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Brussels, 9 November 2010 | The European Emergency Number Association (EENA), which promotes the use of the single European emergency number, organises the 112 Awards Ceremony. One of the objectives of the event is to reward organisation having shown dedication to improve the accessibility of 112 for people with disabilities. The winning project is the creator of the concept of ‘total conversation’. Focus on a revolution of telephony for all.

**Accessibility of the call emergency services**

112 is the free of charge phone number to call emergency services throughout the European Union for urgent situations such as accident, aggression or fire, from fixed or mobile phones. The traditional voice telephony to reach emergency service is not yet suitable for all: persons with disabilities or others that may face temporary barriers in voice communication are as a result denied access to emergency services with obvious dreadful consequences.

**Total conversation: a revolution in the telephony accessibility**

For the 4th edition of the 112 Awards Ceremony, Gunnar Hellström has been rewarded for being the founder of a revolutionary project: the Total Conversation. This initiative allows **communicating in each situation**, may it be with a real-time text conversation, with sign language through high quality video, with lip reading, with voice or with any simultaneous combination of these modes. Even so Gunnar Hellström’s company is dedicated to the communication for all, he is also technical coordinator for REACH 112 project which aim is to improve the accessibility of the 112 emergency number.

If the telecom industry endorses the project, it could save hundreds of life

Thanks to Gunnar’s work and to the disability movement, it is already possible to use real time text system on several smart-phones in the UK and in Holland. On the whole, the technology already exists to be implemented in the phones devices available on the European market, with the European telecom operators. Besides that, it is still important there is still a lot of work to convince the telecom industry and the standardization’s organisation to endorse the total conversation in the European Union. As Gunnar Hellström stressed: “We have to compose with what we already have and make it work together!”

The European disability movement believes such a concept will improve the life of persons with disabilities. As Rodolfo Cattani, EDF Executive Committee member points out: “If the telecom industry endorses the total conversation, millions of deaf and hard of hearing persons will benefit from another revolution in communication. When implemented with the 112 emergency number, the use of total conversation will save plenty of life in the European Union!”

**The European emergency number association**

[www.eena.org](http://www.eena.org)

**The REACH 112 project: Responding to All Citizens needing Help**

[www.reach112.eu](http://www.reach112.eu)

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