

Position Paper

UEAPME¹'s reply to Public Consultation on cross-border parcel delivery.

UEAPME welcomes the European Commission's initiative to launch a public consultation on cross-border parcel delivery in the framework of the Digital Single Market Strategy. However, UEAPME regrets that the Survey is available only in 6 languages as this gives less possibility to SMEs to answer.

Affordable and high-quality (cross-border) delivery services can build customers' trust in cross-border online sales and help SMEs to start selling online, therefore price transparency is necessary and cross-border parcel markets need a regulatory framework to ensure effective competition.

In general, UEAPME is concerned about the anticompetitive behaviour of the big players in the parcel delivery sector, which may drive out small and medium sized enterprises. Indeed, between these players there is a struggle for power going on, although they work sometimes together. Because of the competition between these players, the prices are going to a level that SMEs in the parcel delivery sector cannot compete with. Therefore a close monitoring of competition in the sector is desirable.

The transport of parcels that have been ordered by e-retailers, is transport for hire or reward. Transport for hire or reward has been regulated by the European Regulations 1071/2009 and 1072/2009 on access to the profession and to the market. These European regulations do apply only for vehicles and combinations of vehicles that exceed a permissible laden mass of 3,5 tons. However, nothing prevents from lowering this limit to include also the transport of parcels by light vans, by express and courier companies under these regulations. According to UEAPME, this is preferable above the integration in the rules on Postal Services. UEAPME is in favor of ruling the parcel delivery with a European regulatory framework and not by CEN or other standards. For parcel delivery, the same free market principles should apply as for transport for hire or reward, including the interdiction on state aid and the application of the de minimis-rules that are in force. Adequate pay and working conditions for parcel delivery are necessary as a prerequisite for good quality parcel delivery services.

It is important to be aware of the fact that a lot of subcontractors are working for one of the oligopolistic players. These subcontractors are often very small companies, with no economic power and they are often exploited by the big players.

On areas for improvement it has to be highlighted that for SMEs and their organisations it is important to have a personal contactpoint in these big parcel delivery companies where they can turn to with their questions. At the moment SMEs that have a problem with these companies are confronted with an extremely customer unfriendly call center system.

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¹UEAPME subscribes to the European Commission's Register of Interest Representatives and to the related code of conduct as requested by the European Transparency Initiative. Our ID number is [55820581197-35](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexp1/index.cfm?do=entity.entityDetail&entityId=55820581197-35).