must make the necessary organisational arrangements best suited to the national organisation of the emergency systems, in order to ensure that calls to this number are adequately answered and handled ; whereas the standard Europe-wide emergency call number should therefore be used in parallel with other existing national arrangements, where appropriate ;**
19. **Whereas Member States should work towards increasing the language capabilities of the operators answering calls to number 112, in order to optimise the use of the number;**
20. **Whereas the provision of emergency call numbers is provided for in all Member States by law, regulation, or administrative action and continuing divergent developments in this area must be avoided ,**

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION :

Article 1

- 1. Member States shall ensure that number 112 is introduced in public telephone networks, as well as in future integrated services digital networks and public mobile services, as the standard Europe-wide emergency call number.**
- 2. The standard Europe-wide emergency call number shall be introduced in parallel with any other existing national emergency call numbers, where this seems appropriate.**

Article 2

Subject to Article 3, the standard Europe-wide emergency call number shall be introduced by 31 December 1992...

Article 3

Where particular technical or organisational difficulties in a Member State make the full introduction of the standard Europe-wide emergency call number by the date laid down in Article 2 impossible, the Member State shall inform the Commission of these difficulties.

In this case, the Member State concerned shall communicate to the Commission, with adequate explanations and justification, a new date for the full introduction of the standard Europe-wide emergency call number which however must not be later than 31 December 1995.

Article 4

Member States shall take the necessary measures in order to ensure that calls to the standard Europe-wide emergency call number are adequately answered and handled, in a manner best suited to the national organisation of emergency systems.

Article 5

Member States shall develop arrangements towards increasing the language capabilities of the operators answering calls to the standard Europe-wide emergency call number, in order to optimise its use. For this purpose they shall ensure the progressive implementation of technical and organisational arrangements, such as the automatic identification of the calling line and of the location of the caller and the possibility of automatic transfer to an international operator in case of language difficulties.

Article 6

Member States shall ensure that the texts of the provisions which they adopt in the field governed by this Decision are communicated to the Commission by 31 December 1990.

Article 7

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

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DOCUMENTS

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