

Brussels, 18 September 2008

Telecoms Rules: 112 infringement cases against Italy, Bulgaria and Romania

In a new round of Telecoms infringement proceedings, the European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, today decided to open a case against Italy on the effectiveness of the single European emergency number 112. The Commission also had to refer Bulgaria and Romania to the European Court of Justice, for the lack of availability of 112 and for lack of caller location for 112 calls.

"Although some efforts have been made by both Bulgaria and Romania on the implementation of the single European emergency number 112, we cannot be complacent when it comes to the safety of our citizens. Any delay on the implementation of 112 can put the lives and health of travellers at risk. I call on Romania and Bulgaria to fully and quickly implement number 112", said Viviane Reding, the EU Telecoms Commissioner. "I also urge Italy to ensure that all 112 calls are handled as effectively as calls to other national emergency numbers by all emergency call centres so that Europeans can get help when in need."

EU Telecoms rules require Member States to make sure that people can call the single European emergency number 112 free of charge nationwide from any type of phone. They must also ensure that 112 calls are answered and handled efficiently and that operators provide information on the caller's location to emergency services.

The Commission is today sending a letter of formal notice to **Italy** about the effectiveness of 112 calls handling and answering. The various emergency response systems of many Member States, including Italy, in particular police, ambulance, fire and rescue service, run separate call centre systems using different numbers. These Member States have to ensure that the handling and answering of 112 calls is as effective as for calls made to other national emergency numbers. This is not always the case in Italy because call centres of the emergency service in charge of receiving 112 calls cannot transfer callers to the centres of other required emergency services.

Today the Commission also decided to refer **Bulgaria** and **Romania** to the European Court of Justice. Before reaching this stage, letters of formal notice had been sent to Bulgaria in October 2007 ([IP/07/1530](#)) and to Romania in November 2007 ([IP/07/1785](#)). In April 2008 reasoned opinions – the "last warning" in such a procedure – were then sent to both countries on the proper functioning of 112 ([IP/08/519](#)). In Bulgaria, 112 is still not operational nationwide. In Romania, caller location, which helps emergency services find accident victims, is not provided for all calls ([IP/08/358](#)).

However, in view of ongoing efforts in both Member States to make 112 fully operational by the end of the year, the Commission is delaying the execution of today's decision by three months to give them a last chance to address the matter. Failure to fully comply in the next three months will lead to the cases being filed with the European Court of Justice. *"I expect the many political commitments made by Bulgarian and Romanian authorities to guarantee the full functioning of 112 to be taken very seriously. Their deadline for making 112 fully operational was 1 January 2007, so today's decision to bring both countries before the Court of Justice will be immediately executed if there is the slightest doubt about full respect of EU law at the end of the year,"* said Commissioner Reding.

Background:

112 was introduced in 1991 to provide, in addition to national emergency numbers, a single emergency number in all EU Member States to make emergency services more accessible. Since 1998, EU rules require Member States to ensure that all fixed and mobile phone users can call 112 free of charge. Since 2003, telecoms operators must provide caller location information to emergency services.

Since 2006 the Commission has launched infringement proceedings (including this round) against 14 Member States on the issue of caller location, against two Member States on availability of 112 and against one Member States on handling of 112 calls.

Eight of the caller location cases have been closed as the Member States remedied the situation. The Commission was similarly able to close one of the cases related to the availability of 112. The European Court of Justice has already ruled on two 112 infringement cases finding a breach of EU law in that caller location information was only partially available in Slovakia (Judgment of 25 July 2008) or not available at all for 112 calls from mobile phones in Lithuania (Judgment of 11 September). Two more cases (Italy and the Netherlands) are currently before the Court, while the Commission decision to refer Poland to the Court is under suspension pending verification of the effect of 112 there.

An overview of the state of infringement proceedings can be found in the Annex.

In June 2008 the Commission launched a new website dedicated to 112 that provides information in all EU official languages to citizens who travel within the EU <http://ec.europa.eu/112>

For the other infringement proceedings under the EU Telecoms rules in this round see IP/08/1343 and IP/08/1344.

Annex:

Situation as of 11 September 2008

State of infringement proceedings concerning 112

| Member State | Availability of 112 from fixed and mobile telephones | Provision of caller location for fixed and mobile calls | Call handling and answering |
|---------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Austria | | | |
| Belgium | | Infringement closed in 2007 | |
| Bulgaria | Infringement started in 2007 | N/A | N/A |
| Cyprus | | Infringement closed in 2006 | |
| Czech Republic | | | |
| Germany | | | |
| Denmark | | | |
| Estonia | | | |
| Spain | | | |
| Finland | | | |
| France | | | |
| Greece | | Infringement closed in 2007 | |
| Hungary | | Infringement closed in 2007 | |
| Ireland | | Infringement closed in 2006 | |
| Italy | | Infringement started in 2006 | Infringement started in 2008 |
| Lithuania | | ECJ judgment of 11 September 2008 finding infringement of the applicable EU law | |
| Luxembourg | | Infringement closed in 2006 | |
| Latvia | | Infringement closed in 2008 | |
| Malta | | | |
| Netherlands | | Infringement started in 2006 | |
| Poland | Infringement closed in 2005 | Infringement started in 2006, procedure currently suspended pending verification of the practical functioning of the caller location system | |
| Portugal | | Infringement closed in 2007 | |
| Romania | | Infringement started | |

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| | | in 2007 | |
| Sweden | | | |
| Slovenia | | | |
| Slovakia | | ECJ judgment of 25 July 2008 finding infringement of the applicable EU law | |
| United Kingdom | | | |