

**Question for written answer E-009817/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)

Subject: Discriminatory practices of car-rental companies

On 8 August 2014, the Commission published a letter addressed to six international car-rental companies in which it called for an end to discriminatory practices which prevent European consumers – on the basis of their nationality or country of residence – from renting cars on-line for the lowest available rate¹.

The Czech branch of the European Consumer Centres Network received a complaint on this matter last year from a Czech national, who complained that a French car-rental company had engaged in discriminatory practices by offering different prices on its websites depending on the place of residence of the customer or the language version used.

On 28 October 2014, the Commission announced that an agreement had been reached with representatives of car-rental companies. According to Commissioner Barnier, this agreement will greatly strengthen the position of consumers, including by ending the practice of redirecting customers on the basis of their IP addresses. Nonetheless, car-rental companies will still be able to charge different prices where the difference can be justified by objective reasons².

In a press release, the Commission made a commitment to continue negotiations on determining the objective reasons that can be used to justify differences in prices and to reflect on ways to improve price comparison and information for consumers.

1. What does the Commission feel could reasonably be defined as objective criteria for charging different prices on websites on the basis of language version or place of residence?
2. How are these criteria compatible with the Services Directive, and particularly with the provisions of Article 20 of that directive, which clearly prohibits discrimination against consumers on the basis of their place of residence or nationality?

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-917_en.htm?locale=en

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1209_en.htm