

Join position paper from EENA and AMBER Alert Europe

This position paper sets out the joint views of the European Emergency Number Association and AMBER Alert Europe on the necessity to include alerts to the population in the proposal for a European Electronic Communications Code (EECC).

Main points:

- It is necessary to make sure that telephone networks can be used to alert the population in case of ongoing crisis, upcoming threat or missing child at risk.
- This could have a considerable impact in the work of the emergency services in the handling of large-scale crisis or in the searches for missing children at risk.

Background:

In its first reading of the proposal for a European Electronic Communications Code (EECC), the European Parliament voted an amendment to make sure that electronic communication networks are used to send alerts to the population in case of major crisis (IMCO opinion – amendment 223, article 102a (new)).

When a crisis occurs, informing people quickly and efficiently is one of the major challenges for the emergency services and law enforcement authorities. Regrettably, in a majority of European countries, public sirens are still the only way for civil protection forces to alert the population. By the number of users it reaches, telephone networks should also be used to send such alerts. In 2017, the technologies enabling alerting on mobile phones are available and robust. They should be used to make European citizens safer.

A so-called "Reverse 112" system would allow public authorities to warn the population in a determined area by different channels in order to reach quickly as much people as possible. This could be of a considerable help for the public authorities in large-scale crisis such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters. In the case of the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 and Brussels on 22 March 2016, the population was not notified of the ongoing attacks and alert should have warned them of what was happening.

In addition, the establishment of a modern public warning system could also help the emergency services and in particular law enforcement authorities, in the searches for missing children at risk. Unfortunately, too many children get missing with statistics ranging from 250 000 to 1 000 000 children being reported missing every year in Europe. Most of the time, it is the swift response of on the scene rescuers that makes the difference in finding the missing child. But there also cases when the most important thing the police can do, is get detailed information about the incident out to the public as quickly as possible. That's why public warning systems should be used for child alerts as well. Getting the right information to the right people at the right time is essential.

Hence, in the context of the current discussions on the European Electronic Communications Code, EENA and AMBER Alert Europe draw the attention of the European institutions on the necessity to make sure that electronic communications network can be used as a channel to alert the population in case of major crisis, including in the case of missing children at risk, when needed. In a time where public safety is at the top of our concerns, we hope that the current negotiations will take into account this important concern.

About EENA

*EENA, the European Emergency Number Association, is a Brussels-based NGO set up in 1999 dedicated to promoting high-quality emergency services reached by the number 112 throughout the EU. EENA serves as a discussion platform for emergency services, public authorities, decision makers, researchers, associations and solution providers with a view to improving the emergency response in accordance with citizens' requirements. EENA is also promoting the establishment of an efficient system for alerting citizens about imminent or developing emergencies. The EENA memberships include **more than 1300 emergency services representatives from over 80 countries worldwide, 90 solution providers, 14 mobile operators, 15 international associations/organisations, more than 200 Members of the European Parliament and 100 researchers.** EENA is a registered organisation in the official [EU transparency register](#) and we deeply believe that the transparency register should be mandatory rather than optional.*

Contact person: Benoît Vivier, Advocacy officer, bv@eena.org.

About AMBER Alert Europe

*AMBER Alert Europe is a non-profit organisation that **connects law enforcement with citizens.** We encourage, promote and assist the development and implementation of policies for missing children at risk in Europe. We bring together a network of 26 members (law enforcement, civil society and business) from 18 countries and we facilitate the only European Police Network on Missing Children, encompassing over 40 law enforcement experts from 15 EU countries. The backbone of our work is based on the 2016 [Written Declaration](#) on improving emergency cooperation in recovering endangered missing children and improving child alert mechanisms in the EU member states, adopted with an overwhelming support from **465 Members** of the European Parliament.*

Contact person: Sonila Metushi, Head of Strategy & Public Affairs, sonila.metushi@amberalert.eu