

**Question for written answer E-003022/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Caroline Nagtegaal (Renew)

Subject: Concerns about the Working Time Directive and volunteers in the emergency services

In the Netherlands 80 % of firefighters are volunteers. These 19 000 volunteers form the backbone of the Dutch firefighting system, and are indispensable. This volunteer work is often in addition to their main jobs.

There are concerns in several Member States, such as the Netherlands, about the functioning of applicable EU legislation, especially the Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC). The Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security is concerned that the current position of volunteer firefighters in the Netherlands comes into conflict with the Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC)¹.

1. Does the Commission agree that volunteers are indispensable for the emergency services in EU Member States, and that EU legislation should contribute to maintaining the volunteer system?
2. Has there been contact between the Commission and Dutch Government on these concerns about the effect of the Working Time Directive 2003/88/EC on emergency services in the Netherlands and the use of volunteers?
3. Does the Commission acknowledge concerns about the possible effect of Directive 2003/88/EC on emergency services and the use of volunteers, and if so, what will the Commission do to address these concerns?

¹ <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/brandweer-dreigt-vrijwilligers-kwijt-te-raken~ab6b919e/>