

# 112 Your lifeline while travelling in the EU

*Wherever you are in the European Union, you can always reach the emergency services on 112, the single European emergency number. The EU rules on 112 have recently been reinforced and the Commission continues to monitor their correct implementation in the 27 Member States of the European Union.*

## Why 112?

As European citizens travel more often to other countries of the European Union (EU), for business or holidays, a single emergency number throughout the EU is of great value. Citizens do not longer need to remember several emergency numbers, but only 112.



Some Member States (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Malta and Sweden) have introduced 112 as their main emergency number, while in most Member States, 112 operates alongside national emergency numbers.

## 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. Each Member State is responsible for the organisation of its own emergency services and the response to 112 and national emergency calls.

## What are the EU rules on 112?

Since 2003 EU telecom rules require that 112 is available from fixed and mobile phones free of charge, 112 calls are appropriately answered and handled, information on the location of the caller is made available to emergency services and EU countries inform citizens of 112.

The revised EU telecoms rules from 2009 have strengthened the 112 provisions, in particular, requiring quicker provision of caller location information, extending 112 access obligations for certain VoIP providers, targeting travellers for raising awareness and improving access to 112 for people with disabilities.

Moreover, the new EU telecom rules ensure that citizens using their mobile phones while roaming across the EU receive information about 112 by SMS, free of charge. Member States were to transpose the revised telecom rules in their national legislation by 25 May 2011. The Commission launched infringement procedures against 20 Member States in July 2011 for non communication of measures transposing the new rules. As of January 2012, 13 Member States are yet to transpose the new regulatory framework.

## Who has heard about 112?

112 only helps if people know about it. A recent Eurobarometer survey shows that just over a quarter (26%) of EU citizens questioned could spontaneously identify 112 as the number to call police, fire brigade or medical services anywhere in the EU. Only in four countries (Poland, Luxembourg, Finland and Netherlands) a majority of population identified 112 as the emergency number to call from anywhere in the EU. In Greece and Italy less than 10% of citizens know about 112.

The progress at EU level has been minimal in the last years (from 22% in 2008 to 26% in 2012, up 4 percentage points). In some countries, however, citizens are much more aware of 112 as the EU-wide emergency number than last year: Ireland (from 18% to 26%, up 8 percentage point), Poland (from 54% to 60%, up 6 percentage points) and the UK (from 8% to 13%, up 5 percentage points).

While most EU countries report that they have taken some actions to promoting 112 (such as showing the 112 number on emergency vehicles), according to the survey, only 28% of EU citizens said they have received information related to 112 during the last year.

## European 112 Day

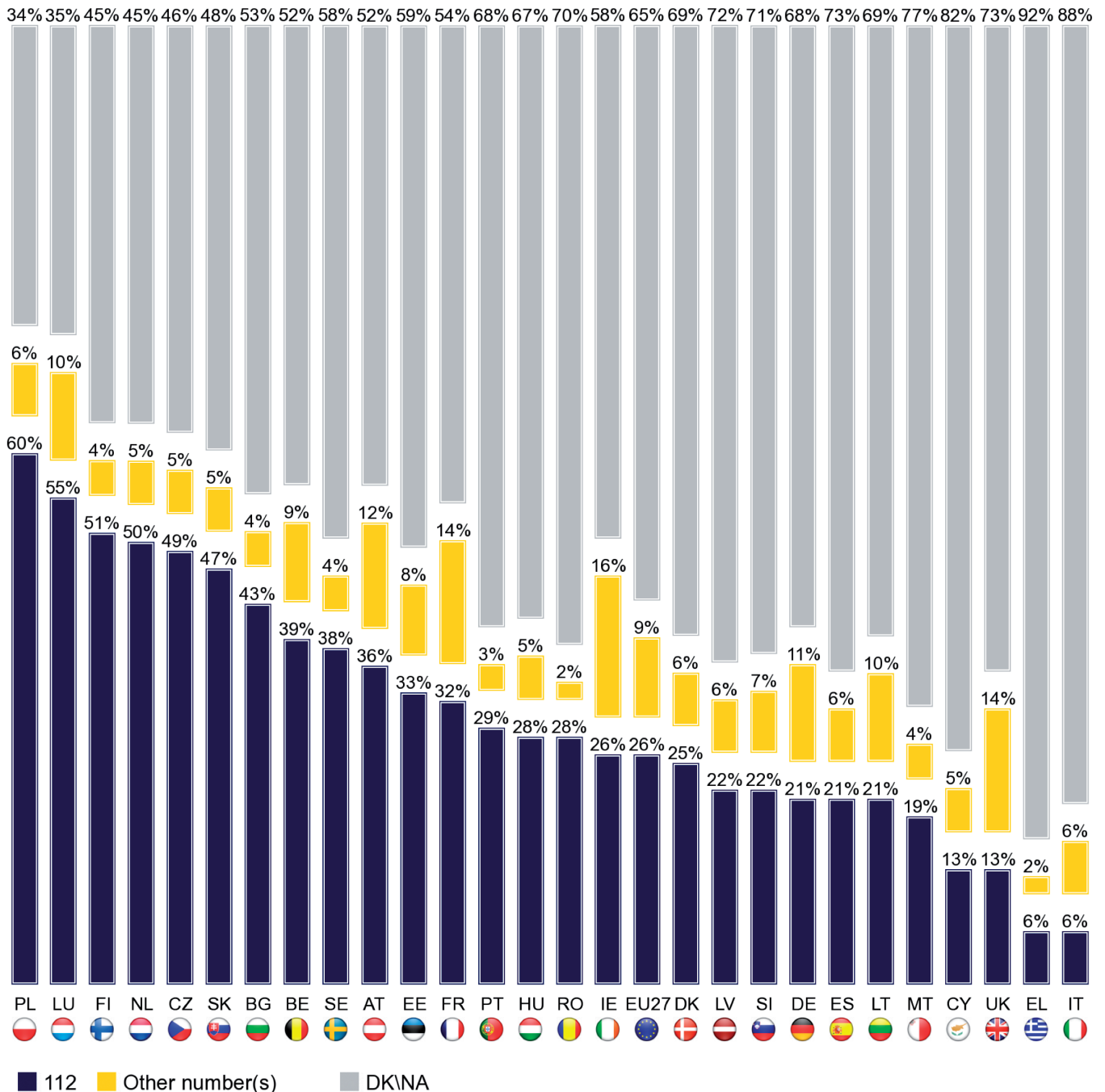
In February 2009, the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council declared 11 February the European 112 Day to spread the word about the European single emergency number. The European 112 Day is celebrated each year through awareness raising and networking activities in all of Europe.

## What else is the Commission doing?

The Commission monitors the functioning of 112 in Member States and will take legal action if necessary. In 2012, the Commission will be assessing as to whether the new EU rules for 112 are appropriately implemented across the EU.

The Commission will 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 best practices among the 27 EU Member States (<http://ec.europa.eu/112>).

### Knowledge of 112 as the EU-wide emergency number: 26% EU average



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](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society)

Information Society and Media DG: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/index_en.htm)

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