

**Question for written answer E-003389/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Directive 97/67/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on postal services and Article 3 thereof concerning universal service

In the European Union, postal services are governed by Directive 97/67/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the development of the internal market of Community postal services and the improvement of quality of service (97/67/EC, as amended by Directives 2002/39/EC and 2008/6/EC).

The Postal Services Directive has gradually harmonised postal markets in the EU, and has been used in an attempt, not only to develop the internal market, but also to guarantee the availability to everybody in all Member States of a universal postal service which is reasonably priced and complies with certain quality requirements.

Article 3, as amended, guarantees one clearance and one delivery not less than five days a week, even in remote or sparsely populated areas, save in circumstances or geographical conditions deemed exceptional (which must be notified to the Commission).

Can remote location or sparse population be taken as grounds for an entire Member State to deviate from the five-day delivery requirement which forms part of the universal service obligation?