Priority question for written answer P-002018/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Impact of the coronavirus on the viability of European physical fashion retailers

In order to combat the spread of the coronavirus, most Member States have decided to close non-essential shops until further notice, including physical fashion retailers.

For many physical fashion retailers, the compulsory closure is causing a substantial loss of revenue. Fashion retailers who do not have an online shop are seeing their sales grind to a halt, while their fixed costs accumulate and their capital has been invested in stocks.

It is important that, when the closure measure is lifted, European physical fashion retailers should be given the time to sell their articles at a normal price. It is equally important that online fashion platforms should then sell their goods at normal prices. The fact is that online fashion platforms are already exploiting the situation now to offer massive discounts. If they continue to do so, even when physical fashion retailers reopen their shops, physical fashion retailers will likewise be compelled to sell at lower prices.

1. What measures will the Commission take to prevent physical fashion retailers in the EU from going to the wall?

2. Will the Commission consider introducing a single European set of rules on discounts applicable to both physical shops and online shops in order to create a level playing field between domestic and foreign businesses and between physical retailers and online shops?

3. Can the Commission guarantee that the ban on loss-making sales in the EU is applied, including by online shops?