

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2090/03
by Bert Doorn (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Protection of the domestic postal market by the French authorities against foreign service providers

A number of court cases and inquiries are under way in France against TNT Jet Services, an express mail delivery service and subsidiary of the Dutch TPG mail delivery service, which, it is alleged, has been evading labour law provisions by using subcontractors. Other service providers in the postal sector, such as the UK's Royal Mail, are also being prosecuted.

Undertakings belonging to La Poste, the French Post Office group of companies, such as Chronopost, also use subcontractors. However, there is nothing to show that any inquiries are being conducted into their activities. I have actually seen a letter in which Chronopost received an assurance from the French Labour Inspectorate that its practices involving subcontractors would not be investigated.

In my view, all this goes to prove that the French authorities are pursuing a policy which seeks to protect the French domestic market against foreign competition and which actually results in its being so protected. The Competition DG is aware of this matter and has agreed to initiate an inquiry into the competition law aspects thereof. The conduct of the French authorities is also hampering the liberalisation of express mail services on the internal market.

- Is the Commission aware of the recent inquiries and court cases that the French authorities have initiated against TNT Jet Services and other express mail undertakings?
- What is the Commission planning to do to combat the unequal application of the law in the postal sector in France?
- Will the Commission ensure that the liberalisation of express mail services is applied uniformly in the internal market?