

# Implementation of the 2018 Geoblocking Regulation in the Digital Single Market

2023/2019(INI) - 13/12/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 376 votes to 111, with 107 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the 2018 Geo-blocking Regulation in the Digital Single Market.

## *Revising EU rules on geo-blocking*

Parliament underlined the importance of the Geo-blocking Regulation in creating a stronger, more coherent, accessible and fair internal market for all EU citizens and businesses, without discrimination or unjustified obstacles, and irrespective of their nationality or place of residence or establishment. However, further measures are needed to exploit the full potential of the Regulation, in particular by strengthening the legal framework to encourage cross-border trade in goods and services.

Given the acceleration of the digital transformation and the rise in online shopping in recent years, Members stressed the need for a **comprehensive reassessment of the effectiveness of the Geographical Blocking Regulation**, including its effectiveness, taking into account the changes in consumer and business behaviour brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (as a result of the pandemic, 12% of businesses in the EU have started or intensified their efforts to sell goods or services online).

Member States are invited to **fully implement and enforce the Geo-blocking Regulation**, while the Commission should ensure reinforced enforcement to avoid regulatory fragmentation and conduct an in-depth study on the impact of the Regulation on cross-border transactions, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

## *Extend the scope of the Regulation*

Parliament noted that one third of all complaints received by responding competent authorities were not actually covered by the Regulation, including, among other things, **copyright-protected content** and insurance services, which shows that consumers perceive geo-blocking to be particularly problematic in these areas. It emphasised the importance of considering the potential benefits of extending the scope of the regulation to new areas.

Members suggested intensifying coordination efforts and developing strategies to address the most common grounds for complaint; emphasises the need to increase efforts put into awareness raising campaigns for both traders and consumers.

## *Cross-border parcel delivery*

The resolution stressed that delivery limitations in cross-border online sales still affect more than 50 % of shopping attempts, frustrating consumer expectations. Members called on Commission and the Member States to take further steps to **ease the access and operations of cross-border parcel delivery services**.

Members recalled that traders should not hinder third party transport companies from enabling the cross-border delivery of products to consumers, particularly in instances where the trader does not provide such an option or when traders prohibit self-collection at the store. The Commission should: (i) assess the

extent to which the identification of affordable cross-border parcel delivery services remains a problem for online sellers; (ii) consider including an even more explicit reference to such third-party parcel delivery services in the Regulation.

### *Online payment methods*

Members deplored the fact that some unjustified obstacles persist in the case of online registration and payment methods, which may result in cross-border customers often not being able to register on websites requiring registration, or being able to pay for the requested service without presenting data such as a local address or specific national payment method, or even a national phone number, undermining the Regulation's objective of making it possible to '**shop like a local**'. The Commission is called on to cooperate with Member States and stakeholders to address these obstacles and to conduct a comprehensive analysis with the aim of proposing measures to eliminate them.

### *Access to audiovisual services and sporting events*

Parliament regretted that, unlike music, e-books, video games and software products and services, progress in the audiovisual market to increase the availability of content across catalogues has been limited.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to examine carefully all ways of reducing unjustified and discriminatory barriers linked to geographical blocking for access to audiovisual services and sporting event, while taking into account the potential impact on the diversity of business models and available funding for the creative sector.

The Commission is invited to present to the Parliament the detailed results of its dialogue with stakeholders on the **possible extension of the scope of the Geo-blocking Regulation to audiovisual content**, including concrete measures and specific targets to improve the cross-border findability of audiovisual content, thereby spreading the diversity and richness of culture in Europe.

### *Keeping pace with market developments*

Parliament called on the Commission to continue to monitor market developments with regard to customer access to products and services in the Single Market, focusing in particular on the impact of geo-blocking practices on transport services, financial and health services and telecommunications, in particular with a view to ending the blocking of services provided by mobile operators in border regions within the Union.