

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE

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Activity of the Emergency Response Centre

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Single European emergency call number 112 is now functioning in all the 27 European Union Member States. It is the only telephone number that enables the caller in case of emergency to contact local emergency services - ambulance, fire brigade and police - free of charge in any of the European Union Member State.

Following the Council Decision of 29 July 1991 on the Introduction of a Single European Emergency Call Number the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 1997 supported the idea of establishing an emergency centre consisting of fire and rescue service, police, ambulance and other emergency services management units and assigned the Ministry of Interior to coordinate the establishment of the Emergency Response Centre and organisation of its activities.

Following the Government Decree of 2004, short emergency call numbers (in the public fixed-line – 01, 02, 03, in the public mobile lines – 101, 011, 102, 022, 103, 033) had to be replaced with a single emergency number 112. According to the data provided by the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania in 2010 all the emergency call numbers received about 4.6 million calls, out of which single emergency call number 112 received about 2.5 million calls.

The Lithuanian Emergency Response Centre has started its activities in 2003 as a statutory body of the interior. In a year (in 2004) the Law on Emergency Response Centre was adopted. Beginning with 1 July 2006 the functions of the founder of the Emergency Response Centre were transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior. In 2004-2005 pilot project of the single emergency centre was implemented in the city of Vilnius.

In 2008 it was decided that there will be four regional Emergency Response Centres in Lithuania (in Vilnius, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Alytus) that will take over the functions performed by existing emergency services: answering to emergency calls, dealing with emergency requests and management of other emergency service units (excluding police). The Emergency Response Centres will perform the mentioned functions in the territory of Lithuania and every caller to the single emergency call number will be able to reach all the necessary emergency services.

The Emergency Response Centre has been operating for more than eight years. As of 1 July 2011 the Centre had 207 staff. More than LTL 76 million were spent on the creation and development of the infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the single emergency call number, however creation of the system of answering to emergency calls, dealing with emergency requests, management of other emergency service units and overall coordination is not finished yet. The Emergency Response Centre does not perform all the functions assigned to it.

In order to clarify the reasons why, we evaluated the creation and development of infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the Emergency Response Centre and organization of its activities.

Audit conclusions

1. Due to planning deficiencies in the introduction of the single emergency call number consistent creation and development of infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the Emergency Response Centre was not ensured therefore:

1.1. The process of optimization of the functions of answering to emergency calls and dealing with emergency requests that is taking place for more than a decade has not been finished yet; the mentioned functions have been implemented not only the Emergency Response Centre that was established for this purpose but also by the emergency services such as police, fire and rescue and emergency ambulance services;

1.2. Further restructuring of emergency ambulance services defined in the Decrees of the Minister of Health is not being related to the implementation of the Law on the Single Emergency Centre although there is an overlap of functions of answering to emergency calls, dealing with emergency requests and management of emergency service units.

2. The Ministry of the Interior which is responsible for coordinating the implementation and carrying out the monitoring of the Government Programme for the Development of the Single Emergency Call Number 112 Infrastructure and the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior which is responsible within the scope of its competence for organising and coordinating the introduction of the single emergency call number 112 did not ensure that the Programme objectives were implemented effectively.

2.1. Single Emergency Centre information system has been created without following the rules for the Establishment and Legalisation of the State Information Systems approved by the Government therefore:

2.1.1. Compliance of the Emergency Response Centre information system with the information system model defined in the Programme for the Development of the Single Emergency Call Number 112 Infrastructure that was recognised as the most reliable and secure was not ensured;

2.1.2. Compatibility and integration of the information systems of the existing emergency services and the Emergency Response Centre were not achieved as the existing emergency services had no information about the technical and software solutions introduced by the Emergency Response Centre;

2.1.3. Created and operating system (sub systems) was not legalised although data in electronic format are being provided to other institutions;

2.2. Information system of the Klaipėda Division of the Emergency Response Centre does not employ all the introduced functions necessary for the proper functioning of the Emergency Response Centre because of insufficient preparation for the creation of the system;

2.3. The Emergency Response Centre has been using the State budget funding inefficiently including:

2.3.1. Rent of facilities and acquisition of equipment for the Klaipėda Division as the necessity for the facilities was not sufficiently justified whereas part of facilities and computerised work places are not used. Without proper justification of the need for the facilities and the work places for the

Klaipėda Division funds might be used inefficiently when providing facilities and equipment for the other Divisions of the Emergency Response Centre;

2.3.2. Purchase of hardware and software was not divided into lots as it was recommended by the Central Project Management Agency therefore part of the equipment for the Klaipėda Division was acquired for much higher prices than the retail prices recommended by a representative of producer of this equipment in Lithuania.

3. The Ministry of the Interior has provided the Government with the information that was not sufficient to adopt decisions concerning the creation and development of the infrastructure necessary for proper functioning of the Emergency Response Centre.

4. Staff positions in the Emergency Response Centre are established without proper justifications of their necessity to perform the assigned functions therefore in the future the State budget funding might be used inefficiently to maintain those positions.

5. The Emergency Response Centre has carried out insufficient control over concluding and implementation of agreements as:

5.1. fixed price was established for all the maintenance services for the Emergency Response Centre information systems hardware and software which is not in compliance with the Methodology for the Establishment of Price and Price Formation Rules for the Public Procurement therefore all the services were paid for without taking into consideration the quantity of the provided services;

5.2. Costs of acquisition, establishment, updating and maintenance of equipment were compensated to public communications operators without getting assurance if expenditure was justified;

5.3. Licence establishment works were approved without getting assurance of their appropriateness.

6. Due to deficiencies in the quality control system the Emergency Response Centre does not always perform the assigned functions properly and does not employ all the possibilities to improve its performance.

Recommendations

For the Government of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. In order to create the infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the Emergency Response Centre and to ensure efficient and effective use of the State budget funding it is necessary to take decisions that would result in:

1.1. Transfer of all the functions of answering to emergency calls, dealing with emergency requests and management of emergency ambulance and fire and rescue service units to the Emergency Response Centre (Conclusion 1.1);

1.2. Agreement of decisions and plans for restructuring of emergency ambulance services with the infrastructure development for the Single Emergency Call Number 112 (Conclusions 1, 2);

2. In order to ensure the efficient use of the State budget funding for compensation of the costs of acquisition, establishment, updating and maintenance of location tracking devices to public communication operators it is necessary to adopt a decision concerning the necessity of assignment of the function relating to evaluation of the justification of expenditure to an institution having competence in the area of electronic communications (Conclusion 5.2).

For the Ministry of the Interior:

3. In order to achieve the aim of and to ensure effective implementation of the Programme for the Development of the Single Emergency Call Number 112 Infrastructure the Ministry of the Interior, as the Programme co-ordinator, was recommended to:

3.1. Evaluate the deficiencies of the development of infrastructure for the Single Emergency Call Number 112 indicated in the Audit Report and determine measures necessary to achieve the Programme aim (Conclusions 1, 2);

3.2. Accumulate, analyse and summarise information about the process, results and financing of the creation and development of infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the Single Emergency call Number 112 and submit it to the Government (Conclusion 3).

For the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of Interior:

4. In order to organise the activities of the Emergency Response Centre subordinate to the Fire and Rescue Department it is recommended to:

4.1. Evaluate the need of staff positions necessary for the implementation of the functions assigned to the Emergency Response Centre and to specify decisions concerning necessity of creation of operator work places in each of the regional division (Conclusion 4);

4.2. Establish special requirements for the Emergency Response Centre facilities and specify the need for the necessary facilities for the regional divisions on the basis of those requirements (Conclusion 2.3.1);

4.3. Take decisions concerning unused facilities and unused equipment in the created work places in the Klaipėda Division (Conclusion 2.3.1);

4.4. Determine measures ensuring control of conclusion and implementation of agreements and proper implementation of functions (Conclusions 2.3, 5 and 6).

For the Emergency Response Centre:

5. In order to use State budget funding efficiently and effectively and ensure proper implementation of assigned functions it is necessary to determine measures that would ensure:

5.1. Control of conclusion of implementation of agreements (Conclusion 5);

5.2. Efficiently functioning system for quality control of performed functions (Conclusion 6);

5.3. Functionality of the created information system in the Klaipėda Division as defined in the concluded agreements (Conclusion 2.2).

The Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of the Interior, the Fire and Rescue Department and the Emergency Response Centre have provided the Plan for the implementation of the recommendations.