

A cell broadcasting system will be introduced to inform the population about possible catastrophic threats or military threats

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Translated by machine translator



On Tuesday, April 13, the Cabinet of Ministers supported the solution prepared by the Ministry of the Interior for the improvement of the state early warning system, which envisages the introduction of so-called cell broadcasting in Latvia in the future, notifying the population via mobile phones in case of possible disasters or military threats.

Cell broadcasting is an advanced technology that combines two important elements of an early warning system: warning and information. This means that people in the endangered area will be informed of the danger at the same time, as well as receive information on recommended actions on their mobile phones, regardless of the size of the affected area and the number of mobile phones or subscribers in the area.

☞ The Minister of the Interior Sandis Ģirģens emphasizes: *"The modern solution - the introduction of a cell broadcasting system - will be aimed at the common security interests of the society, so that in case of a disaster or threat thereof, people receive information as accurately and quickly as possible. At the same time, we will continue to work on educating the public about actions in case of threats. The future introduction of a cell broadcasting system is one of the cornerstones to strengthen the resilience of the national security and national defense system to various threats. "*

With this state-of-the-art solution, the benefits to the public will be the speed of notification, as information will be sent within minutes; an alert will be received on any switched on phone; it will be possible to reach persons visiting Latvia, as well as persons with hearing impairments. In the event that one of the networks of mobile operators does not work, the coverage of the network of other operators will allow to ensure the notification of the population.

Experience in other countries has shown that cell broadcasting can be used in the event of floods, major forest, bog or peat fires, storms, chemical accidents, railway, aviation or road accidents, pandemics, riots, terrorism, escaped prisoners. , in the event of uncontrolled refugee or migratory flows, in the event of cross - border threats, etc situations.

Cell broadcasting has been introduced in several countries - Lithuania, Norway, Romania, the Netherlands and Japan. Another significant advantage of introducing a cell broadcasting system in Latvia is that the same mobile operators operate in the Lithuanian and Latvian markets. It is also important that mobile operators have experience with cell broadcast technology.

At present, the state early warning system includes alarm sirens located in Latvian cities and parishes (there are a total of 164 such in Latvia). The system also includes alarm and notification equipment of state and local government institutions; electronic media (radio, television); broadcasters and electronic communications operators (Internet portals, cable television, other television channels and radio stations using Internet and satellite communications solutions), as well as mobile communications operators. Finally, the system includes the operational meteorological observation network established by the Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Center, as well as alarm and notification equipment of the operational services and the National Armed Forces.

Despite the regular development of the early warning system, there are still problems that limit its effectiveness. At the same time, there is a need to develop a culture of public safety and education on how to act in situations of danger, including the need to act on audible alarms, which, moreover, are not audible indoors, and which only draw attention rather than provide information on how to act.

Account must also be taken of the fact that alarm sirens do not effectively warn people with hearing impairments.

In 2020, the State Fire and Rescue Service conducted a study evaluating three possible solutions for the improvement of the state early warning system based on the services of mobile operators - cell broadcasting, SMS notification and mobile application. Cell broadcasting was chosen as the most appropriate solution, which will be an additional modern solution for informing the population about the already mentioned existing solutions in the state early warning system - alarm sirens, electronic media, etc.

For the implementation of the cell broadcasting system solution, it is planned to attract the funds of the European Union Fund for the 2021-2027 programming period Operational Program specific support objective "Promote adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and resilience to disasters".

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