



Brussels (or other), ... August 2009

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Start of the Project REACH112 - Responding to all citizens needing help**

*REACH112 (Responding to all citizens needing help) is a three-year project partially funded by the European Commission under the ICT PSP CIP programme gathering 22 partners from all over Europe, including user organisations and major global telecommunications companies. In five countries, it will deploy a new text/voice/video communication solution to allow thousands of people to communicate in video, voice and text simultaneously, with special focus on disabled people. The project will offer access to relay services to help connect users with different abilities to others and will also provide access to the emergency services.*

The European emergency number 112, which is used to contact emergency services free of charge all over the EU, is currently not accessible to the majority of disabled people. However this is set to change with the start of REACH112, a new five-country initiative in France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and the UK, which will introduce improved communication solutions for disabled people, allowing them direct access to emergency services, a potentially life saving feature.

"REACH112 will test innovative solutions to ensure that 112 can be reached by every citizen all over the European Union and set the guidelines for the take-up of new communication technologies by EU emergency services", commented Olivier Paul-Morandini, president and founder of the European Emergency Number Association.

Users will also be able to call each other in video, voice and text via the Internet, across national boundaries. It will also allow sign language users to communicate through remote interpreting services, and via other relay services, using text to talk to voice users.

"The REACH 112 project initiative will provide modes of communication to find a way to communicate in each situation, may it be with a live real-time text conversation, with sign language, with lip reading, with voice or with any simultaneous combination of these modes. This will also be a major step ahead for persons with disabilities in the equality to access emergency services in a society designed for all", concluded Carlotta Besozzi, Director of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and adviser to the project.

For more information, please visit the project website [www.reach112.eu](http://www.reach112.eu).

#### Press Contact:

Gary Machado  
European Emergency Number Association  
Tel: +32 (0)2 53 49 789 and +32 (0) 498 375 962  
Email: [gm@eena.org](mailto:gm@eena.org)

Uberto Delprato  
IES Solutions  
Tel: +39-348-3432513  
Email: [u.delprato@i4es.it](mailto:u.delprato@i4es.it)