

Commissioner Thierry Breton
European Commissioner for Internal Market
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

30 January 2024

Dear Commissioner Breton,

In July 2022, I wrote to you to bring to your attention an issue preventing European citizens from making or receiving voice calls, including calls to emergency services, as 2G and 3G networks are phased out. This is due to a lack of compatibility and interoperability between mobile phones and voice services provided over 4G/5G networks (e.g. VoLTE/VoNR).

This issue is still being faced by many European citizens travelling to the USA, and other parts of the world, where 2G and 3G networks are partly or fully shut down. Indeed, I have myself encountered this problem when travelling to the USA last June.

In Europe, the vast majority of mobile originated voice calls to emergency services still rely on circuit-switched fallback (CSFB) to 2G/3G networks even where 4G/5G is available. This approach ensures continuity of access to emergency services for citizens. The pace of 2G/3G phaseout is slower in Europe, but accelerating, which means that the safety net provided by CSFB cannot be relied on for much longer.

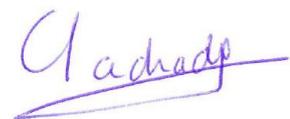
Access to emergency services is a fundamental right of citizens. Any impediment to this access poses a significant risk to citizens' safety and well-being. Therefore, urgent action is required to resolve the root causes and mobile network operators (as well as mobile virtual network operators), handset and chipsets manufacturers, standardisation bodies, national governments and competent public authorities all have a role to play in its resolution.

In your cabinet's response to my previous letter (Ares(2022)5798741-18/08/2022), I was assured that "the Commission services are taking this issue into consideration within various work streams, including the works on emergency communications, eCall and standardisation" and that your cabinet "[took] note of [our] suggestion to bring this issue to the attention of our counterparts in the United States."

Hence, with this letter, I would like to enquire about any follow up measures that the European Commission may have taken on this matter and whether the issue has been raised with relevant counterparts in the USA.

Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Gary Machado
Executive Director