

Press release

**BEREC and ERGP adopt a joint opinion to the European
Commission on price transparency and regulatory oversight of
cross-border parcels delivery**

The proper functioning of the e-commerce sector is instrumental for the European Union (EU) economic growth, in particular considering its potential to decrease retail prices, widen consumer choices, reduce transaction costs and, hence, contribute towards the deepening of the internal market.

E-commerce is a growing sector prompting a significant increase of parcel and express volumes due to the need to physically deliver the goods bought online to the buyer of a product. To this end, e-commerce offers a dynamic setting for a wide variety of delivery operators, including the historic postal operators, as well as new market entrants. Nonetheless, many e-retailers and internet shoppers still consider that prices and conditions for cross-border e-commerce parcels delivery may create an obstacle for online buying. These obstacles, which might hinder the development of the e-commerce in Europe, were addressed in the Digital Single Market Strategy, namely the need to adopt measures regarding price transparency and regulatory oversight.

In this context, BEREC and ERGP have worked together in a joint working group and adopted, on 3 December and 10 December, respectively, a joint Opinion on price transparency and regulatory oversight of the cross border parcels delivery, taking into account possible regulatory insights from the electronic communications.

The Joint Opinion outlines the powers that the competent national regulatory authorities should have to monitor cross border parcels delivery and to intervene in this market regarding price transparency for European deliveries, including for prices of small shipments, if problems are identified and evidenced.

Furthermore, the document focuses on the existing measures to increase consumer and supplier information and awareness, such as information platforms for (small) e-retailers on the available delivery services, price comparison websites, enhanced 'track and trace' systems and scoreboards on delivery performance.

With regard to regulatory oversight, the Joint BEREC-ERGP Opinion addresses the potential for developing principles or guidelines to improve monitoring within the sector, the powers of NRAs to collect relevant data, the development of 'quality of service' indicators and the strengthening of cooperation amongst the NRAs, the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders.

Finally, the Joint BEREC-ERGP Opinion considers that incentives could be provided to the e-sellers and other entities in order to reduce shipping costs, such as access of small e-sellers to bulk shipments by cooperating with a local postal operator or a postal operator active in another country and the application of efficient terminal dues for shipments collected and delivered within the EU Member states.

Upon the adoption of the joint Opinion, Fátima Barros, BEREC Chair 2015, said: *“Affordable and reliable parcel delivery services is considered extremely important for retrieving the huge potential of e-commerce. Regulators therefore need the appropriate powers to intervene should any competition issues become evident or are suspected in the parcels sector”*.

Feliksas Dobrovolskis, ERGP Chair 2015, stated: *“A number of barriers related to public policy as well as to commercial conduct of companies may be hindering the proper functioning of the cross-border e-commerce parcels delivery sector. Increased price transparency measures could be helpful in overcoming such barriers where they exist”*.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

About BEREC

BEREC (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications) is composed of a Board of Regulators consisting of the Heads of the 28 national regulatory authorities (NRAs). BEREC advises the European Commission and its member NRAs, and assists the European Parliament and Council, on issues related to the application of the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications. BEREC seeks to ensure fair competition and consistency of regulation in the internal market for electronic communications, for the benefit of European consumers.

About the ERGP

The European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP) is composed of the 28 national regulatory authorities (NRAs) for postal services of the EU, as well as national regulatory authorities from countries of the European Economic Area and countries with candidate status to join the EU.

The ERGP’s tasks are to advise and assist the European Commission in consolidating the internal market for postal services or any other matter related to postal services within its competence.

Furthermore, the ERGP is advising on and assisting the Commission with the development of the internal market for postal services and as to the consistent application in all Member States of the regulatory framework for postal services.