

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0776/08
by Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Information of citizens about the 112

According to Article 26.1 of the Universal Service Directive (2002/22/EC⁽¹⁾) the 112 shall be available 'in addition to any other national emergency call numbers', while according to Article 26.4 'Member States shall ensure that citizens are adequately informed about the existence' of the 112. Does the Commission plan to implement these provisions by requesting all Member States to prominently display the 112 'in addition' to other emergency call numbers on all the vehicles of emergency services displaying emergency numbers, on any other information means used to display emergency numbers (bus terminals, train stations, ports or airports, telephone directories, payphone kiosks, subscriber and billing material etc.) as well as in the context of national campaigns promoting emergency numbers?

E-0892/08EN
Answer given by Mrs Reding
on behalf of the Commission
(2.4.2008)

As pointed out by the Honourable Member, under Article 26(4) of the Universal Service Directive¹, it is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that citizens are adequately informed about the European emergency number 112. The Commission is aware of the overall low awareness among EU citizens about 112 and considers that there is significant room for national authorities to better inform their citizens.

For this reason the Commission has on a number of occasions, most recently in a press release² issued on 11 February 2008, called on Member States to raise public awareness of 112 and emphasized the need for EU citizens to be better informed about 112. Moreover, in December 2007, the Commission requested Member States to provide detailed data on the implementation of 112, including information on awareness-raising measures. The results of this data gathering exercise will be published later in 2008, providing citizens with comprehensive information about the implementation of 112 across the EU.

The Commission also specified in its proposal of 13 November 2007 to amend the relevant provision of the Universal Service Directive that the information measures to be taken should, in particular, include initiatives specifically targeting persons travelling between Member States.

As regards the specific awareness-raising measures mentioned by the Honourable Member, such as displaying the 112 number on emergency vehicles, in public places and in relevant written media as well as promotion of 112 in the context of national campaigns, all such measures would surely help in raising awareness amongst citizens and would be welcomed by the Commission. However, it is for Member States to decide on the specific awareness-raising measures. On the basis of the information received through the above-mentioned data gathering exercise, the Commission intends to highlight best practice in the EU and to encourage Member States to follow it, including as regards information provided to citizens about 112.

¹ Directive 2002/22/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on universal service and user's rights relating to electronic communications networks and services, OJ L 108, 24.4.2002.

² IP/08/198: "Telecoms: EU citizens need to be better informed about Europe's single emergency number 112".