

Brussels, 3 June 2008

EU puts European emergency number 112 on the map before the summer holidays

The European Commission today stepped up its efforts to promote the use of the charge-free European emergency number 112 in the EU. As of today, the new website ec.europa.eu/112 will tell citizens how to use 112 and what to expect from it, particularly when they travel within the EU. It also shows how 112 functions in each Member State: how quickly calls are answered and in which languages.

"The millions of EU citizens going on holidays this summer only need to remember one emergency number: 112," said EU Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding. "While 112 is now available in all but one country across the EU, I call on Member States to make 112 better known and more effective. All EU citizens should know they can dial 112 to reach emergency services. I especially urge those Member States yet to introduce caller location, which helps emergency services find accident victims, to do so for all 112 calls as soon as possible. I am also counting on rapid action from the Bulgarian authorities to finally make 112 available nationwide."

This February, the Commission asked national authorities to improve public awareness of 112, after a survey showed that only 22% of EU citizens know they can call 112 throughout Europe in an emergency.

The Commission today launched the [112 website](#) to inform citizens about the functioning of 112 in the Member States in time for the summer holidays. Based on the information provided by Member States, it compares the performance of national authorities in implementing EU rules on 112 and highlights **best practices**:

- **Fast call handling:** Member States reported on response times to 112 calls once connected. At least 97% of 112 calls are answered **within 20 seconds** in the Czech Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom, and at least 71% within **10 seconds** in the Netherlands and Finland.
- 17 countries reported on their **ability to answer 112 calls in foreign EU languages**: 112 emergency call centres can normally handle English calls in 16 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden). 7 countries said their call centres can answer in the language of a bordering Member State (Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, Hungary, and Slovenia). Several countries have special arrangements allowing call centres to answer in other foreign languages such as forwarding them to other call centres with competent staff on duty (the Czech Republic, Greece, Slovenia and Spain) or to interpretation services (Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK).
- **Raising awareness:** 4 countries broadcast TV programmes promoting 112 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Sweden). Finland and Romania now annually celebrate 112 day on 11 February ([IP/08/198](#)). Other useful tools include motorway signs (Austria and Hungary), leaflets at toll points (Spain) and SMS to roaming mobile users (Hungary).

The [112 website](#) also indicates **shortcomings**:

- **112 is still not fully available in Bulgaria**, and an infringement proceeding is still pending. While 112 is reportedly available in the Sofia region, it cannot be used nationwide.
- **Lack of caller location for mobile 112 calls**: 6 countries (Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) are currently subject to EU infringement proceedings.
- 9 countries did not provide information on **response times to 112 calls** once connected: Belgium, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.
- 10 countries did not provide information about the ability of national 112 emergency centres to answer calls in at least one EU language that is not their national or official language: Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

Background

The European emergency number 112 was introduced in 1991 to provide, in addition to national emergency numbers, a single emergency call number in all EU Member States to make emergency services more accessible, especially for travellers. Since 1998, EU rules require Member States to ensure that all fixed and mobile phone users can call 112 free of charge. Since 2003, telecoms operators must provide caller location information to emergency services so that they can find accident victims quickly. EU Member States must also raise citizens' awareness of 112.

To ensure the effective implementation of 112, the Commission has so far launched 16 [infringement proceedings](#) against 15 countries due to a lack of availability of 112 or caller location. 9 of these have been closed following corrective measures.

An exhibition on 112 in the Commission's Berlaymont building will be opened by Commissioner Reding and Diana Wallis, Vice-President of the European Parliament, today at **14:00**.

For more information:

ec.europa.eu/112

MEMO/08/358

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=4150

European Parliament initiatives on 112:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/065-10135-246-09-36-911-20070906|PR10134-03-09-2007-2007-true/default_en.htm

Annex:

112 in the Member States

| | Fixed and mobile 112 calls possible | Response time of emergency call handler to answer 112 call once connected | Mobile 112 calls possible if no home network available | Foreign EU languages available for 112 calls | Caller location provided (Push = automatically with every call, Pull = on request) & time needed for pull request | |
|-----------|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | | Fixed | Mobile |
| AT | + | Few seconds | + | English | Pull – a few minutes | Pull – a few minutes |
| BE | + | <i>No information</i> | - | <i>No information</i> | Pull – <i>no information on time</i> | Pull – <i>no information on time</i> |
| BG | - (112 not yet available nationwide); infringement procedure pending | 1-5 seconds | + | English, French, German, Romanian | Push (Sofia region only) | Push (Sofia region only) |
| CY | + | <i>No information</i> | - | <i>No information</i> | Pull – 45-75 seconds | Push |
| CZ | + | All calls answered within 20 seconds | + | English, German; calls in other languages can be transferred to other call handlers who speak the language concerned | Pull – average time 3 seconds / max. 7 seconds | Push |
| DK | + | 20-25 seconds | + | English | Push | Push |
| DE | + | 5 seconds to 1 minute | + | English, languages of neighbouring countries in border areas | Pull – 30-60 seconds | Pull – up to 60 minutes |
| EE | + | 10 seconds | + | Finnish, English | Push/ Pull – 23 seconds | Push/ Pull – 23 seconds |
| IE | + | 1 second | + | <i>No information</i> | Push | Pull – <i>no information on time</i> |
| EL | + | 9 seconds | + | English, French; calls in other languages can be transferred to other call handlers who speak the language concerned | Pull – up to 1 minute | Pull – 10-36 minutes |
| ES | + | 97% of calls answered within 20 seconds | + | English, French, German, Portuguese, Italian in some areas; interpretation | Push / Pull – 30 seconds | Push / Pull - <i>no information on time</i> |

| | Fixed and mobile 112 calls possible | Response time of emergency call handler to answer 112 call once connected | Mobile 112 calls possible if no home network available | Foreign EU languages available for 112 calls | Caller location provided (Push = automatically with every call, Pull = on request) & time needed for pull request | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Fixed | Mobile |
| | | | | services and transfers to other call handlers who speak the language concerned available | | |
| FI | + | 71% of calls answered within 10 seconds | + | English, interpretation service available for some other languages (e.g. German and French) | Pull – 3-30 seconds | Pull – 3-30 seconds |
| FR | + | <i>No information</i> | + | English; interpretation service available for other foreign languages | Pull – few seconds | Pull – up to 30 minutes |
| IT | + | <i>No information</i> | Subject to commercial agreement between operators | <i>No information</i> | Pull | Not yet implemented; infringement procedure pending |
| LV | + | 4-5 seconds | <i>No information</i> | <i>No information</i> | Pull – immediate | Pull – 5-10 seconds |
| LT | + | 4-20 seconds | + | Polish, English, German | Pull – up to 1 minute | Not yet implemented; infringement procedure pending |
| LU | + | <i>No information</i> | + | <i>No information</i> | Pull – 1-4 seconds | Push |
| HU | + | 5-10 seconds | + | English, German, languages of neighbouring countries in border areas | Pull – from 30-40 seconds to 3-4 hours | Pull – from 30-40 seconds to 3-4 hours |
| MT | + | <i>No information</i> | + | English | Pull – <i>no information on time</i> | Pull – <i>no information on time</i> |
| NL | + | 90% of calls answered within 10 seconds | + | English, German, interpretation service available for other languages | Push | Not yet implemented; infringement procedure pending |
| PL | + | <i>No information</i> | + | <i>No information</i> | Pull – several minutes | Pull – several minutes; Infringement procedure currently |

| | Fixed and mobile 112 calls possible | Response time of emergency call handler to answer 112 call once connected | Mobile 112 calls possible if no home network available | Foreign EU languages available for 112 calls | Caller location provided (Push = automatically with every call, Pull = on request) & time needed for pull request | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | | Fixed | Mobile |
| | | | | | | suspended in view of verification |
| PT | + | 6-20 seconds | + | <i>No information</i> | Push | Push |
| RO | + | <i>No information</i> | - | <i>No information</i> | Push | Not yet implemented; infringement procedure pending |
| SI | + | 3-5 seconds | + | English, German, Hungarian, Italian, calls in other languages can be transferred to other call handlers who speak the language concerned | Push / Pull – 15 minutes | Push / Pull – 15 minutes |
| SK | + | <i>No information</i> | + | <i>No information</i> | Pull – 2-3 seconds | Pull – 2-3 seconds; Infringement procedure pending |
| SE | + | 9 seconds | + | English; a new interpretation service launched in 2008 covers 10-15 languages | Push | Pull – up to 12 seconds |
| UK | + | 98% of calls answered within 20 seconds | - | Some emergency call centres can make use of interpretation service to deal with calls in foreign languages | Pull – average less than 0.1 seconds in case of electronic transmission | Pull – average less than 0.1 seconds in case of electronic transmission |