

Question for written answer E-004305/2026

to the Commission

Rule 144

Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE), Nikola Bartůšek (ECR)

Subject: Language barriers and accessibility of the European emergency number 112

On the night of 12 to 13 October 2026, a fatal shooting occurred on Rue Wiertz in Brussels, near the European Parliament. An EU institutions employee heard gunshots from his apartment and called 112. However, he encountered an automated menu available only in French and Dutch. Speaking neither language, he could not report the incident despite being able to communicate in English.

This raises concerns about the accessibility of the European emergency number. Brussels hosts thousands of EU officials, international workers and visitors who may not speak the local languages. These barriers are foreseeable and emergency services must be equipped to address them.

Article 109 of Directive (EU) 2018/1792 requires Member States to ensure the effective handling of emergency communications, yet no EU-wide minimum language requirements currently apply to the emergency number 112.

1. Does the Commission consider that emergency call systems relying on automated menus unavailable in English ensure effective access for people who do not speak the local languages, when navigating such menus may prevent callers from reaching an operator?
2. Will the Commission consider introducing EU-wide minimum language accessibility standards for the emergency number 112, including English-language automated instructions and access to an English-speaking operator or interpretation service, to ensure that language barriers do not prevent anyone from reporting an emergency or receiving timely and potentially life-saving assistance?

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