



Calling 112 can save lives

Plenary sessions

Raising public awareness of EU emergency phone number could save lives this summer, said Parliament in a resolution passed on Tuesday. But the accuracy and reliability of caller information still need to be improved, it added.

MEPs regret that the EU-wide 112 emergency number is still far from fulfilling its potential to save lives in holiday accidents, because too few citizens are aware of it.

A Eurobarometer survey published in February 2011 found that only 26% of EU citizens can spontaneously identify 112 as the number to call in an emergency abroad.

The non-legislative report on "Universal Services and 112 emergency number" drafted by Sylvana Rapti (S&D,EL) and approved by a show of hands, says that Member States should publicise the number in doctors' surgeries and pharmacies, schools and universities, airports and train stations.

"Now when it is summer and people have holidays there is a great deal of security attached to this number which means that people can solve their problems no matter where they are", said Ms Rapti during the debate.

Improving caller location and accessibility

To ensure that caller location data is timely, accurate and reliable, especially for roaming calls, the report calls on the Commission to "significantly improve" it, with the "ultimate goal of mandatory automatic localisation for all 112 calls". The use of Voice over Internet should also be tested with a view to developing the next generation 112 system in the EU, it adds.

The report also stresses the need for interpretation services to help people who do not speak the language of the country in which they are calling, and also the need to guarantee accessibility for disabled and vulnerable people (e.g. by using text relay or sign language services).

About the 112 number

The EU number 112 was established in 1991, as an additional emergency number to help Europeans travelling abroad in the EU. In most countries, it has yet to replace familiar national numbers and will not displace the traditional 999 in the UK and Ireland.

The 112 number can be called free of charge and is reachable from fixed and mobile phones anywhere in the EU.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

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