

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000343/26
to the Commission
Danilo Della Valle (The Left)
(28 January 2026)**

Subject: Ensuring a universal postal service and territorial cohesion in rural areas

The universal postal service is an essential safeguard of territorial cohesion (Article 174 TFEU). Directive 97/67/EC requires Member States to ensure quality and accessibility standards. In many small Italian municipalities, such as Laviano (Province of Salerno), there have been prolonged closures of ordinary post offices, which get replaced by partial temporary solutions. Photographic documentation shows how ‘mobile post offices’ force customers — including older people and people with disabilities — to wait outdoors for long periods, exposed to the elements. This situation makes the public feel undervalued and compromises the protection of their health, fuelling the risk of depopulation.

Can the Commission reply to the following:

1. Is the use of mobile post offices that lack adequate reception facilities compatible with the obligations concerning quality and density of access points laid down in Directive 97/67/EC?
2. What steps will it take to verify that Member States do not allow any structural downgrading of the service in inland areas, which would run counter to Article 174 TFEU?
3. Will it promote the adoption of EU minimum standards for temporary service solutions so that vulnerable customers always feel valued and protected?

Submitted: 28.1.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(6 March 2026)**

The Postal Services Directive ⁽¹⁾ requires Member States to ensure that users enjoy the right to a permanent provision of a postal universal service at all points of the territory.

However, the directive does not specify the exact number, form or location of branches, the determination of which is a national competence.

The Commission has announced in the Single Market Strategy ⁽²⁾ that the regulatory framework for postal services including the directive will be revised and a new EU Delivery Act is envisaged for the second half of 2026 ⁽³⁾.

A call for evidence ⁽⁴⁾ closed on 14 November 2025 and a public consultation will close on 5 March 2026 to enable stakeholders to provide feedback on the future regulatory framework including issues to which the Honorable Member refers to in his question.

An impact assessment in line with the Better Regulation principles will be prepared to support the elaboration of this initiative and inform the Commission’s decision on postal services fit for a modern era.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:01997L0067-20080227>.

⁽²⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/publications/single-market-our-european-home-market-uncertain-world_en.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategy-documents/commission-work-programme/commission-work-programme-2026_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14821-New-EU-Delivery-Act-EU-to-reform-postal-rules_en.