

**Question for written answer E-014599/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Gianluca Buonanno (ENF)

Subject: Delivery service for online purchases, call centres, and hidden costs

The home delivery and courier sector (which is now booming, given the number of purchases made online and delivered to the buyer's home) appears to have adopted a type of standard practice which, from the consumer's point of view, is both expensive and disadvantageous. According to the information that I have received, a courier company will very often email the buyer to say that the goods cannot be delivered because – apparently – the delivery address either does not exist or cannot be traced. The buyer is invited to arrange a second delivery date via a customer service call centre (outsourced to an outside company); the very high cost of using this latter service is charged entirely to the buyer. Having already been charged for delivery, the buyer consequently has to pay the courier company twice over for the delivery (or for its own inefficiency), without ever having entered into any such contractual arrangement.

Is the Commission aware of this type of practice? Does it not believe that, because of this way of proceeding, consumers are being charged hidden costs for services that they have already paid for?

Does it not see a need to regulate a particularly sensitive sector, in which the consumer is regarded as the weak link in a system still too much in thrall to large multinational groups?