

Question no 45 by Reinhard Rack (H-0648/06 )

Subject: Uniform European markings for emergency service vehicles H-0648/06

There have been frequent calls in the Member States for vehicles used by the security and emergency services (police, Fire service, civil protection and so on) to have uniform logos/markings, as has been the case for the ambulance service (Red Cross) for some time.

Does the Commission consider it would be possible to bring forward proposals and/or introduce legislative measures to this effect?

(EN) Community law does not include provisions aimed at standardising vehicle identification markings and logos intended for emergency service vehicles.

The situation within the various Member States differs significantly. Only few Member States have legislation dealing with these issues. Generally, each corps has its own identification markings, which is determined under the control of the supervision authorities.

In these conditions, harmonising the laws of the Member States would seem very difficult while providing little added value. Laying down harmonisation measures would create significant problems:

it would be necessary to require that existing markings and logos be replaced on all emergency service vehicles;

then, it would be necessary to 're-train' the public to react to the new signals;

finally, it would be necessary to remove lettering in the language of the Member State, intended specifically to make the identification of most of the emergency service vehicles easier.

The added value of harmonised markings and logos seems limited by the fact that the Vienna Convention of 1968 on Road Traffic lays down the conditions for use of special warning lights. Emergency service vehicles are equipped with light systems emitting a blue light, which must be illuminated when the vehicle is on a priority mission. This has led to a uniform practice, ensuring full understanding of such emergency services in priority missions, throughout the entire Community even if markings and logos of different corps are not harmonised.

Thus, under the better regulation principle there does not seem any justification for the Commission to bring forward proposals and/or introduce legislative measures in this area.