

The European Emergency Number 112

Summary

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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

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THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

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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 legislation¹, 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.

Purpose of the Flash Eurobarometer survey on “The European Emergency Number 112” (N° 262)

This Flash Eurobarometer survey on “The European Emergency Number 112” (N°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 Eurobarometer survey on “The European Emergency Number 112” (N°228). The current report presents comparative data between the two waves.

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

- measure EU citizens’ knowledge of the European emergency number 112,
- 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
- Knowledge of 112 as an emergency number available from within one’s own country and when 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

The survey’s fieldwork was carried out between 7th and 11th of January, 2009. Over 40,500 randomly selected citizens, aged 15 years and over, were interviewed in the EU’s 27 Member States. Interviews 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.

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

Main findings

Usefulness of the European emergency number 112

- Over nine out of 10 EU citizens (94%) totally agreed, or tended to agree, about the usefulness of having an emergency number available anywhere in the EU. Respondents in the UK were again the least convinced about the value of such a number (87% totally agreed or tended to agree).
- Nine out of 10 (89%) EU citizens agreed (they agreed totally or tended to agree) that access to emergency services via 112 for users with disabilities should be improved, but the individual country responses varied from 75% in the Netherlands to 97% in Greece.
- Between 2008 and the current survey, only small differences were observed between the opinions about the usefulness of a Europe-wide emergency number and about its accessibility for people with disabilities.

Information about the European emergency number 112

- Just over six out of 10 EU citizens (63%, a three percentage point decrease compared to 2008) did not agree that people were adequately informed about the existence of the European emergency number 112. Only in three EU countries (Luxembourg, Romania and the Czech Republic) did the majority think the information was adequate.
- The majority of respondents had not received information about the EU-wide emergency number or other emergency numbers during the last 12 months (69%, down two percentage points). Only one in five interviewees (21%) said they had seen or heard information about 112.
- The proportion of respondents who said they had received information about 112 as the European emergency number in the past 12 months ranged from 7% in the UK to 60% in Bulgaria.
- As in 2008, of those who have seen/heard about the European emergency number 112, four out of five (81%) named media outlets (television, radio, newspapers, the Internet) as their source of information. Nine percent reported telecommunications operators as their information sources.

Knowledge of the European emergency number 112

- The general 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. Many more citizens (45%, up four percentage points) said they would call 112 for emergencies within their own country.
- Knowledge of 112, as the number to call in an emergency situation anywhere in the EU, still greatly depends on the respondent's own country (from 3% in Italy to 58% in the Czech Republic). The proportion of respondents who mentioned 112 for emergencies within their own country ranged from 1% in Greece to 98% in Sweden.
- 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.

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. Of the calls made to 112 in one's own country, 69% were calls in countries 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).

1. Usefulness of the European emergency number 112

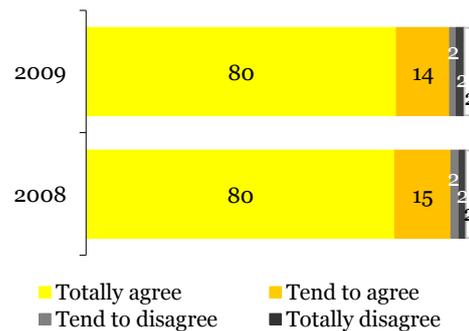
EU citizens' opinions about the usefulness of a Europe-wide emergency number and about its accessibility for people with disabilities were analysed. This was done by presenting respondents with two statements about the phone number 112 and by asking them to say if they agreed or disagreed with each one.

Overall, more than nine out of 10 EU citizens (94%) thought it was useful to have an emergency number available everywhere in the EU. Of them, 80% *totally agreed* that it was very useful to have such a number and 14% *tended to agree*. As in 2008, respondents in the UK were the least convinced about the value of such a number (87% totally agreed or tended to agree).

There were only small differences between socio-demographic groups when comparing the percentages of respondents who agreed or disagreed about the usefulness of 112. Comparing EU citizens with or without disabilities, it was noted that the latter were more likely to *totally agree* that a Europe-wide emergency number available everywhere in the EU was very useful (81% vs. 74%).

Opinions about the European emergency number 112

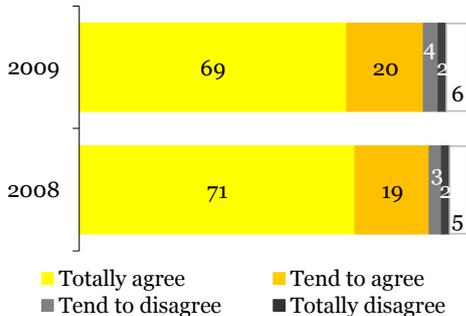
It is very useful to have a Europe-wide emergency number available everywhere in the European Union



Q4 a/c. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements...
%, Base: all respondents, EU27

Opinions about the European emergency number 112

[COUNTRY] should do more to make it easier for disabled users to contact the emergency services via 112, such as by providing adapted phones



Q4 a/c. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements...
%, Base: all respondents, EU27

There is still a large majority of EU citizens who considered that the access to emergency services via 112 for disabled users should be improved, for example by providing adapted phones (89%; similar to the results of the last survey).

In all EU Member States, at least three-quarters of citizens agreed that their country should do more to make it easier for disabled users to contact the emergency services via 112. The agreement varied from 75% in the Netherlands to 97% in Greece.

Women and the youngest respondents (the 15-24 year-olds) were more likely to agree that more such efforts were necessary.

Between 2008 and the current survey, only small differences were observed between the opinions about the usefulness of a Europe-wide emergency number and about the need for improved access to the number for those with disabilities.

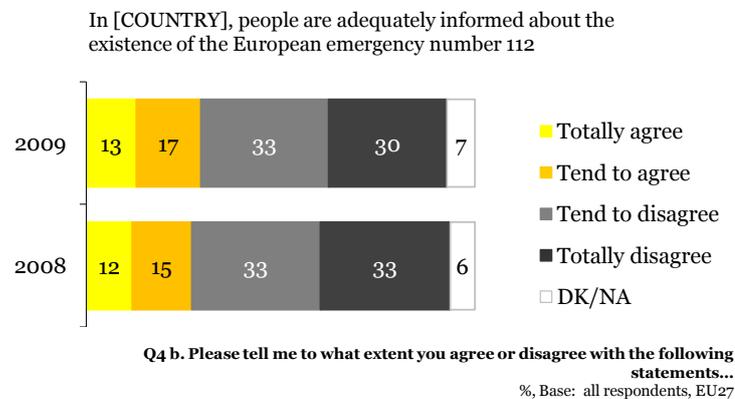
2. Information about the European emergency number 112

2.1 Adequacy of information about the European emergency number 112

The majority of EU citizens disagreed that people were adequately informed about the existence of the European emergency number 112 (63%, a decrease of three percentage points compared to 2008).

The highest proportion of respondents satisfied with the information about the European emergency number 112 was found in Luxembourg (70%). Only in three EU countries (Luxembourg, Romania and the Czech Republic) did the majority think the information received was adequate.

Opinions about the European emergency number 112



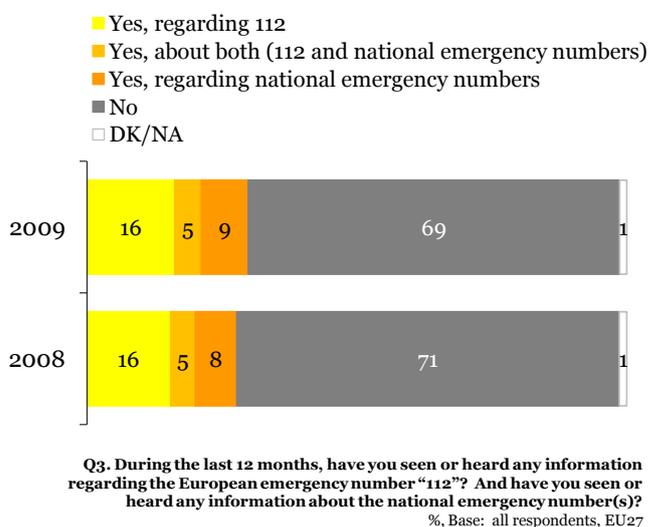
In most EU Member States, slightly more people agreed – in 2009 compared to 2008 – that they were adequately informed about the 112 number. However, in Romania and Bulgaria, there was an increase in the level of agreement about this of more than 14 percentage points. The proportion of Bulgarian respondents who agreed that people in their country were adequately informed about the existence of the Europe-wide emergency number increased from 21% in 2008 to 39% in 2009. The corresponding proportions for the Romanians were 45% in 2008 and 60% in 2009.

The youngest respondents (in the 15-24 year-old age group) agreed more than others that information about the number 112 was adequate in their countries (35% vs. 30% on average).

2.2 Receiving information about the European emergency number 112

Despite Member States being obliged to inform citizens about the existence of 112, only one in five interviewees (21%) said they had received information about 112 as the European emergency number in the past 12 months. This was unchanged compared to 2008.

Information about the European emergency number 112 and national emergency numbers



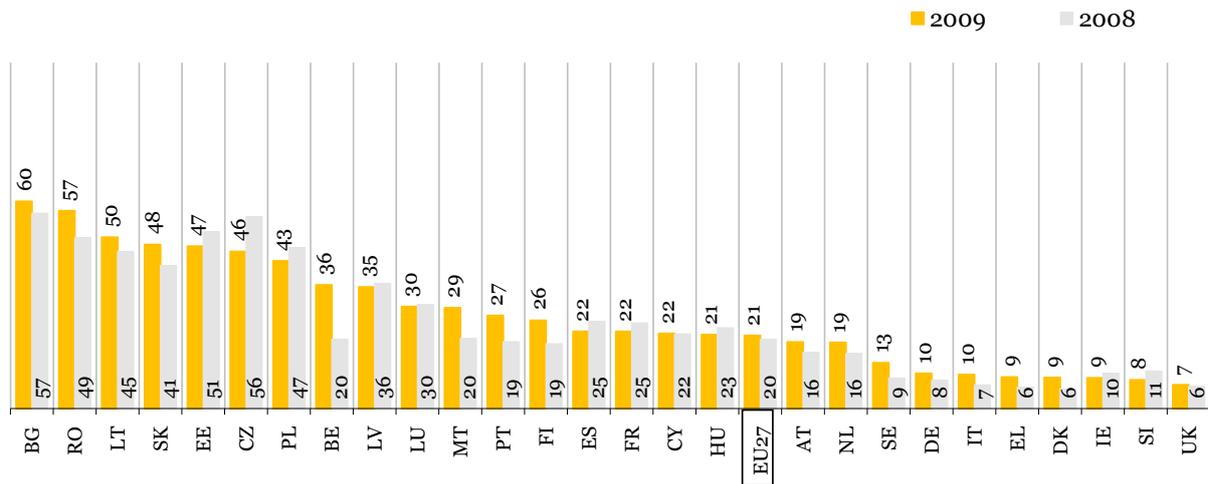
Sixteen percent of EU citizens said they had seen or heard information about the European emergency number 112, and an additional 5% reported having received information about the EU-wide number and other national emergency numbers.

Citizens of countries that joined the EU after 2004 were much more likely to have received such information about the EU-wide number for emergencies than the EU15 citizens: on average, 45% of the respondents from countries that joined the EU after

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.

Information about the European emergency number 112 – 2008-2009



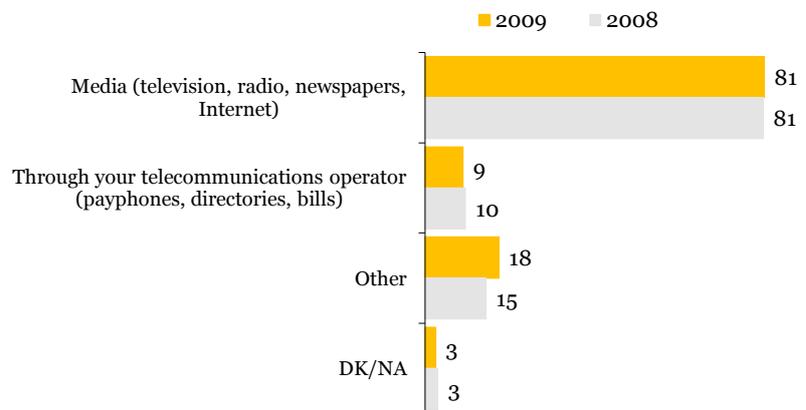
Q3. During the last 12 months, have you seen or heard any information regarding the European emergency number “112”? And have you seen or heard any information about the national emergency number(s)?
 Base: all respondents
 % “Yes, regarding 112” and “Yes, about both”, by country

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 operator².

Source of information regarding the European emergency number 112



Q3a. Where did you see/hear information regarding the European emergency number “112”?
 %, Base: those who have seen/hear information regarding the European emergency number 112, EU27

² 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 study, the next step is to examine EU citizens' awareness of the European emergency number 112. To examine 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).

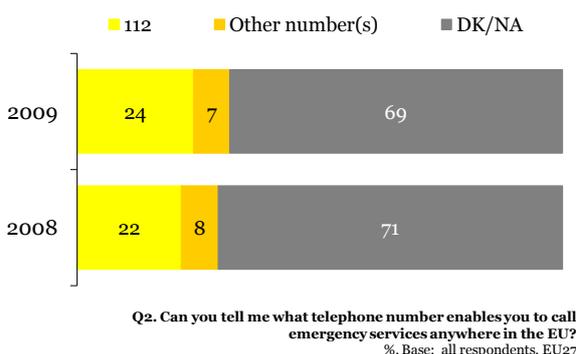
When looking at the country results, we again – as in 2008 – noticed great variations in the numbers of respondents who would call 112 or, alternatively, other national numbers in emergency situations in their own country. The proportion of respondents who mentioned 112 for emergencies within their own 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.

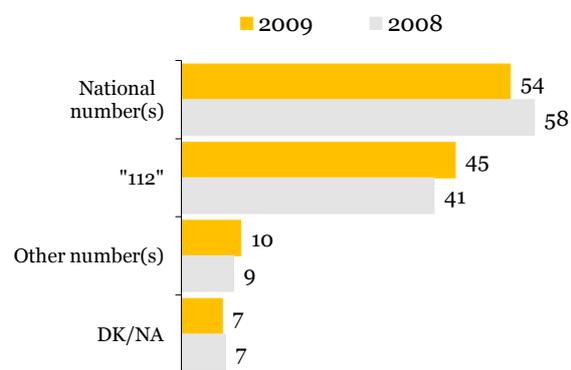
3.2 Calling the emergency services from another EU Member State

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.

Knowledge of 112 as the EU-wide emergency number



Telephone number(s) to call in the event of emergencies in one's own country



Q1. Can you tell me what telephone number you would call in the event of an emergency in [COUNTRY]?
%, Base: all respondents, EU27

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

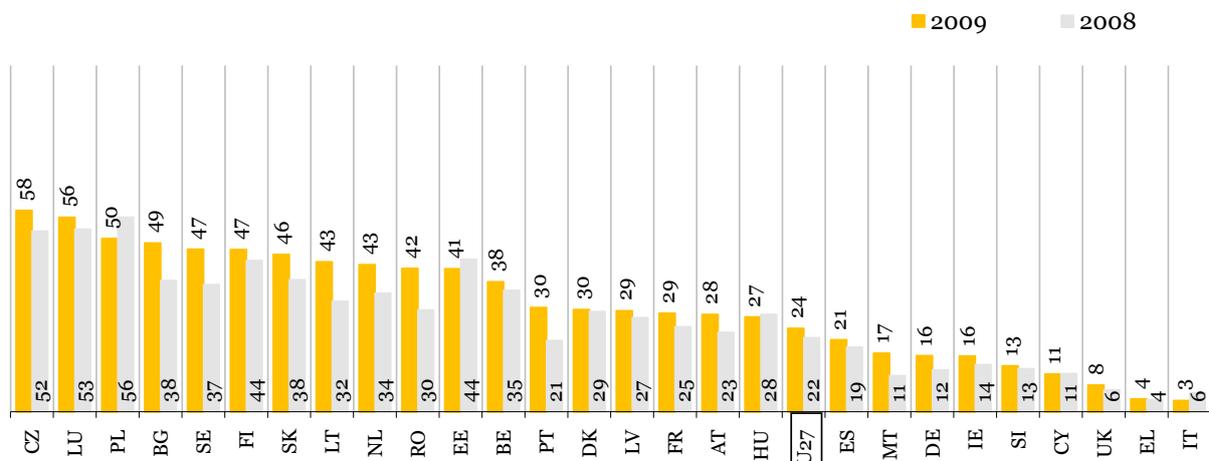
It is still the case that having knowledge of 112 as an emergency number to call from one's own country does not necessarily mean that respondents were also aware of this number as the European emergency number. Only 39% of respondents who reported that

they would call 112 in the event of an emergency in their own country also knew that this number could be used to reach the emergency services anywhere in the EU.

Knowledge of 112, as the number to call in an emergency situation anywhere in the EU, still greatly depends on the respondent's own country. While at least half of the respondents in the Czech Republic (58%), Luxembourg (56%) and Poland (50%) correctly answered that 112 was the telephone number that enabled them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU, the number 112 was practically unknown to interviewees in Italy (3% correctly stated the number), Greece (4%) and the UK (8%).

It is worth noting that although the European emergency number 112 was recently introduced nationwide in Bulgaria (September 2008), half (49%) of Bulgarian respondents were already familiar with 112 being the number that would enable them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU.

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

A comparison with the results of the 2008 survey showed that respondents were now slightly more likely to correctly answer that 112 was the telephone number that enabled them to call emergency services anywhere in the EU. At the country level, this increase in the level of knowledge of 112 was primarily seen in Romania (up by 12 percentage points), Lithuania and Bulgaria (both +11), Sweden and Portugal (both +10). In addition to the national promotion campaigns, the press coverage following the launch of legal actions against some Member States (such as Bulgaria, Romania or Lithuania) may have contributed to the increase in the proportion of respondents answering that 112 was the telephone number to call emergency services anywhere in the EU.

As last year, knowledge of 112 as the European emergency number is, of course, not only influenced by the national situation in terms of available emergency numbers, but also by the frequency and amount of information provided to citizens about the European emergency number 112. For most of the countries, where respondents said they had received information about the European emergency number 112 in the past 12 months, we also found that knowledge of the number was above the EU average. In addition, most countries where respondents were very unlikely to have received information about the European emergency number, also scored the lowest on knowledge of 112 as the European emergency number.

Finally, women, the oldest respondents (the over 54 year-olds), the non-working ones and respondents with disabilities were less aware that 112 enabled them to call for help in the event of an emergency anywhere in the EU. For example, 18% of respondents with disabilities were familiar with 112 as the European emergency number compared to 25% of respondents without a disability.

4. Experience of calling the European emergency number 112

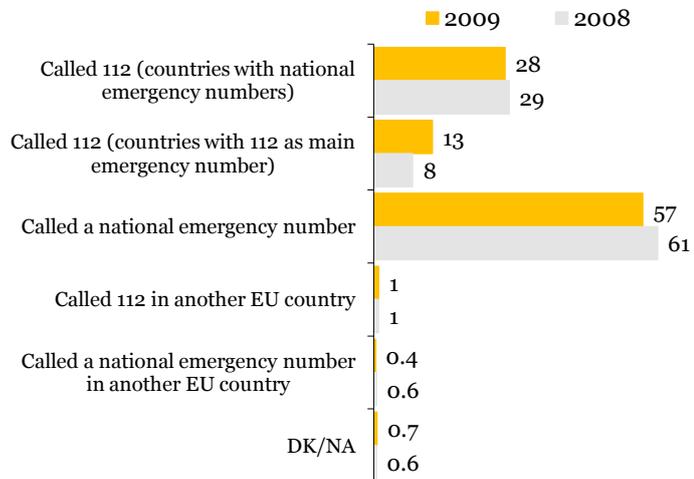
4.1 Emergency calls in the past five years

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.

Of those who had called an emergency number at least once in the past five years, more than half (57%) said that, the last time they needed assistance, they were in their own country and dialled national emergency numbers, and four in 10 (41%) called 112 for emergencies in their own country.

Of these calls made to 112 in a citizen's own country, 69% were calls in countries where 112 operates along with other emergency numbers, and 31% were calls in countries where 112 is the only/main emergency number.

Number called during the last emergency situation



Q6. Please think about the LAST occasion when you called an emergency number. Was this call made...

%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

4.2 Characteristics of the most recent emergency call

4.2.1 Type of telephone used

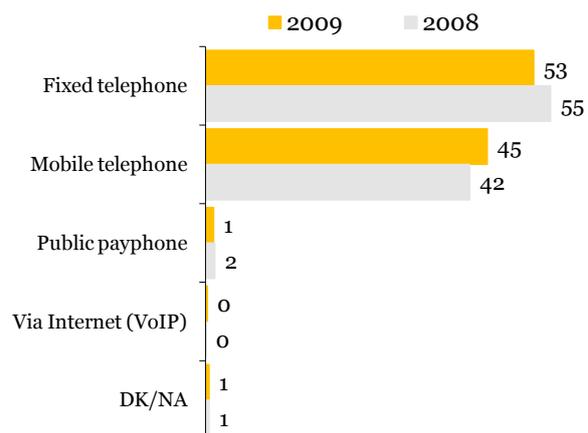
The majority of most recent emergency calls were made from a fixed telephone (53%). However, compared to 2008, more of these emergency calls were made via a mobile telephone (45% vs. 42% in 2008).

The individual country results showed that with six out of 10 respondents having used a fixed telephone, France (69%), Italy (66%), Greece (64%) and Germany (62%) had the most citizens who called emergency services from a landline. On the other hand, Finnish respondents were the ones that most frequently used a mobile phone when they last called the emergency services (76%).

It is also worth mentioning that 7% of respondents in the Czech Republic said they last called the emergency services from a public payphone, while in all other EU countries the percentage that called from a public phone was equal to 3% or less.

The reported usage of mobile phones to call the emergency services is linked to the proportion of mobile phone-only households in each country. Given the high rate of mobile-phone only households

Type of the telephone used to make the emergency call



Q7. What kind of telephone did you use?

%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

in most countries that joined the EU after 2004, the usage of mobile telephones for emergency calls was, on average, much higher in these countries (65% vs. 40% in the EU15).

Similarly, since men are more likely than women to have a mobile phone which they regularly use³, they are also more likely to say they have called the emergency services using such a device (53% vs. 37%). The same reasoning applies when comparing younger and older respondents: while approximately only one in four respondents over 54 had made their last emergency call with a mobile phone (24%), two in three aged between 15 and 24 years-of-age had done so (67%).

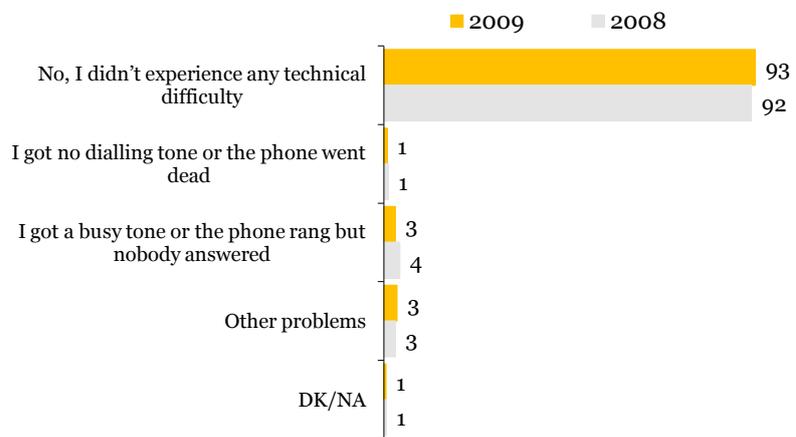
As in 2008, the most recent calls made to 112 as a result of an emergency situation in one’s own country were most often made by mobile phone: 59% of the respondents who called 112 in countries where this number was the sole/main emergency number used mobile phones (an increase of eight percentage points compared to 2008); the same holds true for the 54% who called 112 in countries with multiple emergency numbers.

4.2.2 Difficulties encountered when trying to make an emergency call

A minority of respondents experienced difficulties in establishing or maintaining the communication during their last call to an emergency service (7%; down one percentage point compared to 2008).

In all EU countries, less than one out of five respondents reported communication problems when trying to reach the emergency services. As in 2008, Poland was the country where respondents were the most likely to have experienced difficulties when contacting the emergency services (17%).

Problems encountered when calling the emergency services



Q8. Did you experience any technical difficulty in establishing or maintaining the call?
%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

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.

Problems encountered when calling the emergency services

Type of Telephone	% No difficulty	% Some difficulty
Fixed telephone	95	5
Mobile phone	91	9

Q8. Did you experience any technical difficulty in establishing or maintaining the call?
%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years (0-1% DK/NA)

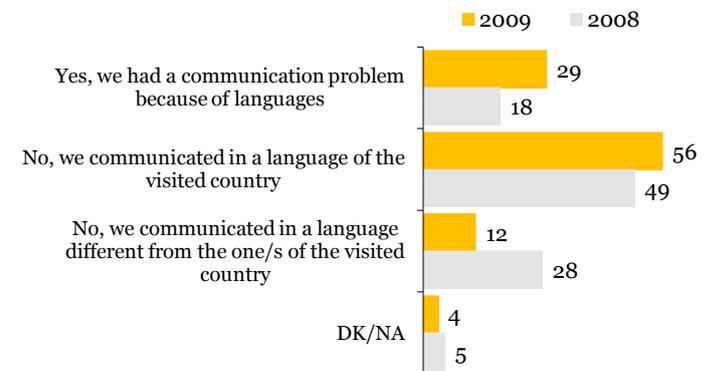
Such communication problems, when last making an emergency call, were reported more frequently by respondents who used a mobile phone than by those who called from a fixed-line telephone (9% compared to 5%). The respondents who made an emergency call in another EU country were more likely than those who made it in their own country to have encountered technical difficulties.

³ Flash 241(Information society as seen by EU citizens - http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_241_en.pdf).

4.2.3 Language-related problems when making an emergency call in another EU country

Calling emergency services while visiting another EU country may give rise to additional difficulties because of the possible language barriers when trying to communicate with the emergency services.

Language barriers when making an emergency call in another EU country



Q8a. Did you experience any communication problem because of the language you used?
%, Base: those who made an emergency call in another EU country in the last 5 years

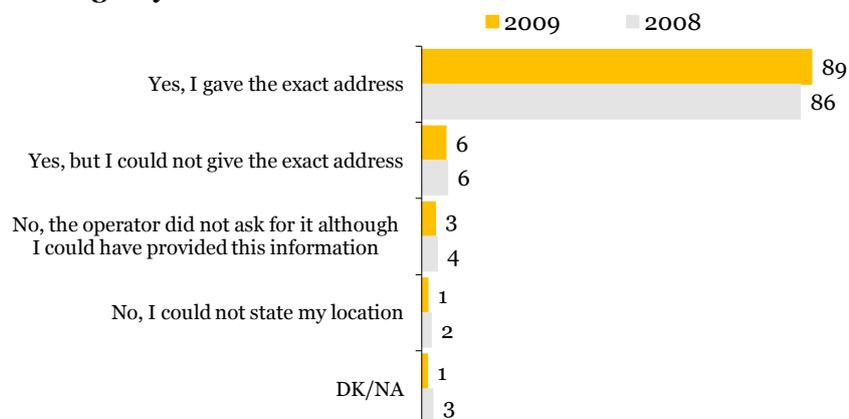
Surprisingly, compared to 2008, we saw an increase in the proportion of those who encountered a language barrier: approximately three out of 10 respondents who called an emergency service when visiting another EU country said they had communication problems because of language issues (29%); in 2008, only two out of 10 (18%) said the same.

While in 2008, it appeared that respondents who called 112 reported less language problems, than those who called other national emergency numbers when visiting another EU country, in 2009, the situation was more balanced between the two groups: 28% of the interviewees who last called the European emergency number claimed to have had language difficulties and 29% of those who last called a national emergency number while abroad reported the same.

4.2.4 Information about the location of the emergency

When asking respondents if they provided information about their location to the emergency line operator, 89% (a 3 percentage point increase over 2008) said they gave the exact address, while 6% gave some information about the location of the emergency but not an exact address. In 3% of the cases, the operator did not ask for the location, although the respondents could have provided information if requested. In all EU countries, the percentage of respondents who could not state their location was low.

Providing precise information about the location of the emergency



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

A higher proportion of older (over 40 years-of-age) than younger respondents (the 15-39 year-olds) (90%-91% compared to 86%-87%), and more non-working citizens than their counterparts (91% vs.

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 operator with some information about the emergency’s location but could not give an 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?

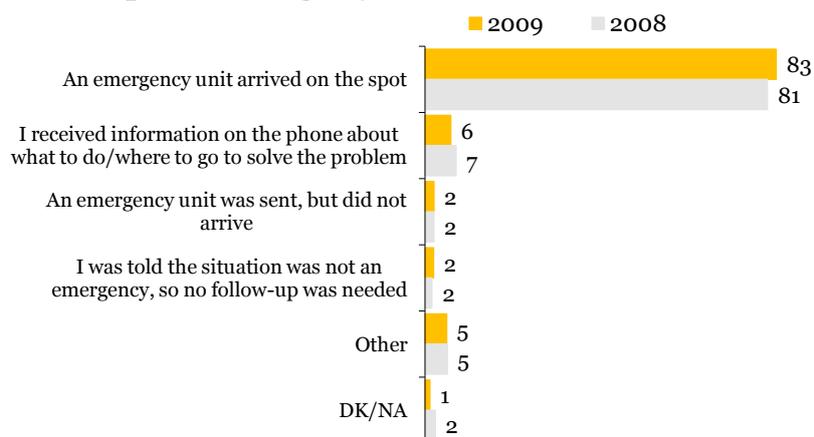
%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

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%).

Follow-up to the emergency call



Q10. What was the follow-up given to your call?

%, Base: those who called an emergency number in the last 5 years

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.

As we saw in 2008, when older, non-working respondents and those with disabilities made an emergency call, such calls were more often followed by the arrival of an emergency intervention unit than when respondents in the other socio-demographic groups made such a call. For example, while 89% of respondents over 54 said that an emergency unit arrived on the spot when they last called the emergency services, only between 80%-83% of those below 55 did so.

One-fifth of respondents (21%) who made an 112 emergency call in another EU country received information on the phone about the actions necessary to solve the problem (compared to, for example, 7% of respondents who called 112 in their own country). One out of 10 respondents (12%) who called other national emergency numbers while in another EU country said that the emergency call was followed by some other action than the ones listed in the survey.