PSAP DIRECTORY

SUPPORTING INTER-PSAP COMMUNICATION ACROSS NATIONAL BORDERS

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INTRODUCTION

112 is the pan-European emergency number which provides European citizens with a common and memorable number to reach emergency services from all countries in Europe. 112 is becoming more important as an ever-increasing number of citizens travel around Europe but it does not resolve the issue of dealing with emergency calls with a cross-border dimension.

European PSAPs are unable to contact each other across national borders to deal with these types of calls, except in a few cases where cross-border initiatives have been implemented by neighbouring countries. In order to address this issue, and at the request of several national emergency services representatives, the European Emergency Number Association (EENA) established a database in 2009 containing long form E.164 telephone numbers of national Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to enable them to communicate with each other when such a need arises. The EENA Transnational Database[1], only accessible by participating PSAPs, contained contact information for 24 PSAPs in 19 countries and provided a valuable service to PSAPs, and ultimately, positively affected public safety. On 1 December 2018, EENA's transnational database was superseded by the PSAP Directory which is hosted by the European Communications Office (ECO) based in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide information about the ECO

- Describe the ECO's rationale for undertaking this work and taking over the responsibility from EENA

- Describe the PSAP Directory structure and contents

- Outline the requirements for PSAP participation

- Provide guidance to PSAPs on protocols/training for using the PSAP Directory in an operational setting

The handling of emergency calls is a national matter and this document does not intend to provide any guidance to national PSAPs on the handling of emergency calls with a cross-border dimension. The PSAP Directory may be regarded as an internal back-office support tool for PSAPs to use when a need arises. It is up to PSAPs to decide when and why to use the PSAP Directory in accordance with their respective national legislation, processes and procedures.

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[1] Described in EENA document 3.5.4.1 v1.0 (Transnational Emergency Calls). This document has now been superseded by the present document.

1 | ABOUT THE ECO

The ECO is the permanent office of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), an organisation where policymakers and regulators from 46 countries across Europe collaborate to harmonise telecommunication, radio spectrum and postal regulations.

(Source: ECO Annual Report 2023)
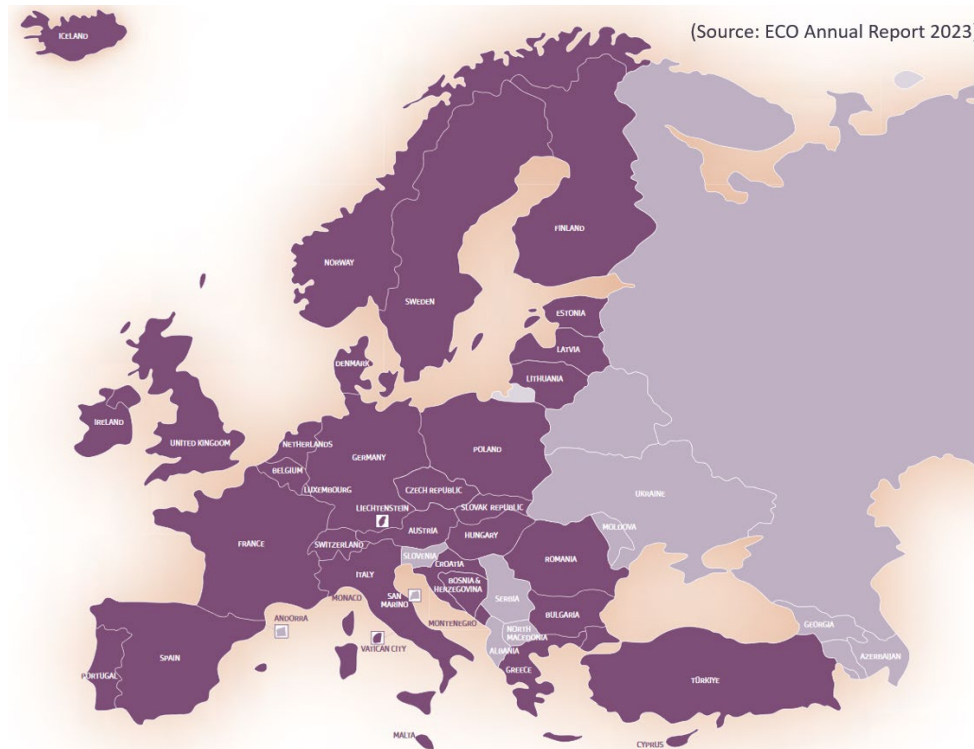
The ECO is a centre of expertise in electronic communications and it provides advice and support to the CEPT's three business committees (ECC - Electronic Communications Committee, Com-ITU - Committee for ITU Policy and CERP - European Committee for Postal Regulation). The ECO's support includes the development and maintenance of several operational IT systems[2] to help CEPT to develop and deliver its policies and decisions in an effective and transparent way. The CEPT and the ECO are not bodies of the European Union (EU) although they do have formal working relationships with the EU on relevant matters. The ECC has been active for many years in the development of deliverables[3] on the technical and regulatory aspects of emergency communications.

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[2] ECO Frequency Information System (EFIS), Spectrum Engineering Advanced Monte Carlo Analysis Tool (SEAMCAT), ECC Work Programme Database, ECO Documentation Database.

[3] ECC Report 225 - Establishing criteria for the accuracy and reliability of the caller location information in support of emergency services, ECC Report 255 - The use of Assisted-Global Navigation Satellite System (A-GNSS) capabilities to improve caller location information for emergency calls, ECC Report 264 – Feasibility Study: PSAP-DIR, ECC Decision (17)05 – Harmonised prefixes and short codes in national numbering plans.

2 | EXAMPLE USE CASE FOR THE PSAP DIRECTORY

When a citizen in country A is informed of an incident in country B, it is not possible to access emergency services in country A from country B by dialling an emergency short number (e.g. 112). The aim of the PSAP Directory is to provide contact information so that the PSAP in country A can contact the relevant PSAP in country B.

3 | RATIONALE FOR ECO DEVELOPING THE PSAP DIRECTORY

From the outset of the transnational database project, EENA was clear that it did not intend to permanently manage the database believing that official institutions should have the responsibility. To that end, in 2015, EENA wrote to the ECC requesting it to consider taking over responsibility for the transnational database.

The motivation for the request was to put the database on a more formal footing with an appropriate public European body with the experience and expertise to manage it. It was considered, based on feedback from the PSAPs, that such an approach would encourage PSAPs from more countries in Europe to participate in the project.

After careful consideration of EENA's request and after carrying out a feasibility study (ECC Report 264), the ECC decided that this was a relevant activity for it to be involved in given its related work in the field of emergency communications. The ECO's governing body agreed to commit resources to the project and work commenced on the development of the PSAP Directory in 2018. The PSAP Directory came into service on 1 December 2018.

4 | STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE PSAP DIRECTORY

The PSAP Directory consists of a secure website where nominated PSAP contact points can log in and enter contact information for their own PSAP. Nominated contact points can also download a password protected .pdf file containing contact information for all participating PSAPs which can then be used locally in the PSAP when a need arises. When contact information is updated, all nominated contact points in all participating PSAPs will be immediately notified by e-mail that the information in the directory has changed and will be advised to download an updated version of the .pdf file.

The following information is contained in the directory for each PSAP:

Country, PSAP Name, PSAP Type (primary or back up), PSAP Level (e.g. All emergency services, police only, fire only, ambulance only), Telephone Number, Languages Spoken, Availability (e.g. 24x7). The directory does not contain any personal contact information for individuals working within the PSAPs.

5 | REQUIREMENTS FOR PSAP PARTICIPATION

Participation in the PSAP Directory is voluntary and free of charge for PSAPs. For a PSAP to participate, the ECO needs to be able to validate its credentials as a national PSAP for participation. To that end, the ECO will require that each PSAP requesting entry to the PSAP Directory provides documentary evidence of its eligibility and right to participate in the PSAP Directory in the form of a letter from a relevant national authority with responsibility for emergency services (or a coordinating entity where such responsibility is shared across different authorities). A template for this letter is provided in Annex 1.

Once the letter has been received and validated, a participating PSAP will be required to sign a participation agreement with the ECO. The agreement recognises and acknowledges the responsibilities of both parties. Once this step has been completed the nominated contact points in the PSAP will be sent login credentials for the PSAP Directory.

Here is an overview of the process.
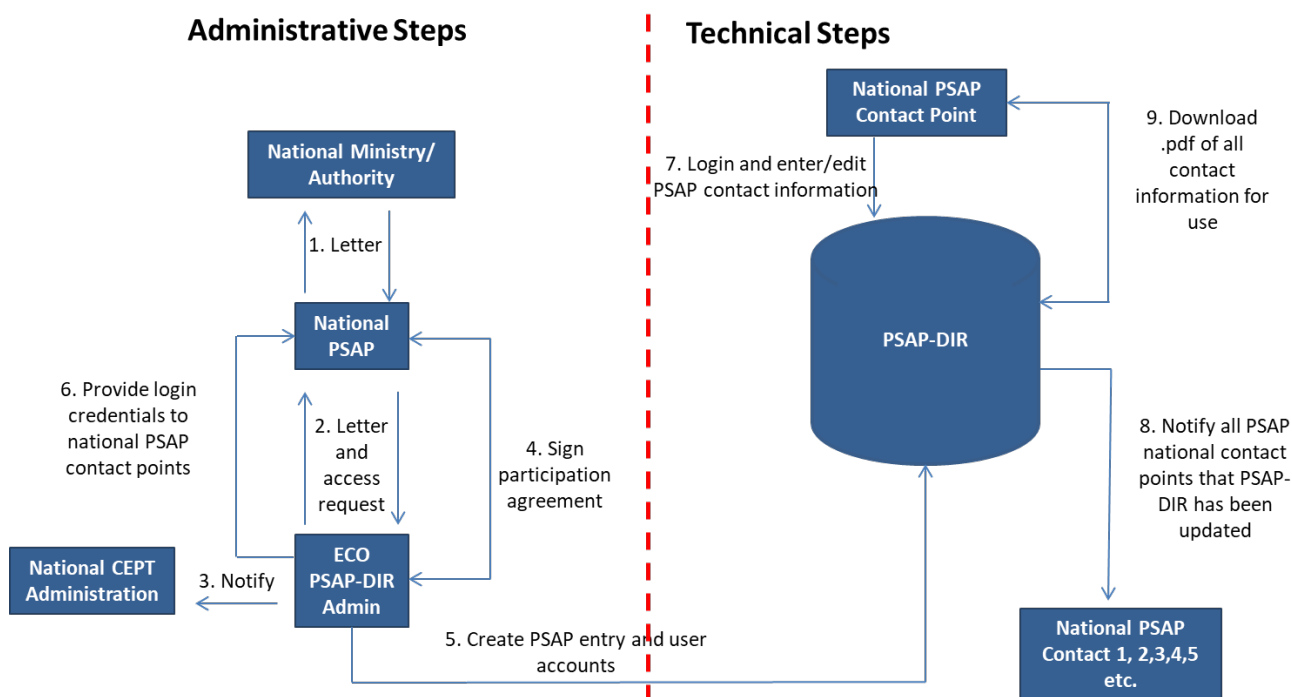
6 | EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The regulatory framework for electronic communications in the European Union (The European Electronic Communications Code, EECC) entered into force on 20 December 2018. The EECC requires the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) to *"maintain a database of E.164 numbers of Member State emergency services to ensure that they are able to contact each other from one Member State to another, if such a database is not maintained by another organization".* BEREC and ECC/ ECO formally exchanged letters on this obligation and the PSAP Directory hosted by the ECO is now considered by BEREC and the European Commission to meet the requirements of this legislative provision.
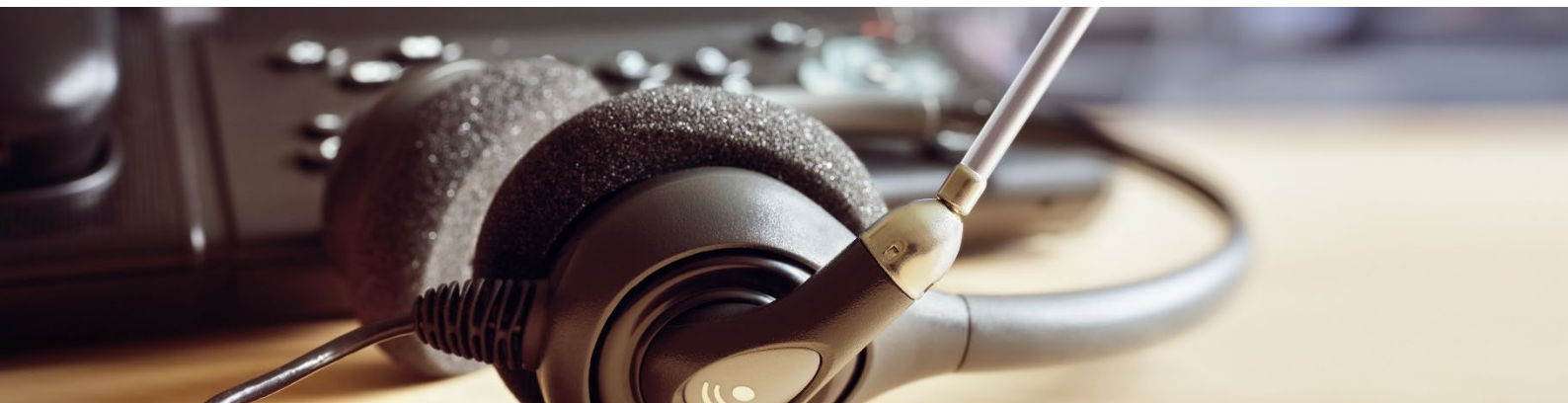
7 | CURRENT LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

As of 22 July 2024, letters have been received from 26 countries and 31 PSAPs from those countries have signed the participation agreement and are now using the PSAP Directory. The EENA directory ceased on 01 December 2018 and the PSAP Directory went into service on the same date.

8 | GUIDANCE ON PSAP DIRECTORY USE

8.1   Receiving the initial emergency call

- Caller A contacts PSAP A in Country A on an emergency number (e.g. 112) to report an incident occurring where assistance from a PSAP in Country B may be required. The call-taker in PSAP A in Country A will make a decision to contact a PSAP in Country B if deemed necessary.
- The call-taker in PSAP A should inform Caller A that the they will contact the relevant PSAP in Country B. **Note:** Call-takers should never provide the number of a PSAP from the PSAP Directory to a caller.
- Caller A is put on hold by Call-taker A.

8.2   Searching for Contact Information

- Call-taker A searches the PSAP Directory for the number of Primary PSAP B and dials the number. **Note:** Best practice would be to have the PSAP Directory available in the CAD system for ease of access and use by call-takers.
- If Primary PSAP B is unreachable, Call-taker A will search the PSAP Directory for the number of the backup PSAP (if available) and dial the number.
- When the call is answered by PSAP B, Call-taker A should clearly state: "I am calling from [PSAP, CITY, COUNTRY] using the PSAP Directory." **Note:** Call-taker A should speak slowly and clearly as language proficiency levels may vary. English is the preferred language.

8.3   Reporting the Incident

- Call-taker A reports the incident to Call-taker B. Alternatively, Call-taker A can connect Caller A to Call-taker B but must stay on the line to announce the call and assist, such as providing translation if needed. **Note:** Caller A should never be connected to Call-taker B without prior announcement, and Call-taker A should remain on the call.

8.4   Transferring Responsibility

- PSAP B takes charge of handling the incident, with support from PSAP A if needed.

8.5   Closing the Case

- Once the incident is resolved, PSAP B should report back to PSAP A to confirm the situation has been handled if permitted by the regulations and rules governing PSAP B.
- PSAP A shall inform Caller A that the case has been handled and closed if the response information is known to the centre and can be legally provided to the caller.

8.6   Minimum training requirements
- All call-takers and dispatchers in Primary and Backup PSAPs must be trained to handle international calls. If an operator is not fully trained, they should know the procedure for transferring the call to a trained colleague.
- Even if a call-taker does not speak English, they should be trained to recognise when another PSAP is calling using the PSAP Directory.

9 | ENCOURAGING ALL PSAPS TO PARTICIPATE

The ECO continues to promote the PSAP Directory amongst the PSAP community in the 46 CEPT member countries and it encourages as many PSAPs as possible to participate in order to make the PSAP Directory an integral tool for supporting PSAPs in their daily activities. Access to the PSAP Directory from PSAPs outside of Europe may also be considered in the future following consultation with all participating PSAPs.

10 | FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further information on the PSAP Directory, please contact support@psapdir.org.

ANNEX 1 : TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL PSAP IN THE PSAP DIRECTORY

Dear sir/madam,

The <RELEVANT NATIONAL AUTHORITY NAME> has responsibility for the provision of emergency services in <COUNTRY>. The <RELEVANT NATIONAL AUTHORITY NAME> can confirm that <PSAP NAME> is eligible and has a right to participate in the PSAP Directory on behalf of <COUNTRY>.

Yours sincerely,

Signature
Name
Position
Organisation
Email and telephone number