

Need help? Call a 116 number!



Missing child? Need to talk? The Commission has reserved the family of 116 telephone numbers for social services help-lines. Citizens in need will be able to use the same number all over the European Union.

What is a 116 number?

The **116 numbers** are **free phone numbers** to be used throughout Europe in situations of need or distress. If you have a problem, when travelling abroad in Europe, you only have to remember one number instead of several ones.

So far three numbers – **116000**, **116111** and **116123** – are going live. **116000** is to be used to report missing children. **116111** aims to support to children and help them with practical solutions if needed. Their concerns can range from relationship problems to real emergency situations like getting help for suicidal tendencies or to escape from a sexual trafficking ring. **116123** is designed to give moral support to adults in crisis.

Why is the European Union interested in 116 help numbers?

Special free phone numbers providing services of a social nature exist throughout Europe but different countries use different numbers for the same service. Common numbers will facilitate the provision of services at a European level. It will also greatly help European travellers who will be able to use the same number everywhere in Europe.

The services can be used as a tool to report social evils and to get assistance, thus contributing to the wellbeing of European citizens.

3 steps to realise a 116 number in your Member State

1. Following a Commission Decision, your Member State reserves the right to use a specific 116 number for a specific service.
2. The authority which watches over the application of telecommunications rules in each Member State assigns it to a service provider that is able to answer the calls.
3. Telecom operators working in your Member State take the technical and commercial measures to forward the calls to your service provider.

What is the European Commission doing to make it happen?

In February 2007, the European Commission adopted a Decision that obliges Member States to reserve the six digit number range starting with 116 for services of social value. The first number being reserved for such a service was 116000 to report missing children.

The Commission also launched a public consultation at the beginning of 2007 to find out which other services could benefit from a 116 number and which organisations could be interested in providing these services.

As a result of the consultation, the Decision was amended in October 2007 and now includes numbers 116111 and 116123 to be used as helplines for children and adults in need of support.

The work to identify specific numbers for social services is continuing and it is still possible to send suggestions to the mailbox: INFSO-116numbers@ec.europa.eu

To be qualified a service should:

1. Be targeted at individuals
2. Be of value for visitors from other countries
3. Answer a specific social need or contribute to the well-being of citizens
4. Help citizens in difficulty
5. Provide information or reporting tools
6. Be open to all citizens
7. Be unlimited in time and non-commercial

What do Member States have to do?

EU Member States are obliged to reserve the 116 numbers, but there is no obligation for them to actually provide the services.

It is then the task of the national authorities to assign the number to an appropriate service provider that is willing and able to handle the calls and the necessary awareness raising campaigns.

Telecom operators have to take steps to carry the calls to the service provider.

Is a 116 number already a reality in your country?

All Member States have completed the preparatory work and opened number 116000, 116111 and 116123 for assignment to a service provider. **116000 is functioning in eleven Member States** (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia). Seventeen Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, and Slovakia) have assigned 116111. **116111 is functioning in thirteen Member States** (Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia). Regarding 116123, nine Member States (Austria, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Slovenia) have assigned the number. **116123 is functioning in Austria, Germany and Slovenia.**

For further information

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Thematic pages:

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