

**Question for written answer E-008227/2016  
to the Commission  
Rule 130  
Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)**

**Subject:** Premium-rate services and associated dangers for European mobile network customers

Premium-rate services, i.e. telecommunication services with increased tariffs, allow mobile network users to purchase games on their telephones, access electronic editions of periodicals, and take part in competitions and SMS lotteries, among other things. Regrettably, though, these services are increasingly frequently being abused by dishonest entities in order to fraudulently obtain money from unwitting telephone users.

The procedure used is as follows: premium-rate SMS messages are sent which usually contain a question and a request for a simple answer, e.g. YES or NO. Sending a message back with an affirmative response in practice results in a service being activated, the cost of which was not previously revealed to the owner of the mobile telephone, nor agreed subsequently. In cases like this, the actions of dishonest entities could have very serious consequences for consumers.

The people who suffer at the hands of these dishonest entities are mainly those who are already disadvantaged, often the elderly and the disabled. However, claiming compensation is very difficult, complicated and time-consuming.

Unfortunately, this crime is starting to affect an increasingly large number of EU citizens. How does the Commission plan to protect the interests of digital consumers from dishonest practices within the framework of the completion of the digital single market?