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The European Parliament approves the Commission proposal for a new regulation of cross-border parcel delivery

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The high prices of cross-border parcel delivery are a big obstacle for consumers and retailers (small and medium-sized enterprises) to buy and sell products online.

When the same product is sent from one EU country to another, this may differ considerably in prices. When a parcel of 2 kg is sent from Belgium to Italy, this will cost 32.8 €, while sending the same parcel from the Netherlands to Italy, this will cost 13 €. Thus sending a parcel from one EU country to another can be charged five times higher than sending the same parcel within a country at national level.

The objective of the new regulation is to make parcel delivery across countries more competitive and the prices more transparent, so that the buyer can choose the best deal for the product he wants to buy. At the same time, it will make the online buyer more confident about buying products online and thus will be a boost to e-commerce.

The Commission will publish the parcel delivery tariffs on a special website so that consumers and e-retailers can compare domestic and cross-border tariffs between Member States and between providers. The website will highlight the highest tariffs, which should encourage consumers and SMEs to look for a better deal and providers to offer better services.

The national regulatory authorities will be responsible for collecting the tariffs from the service providers and assess the affordability of services which the providers offer in line with the universal service obligation. Moreover, they will collect information such as the name and address of the service providers, the services they offer, their turnover, the complaint procedure, the number and status of their workers, etc.

The Commission will re-assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the new regulation in 2020, and every three years thereafter.

The new regulation was approved by the European Parliament on 13 March 2018. As the next step, it will have to be approved by the Council of Ministers, after which it will come into force 20 days after its publication in the EU's Official Journal.

Position of Eurofedop



Already in 2012, at the working group Post and Telecom in Innsbruck, Austria, Eurofedop discussed the subject of cross-border parcel delivery, and underlined that a better regulation and job security were among its principal concerns.

The Trade Council shared the view of the Commission that high quality had to be guaranteed with regard to the cross-border delivery of parcels in the EU. Moreover, appropriate attention had to be given to excluding precarious jobs in the sector of parcel delivery. Social dumping was recognised as a serious problem and the Trade Council was particularly concerned about the growing introduction of subcontractors in the sector. Those subcontractors namely tend to hire "fake self-employed" to do the job, at a very low salary and without any social protection.

The Trade Council demanded that a juridical framework would be established which would be individually adapted to the economic power of a member state concerned and guarantee an interesting salary, good working conditions and social protection for the workers concerned. Moreover, it had to put an end to the practice of fake self-employment.

