

OPINION
of the
Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs
of the
House of Representatives
of the
Republic of Cyprus

On the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border parcel delivery services.

COM(2016)285

The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs (hereinafter «the Committee»), examined, in its meeting held on the 25th October 2016, the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border parcel delivery services. The Committee, supports the efforts of the European Union to configure a framework within which affordable retail prices of cross border postal parcel delivery will be offered, a proposal which is expected to positively contribute to the increase of electronic commerce in the European Union. Following an in-depth examination of the abovementioned proposal for a regulation, the Committee expresses the following positions with regard to cross border parcel delivery services:

The Committee finds that the proposal for a regulation on cross-border parcel delivery services presents shortcomings in issues dealing with: (a) the transparency of wholesale and retail prices, (b) the appraisal of the affordability of the prices of cross-border postal parcel delivery, where no specific calculation methodology exists, as well as (c) the rights of access to the network of providers of universal postal services.

Considering the above shortcomings of the proposal under consideration, the Committee indicates the need to effect changes to the said proposal in a way that a common methodology for the analysis of the affordability and the conditions of access to the providers of universal postal service, which will be binding to all member states of the European Union is adopted. The Committee considers that the adoption of a common methodology of analysis will enable the assessment of the affordability of the prices of cross-border postal parcel services in each member state, and the identification of the price component which makes access not affordable and the establishment of a mechanism which allows intervention to set the affordable price. Moreover, the Committee finds that the adoption of a common framework of access to the network of the universal postal service provider in each member state in order to enable small providers of such services in other countries to utilise the economies of scale enjoyed by large scale providers of cross-border postal parcel delivery services, shall decidedly contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the proposal at hand.

The Committee considers that the publication of the wholesale and retail prices of cross-border parcel delivery services constitutes an important step in the right direction since transparency is expected to increase citizens' choices and at the same time exert pressure on the providers to lower their prices and become more competitive. However, the Committee indicates that measures should be taken to reduce the administrative burden involved in making the said prices available to the public.

In the light of the above, the Committee welcomes the efforts of the Slovakian Presidency to improve the proposal for a regulation on cross-border parcel delivery services and calls upon the institutions of the European Union to contribute to the formulation of the said proposal in a way that adequately reflects the indications made above.