

**Question for written answer P-004562/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Zuzana Roithová (PPE)

Subject: End of the DOLCETA project

In December 2003, the Commission launched the DOLCETA ('Developing On-Line Consumer Education and Training for Adults', subsequently known as 'Consumer Education Online') project. This was a comprehensive, Europe-wide project aimed at educating consumers. For eight years, experts in the Member States gradually developed eight extensive modules covering areas such as consumer law, financial literacy, sustainable consumption and product safety. The aim of the project was to raise EU citizens' awareness of their consumer rights. The project not only targeted the general public, it also provided information and materials for lecturers, teachers and non-profit organisations.

Over the years, the portal transformed into a several-thousand-page-long encyclopaedia whose authors were always respected experts. The number of visitors to the site in the Czech Republic alone was in the thousands each month.

In 2013, in view of the high cost of updating and maintaining the project, the Commission decided to make the entire content of the website inaccessible and to replace it with the 'ConsumerClassroom.eu' project. Unlike DOLCETA, the new project does not provide consumers with information; rather, it serves only the needs of teachers, allowing them to share their teaching materials. Not one piece of information from the original DOLCETA portal has been published on ConsumerClassroom.eu.

The non-profit organisation 'Generation Europe' has asked the Commission whether it would be possible to make the original contents (modules covering core consumer education) of the portal available on its own website – while stating the source of the information – and to update it at its own cost, so that Czech consumers do not lose their only source of information. The Commission responded negatively, arguing that the materials could now only be used within the Commission owing to the technical difficulty involved in transferring them.

1. Given that the Commission has already invested over EUR 100 000 in public funds to set up DOLCETA, the general public should be entitled to continue using this vital information. How will the Commission explain that its investment in DOLCETA is worthless now that the contents of the DOLCETA portal have been made inaccessible?
2. Given the usefulness of this information for consumers and for protecting consumer rights, how will the Commission guarantee that the contents of the DOLCETA portal are made available to non-profit organisations in Member States which are willing to continue to invest their own money in the project?