

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0287/07  
by Renato Brunetta (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Obtaining original spare parts for branded watches

Watch repairers in all the EU Member States are currently having difficulty in obtaining original spare parts for branded watches - parts which the manufacturers have been withholding from them for some time. This means that customers/consumers are required to have their watches repaired by the manufacturers - a slow and considerably more expensive process.

The European Confederation of Watch and Clock Repairers' Associations (CEAHR) has already made the Commission's 'Competition' DG aware of this deplorable state of affairs, in which independent repairers are being put under pressure by the watch manufacturers' attempt to establish a monopoly which will distort competition and the free market.

If this state of affairs were to continue, the survival of watch-repairing as an independent trade would be seriously jeopardised.

In view of the above, would the Commission answer the following questions?

1. Is the manufacturers' conduct legitimate from the point of view of the rules on competition?
2. Can independent watch repairers insist on being supplied with spare parts (which would put a stop to the manufacturers' monopolistic scheme)?
3. Why has the Commission's 'Competition' DG decided to dismiss the earlier analogy with the case law applicable to the automobile industry and why has it rejected calls from CEAHR for the market in spare watch parts to be reopened?