

**Question for written answer P-001195/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Renaud Muselier (PPE)

Subject: EU working time directive and status of French volunteer firefighters

In France, the emergency relief system is based on the involvement of 194 000 volunteer firefighters, i.e. 79 % of all staff. Volunteer firefighters, who account for 66 % of all daily interventions, are an indispensable part of that system. They often carry out their tasks in addition to their main jobs.

This civic engagement is being threatened by the 2003 Directive 2003/88/EC concerning working time. Indeed, in a judgment of 21 February 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that the time required for volunteer firefighting had to be regarded as working time within the meaning of Directive 2003/88/EC. As a result, the majority of volunteer firefighters who also have other jobs, by combining both activities would end up exceeding permitted working time limits (13 hours per day, 48 hours per week) and would be forced to put an end to their commitment to serving the population.

In addition, this provision would directly endanger the 'rescEU' initiative, which is supposed to enable a European civil protection force to be set up, based on the 3.5 million volunteer firefighters in Europe.

Will the Commission shortly propose a specific EU directive concerning the working time of volunteer firefighters in order to protect, in all its forms, the voluntary and charitable engagement of our civil protection services?