

**Question for written answer P-007538/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Automatic blocking of other manufacturers' toner cartridges

The printer manufacturer HP has confirmed that HP printers which are not equipped with an original HP cartridge no longer work. Since 13 September 2016, consumers, possibly numbering in their millions, have no longer been able to use alternative own-brand cartridges in their HP printers. It has been established that this date, on which printers blocked, was programmed in advance, having been incorporated in an update developed in 2015 and implemented in March 2016. The question now is whether the same thing will apply to all HP printers. This matter has already been raised in previous parliamentary questions¹, and at that time it became apparent that EU competition law was probably not being infringed. However, in view of the blocking since 13 September 2016, we make so bold as to express doubts about the accuracy of that view.

1. Is the Commission aware of this new development?
2. Does the Commission consider that this blocking, and the fact that it compels consumers to buy (expensive) original HP cartridges if they want to use HP printers, infringes competition law in the EU?
3. What steps will the Commission take to investigate these practices?

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2015-006065%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fNL&language=NL>