

# Less than one in five Irish people know of lifesaving emergency number '112'

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Statement by [Proinsias De Rossa MEP](#)

Proinsias De Rossa MEP has called on the Government to launch an information campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of the European emergency number '112'.

This number can be dialled free of charge from any fixed or mobile phone in any European country, to call for an ambulance, the fire brigade or police in an emergency. Mr De Rossa was responding to the European-wide survey released today which indicated that just 18% of Irish respondents were aware of this number.

"112 is a very useful, and in some cases life-saving, service for Irish people travelling abroad for business or holidays, as well as for people visiting or living in Ireland. It was introduced to provide citizens in the European Union with a common emergency number, alongside national emergency numbers such as 999 in Ireland.

"It is available in every European country and calls from English-speakers can be handled by the emergency services in 21 EU countries, including France and Spain, the most common destinations for Irish tourists. Telecoms operators are obliged under European law to provide caller location information to the emergency services, allowing them to locate victims of accidents.

"While the level of awareness in Ireland of 112 has increased slightly over the past year - in February 2009 it stood at 16% - it is still the fifth lowest in the EU. 85% of Irish respondents said they hadn't seen or heard anything about 112 over the past year while 77% said they weren't adequately informed about this number.

"Precisely two years ago, I called on the Government to undertake a public information campaign aimed at increasing awareness of 112 and suggested that we replicate what is done in other European countries with billboards at ferry ports and in airports, TV broadcasts, and marking 112 day annually. I again urge the Government to better inform the public of this potentially life-saving service."