

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1365/09  
by Marcello Vernola (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Shop opening on Sundays and public holidays

Law No 5/08<sup>1</sup> of the Apulia (Puglia) Region has made it compulsory for shops to close on Sundays and public holidays, thereby substantially limiting the business of large and medium-sized non-food sales outlets. Closure is compulsory for retail outlets on national holidays (Article 8 (c)), while exemptions may be granted for local shops alone at weekends and nights, at the discretion of the municipalities (Article 8 (a)). Special provisions have been introduced for shops in tourist or art centres for the summer period (Article 18.6). The law excludes from its scope furniture shops, florists, etc. and does not therefore place any restrictions on their businesses. Conversely, a wide variety of other businesses are subject to its provisions, such as food and non-food outlets.

The latter kind of sales outlets, which have developed over large spaces, require a catchment area of over 500 000 inhabitants; the law therefore stipulates that such businesses must be set up outside urban areas. This means that customers generally go there at weekends: it has been noted that Sunday opening has a 32% impact on annual turnover.

Does the Commission not consider that this Apulian regional law leads to discrimination between various categories of businesses and that it is detrimental to the freedom of consumers to choose which products to buy?

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Law No 5 of 7 May 2008: 'Amendments and additions to Regional Law No 11 of 1 August 2003 (new trading rules)', BURP No 76 of 14.5.2008.