Question for written answer E-002635/2024
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: Protecting consumers when making digital transactions and improving their awareness

European citizens often feel that they do not have full control over their digital transactions. By way of illustration, 69 % of consumers had difficulty cancelling a subscription[1] created online, 55 % experienced deliberate avoidance by the trader to cancel their subscription contract, while 34 % were only able to cancel their subscriptions after a longer time period (e.g. a year).

Furthermore, there are practices whereby free trial subscriptions turn into paid subscriptions or renewals are offered at very low discount prices to start with, after which prices go up significantly later on.

It should be noted that consumer knowledge of their rights remains insufficient bearing in mind that in 2016 only 12.6 % of consumers demonstrated considerable knowledge of their rights compared to 28 % in the same survey carried out in 2023.

In view of this:

1. How does the Commission plan to strengthen the legal framework in place in order to address such practices and what is the time frame for the Digital Fairness Act, which is currently in the planning stage?

2. How does it plan to improve awareness and understanding of the rights of European consumers?

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[1] SWD(2024) 231, Commission Staff Working Document, Fitness Check of EU consumer law on digital fairness.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2024_2029/plmrep/COMMITTEES/IMCO/SWD/2024/11-18/COM_SWD20240230_EN.pdf