



The European emergency number now works in all Member States



Wherever you are in the European Union, you can always reach the emergency services on 112, the single European emergency number. It is now available in all Member States and the Commission continues to monitor correct implementation of the service.

Why 112?

As European citizens travel more often to other countries, for business or pleasure, a single emergency number is needed. It should be the same number throughout the European Union (EU), so that citizens no longer need to remember several numbers, but only one, wherever they are.

What happens when you call 112?

People calling 112 are connected to an operator. Depending on the national civil protection system, the operator (who may be part of the police for example) will either deal with the request directly or transfer it to the appropriate emergency service (ambulance, fire brigade, etc.). In many cases, operators are able to answer in more than one language.

Is 112 available throughout the European Union?

112 is now available in all 27 Member States. Bulgaria made 112 accessible nationwide in autumn 2008, after repeated requests from the Commission.

Some member States (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden) have introduced 112 as their main emergency number, while in most Member States, 112 operates alongside national emergency numbers. Each Member State is responsible for the organisation of its own emergency services and the response to 112 and national emergency calls.

What do people think about 112?

A Euro-barometer survey published in February 2009 indicated that 94% of EU citizens agreed with having a single emergency number everywhere in the EU.

Citizens felt that a properly functioning 112 emergency number was particularly important for people away from their familiar surroundings. For example, people travelling abroad are generally less likely to be able to provide the exact location of the emergency when they call 112.

Are people aware of 112?

Two out of three respondents to the survey believed that people were not adequately informed about 112, which is a call for further action by national authorities. Citizens in the new Member States were in general better informed. Even where people recognise 112 as a national emergency number, still 24% are aware they can call this number from anywhere in the EU, which represents a minor increase compared to 2008.

Is 112 accessible to all?

Not everyone can easily call 112 in an emergency. People with hearing or speech impairments, senior citizens or people with serious injuries may find it difficult to call and explain what has happened.

A 112 multimedia service named "Total Conversation" (to be tested in the next months) will allow users to alert emergency teams through a combination of voice, video and real-time text. This means that emergency centres will receive more complete information (image, text description) enabling them to ensure the best possible response with the shortest possible delay. Services like this can be life saving.

eCall in vehicles?

According to an action plan agreed between the Commission and industry, all new cars should be equipped with "eCall" from 2010 onwards. This in-car technology will call the emergency services in case of an accident, using 112 to send accident data, including the car's location. Many Member States need to upgrade their infrastructure to enable emergency services to receive and process the "eCall" data.

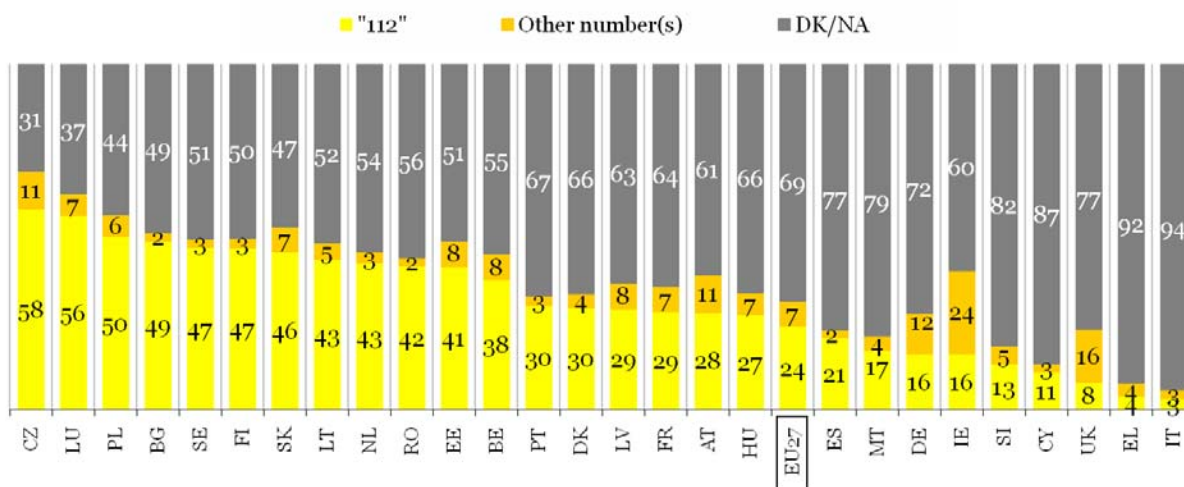
What is the Commission doing?

The Commission will continue to monitor the functioning of 112 in Member States and will take legal action if necessary.

In particular, in some Member States (such as Lithuania, the Netherlands and Italy) emergency centres are still unable to determine the location of the person calling 112. And in Italy proceedings are also pending regarding the appropriate answering and handling of 112 calls.

The Commission will also continue to play an active role in promoting 112 and outlining best practices. The Commission has launched a website, including an interactive quiz for children, to inform citizens about 112 and to encourage a benchmarking of best practices among the 27 EU Member States (<http://ec.europa.eu/112>).

Knowledge of 112 as the EU-wide emergency number



Q2. Can you tell me what telephone number enables you to call emergency services anywhere in the European Union?

%, Base: all respondents, by country

For further information

112: The European emergency number: <http://ec.europa.eu/112>

Europe's Information Society Thematic Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society

Information Society and Media DG: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/index_en.htm

You can listen to all our pages by clicking on the web reader icon 

Information Desk: BU31 01/18 B-1049 Brussels, Email: info-desk@ec.europa.eu