



European Commission

THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRES' NETWORK

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



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More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

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Main abbreviations used in this publication

ECC	European Consumer Centre
ECC-Net	European Consumer Centres' Network
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms
NEB	National Enforcement Body for Air Passenger Rights (Regulation (EC) No 261/2004)
CPC	Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004)

We are grateful to the ECCs for their substantial contributions to the preparation of the national pages.

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Foreword

Whether we are shopping online or booking a holiday in Europe, the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) are our allies.

Their expert, hard-working staff are there to advise us before we buy so that we can enjoy all the opportunities of a Europe-wide market while avoiding possible problems. When something does go wrong, they can help us solve our problem and often help us get our money back.

The ECCs can be a real safety net and a critical link in ensuring that EU consumer laws are actually working for European consumers.

I am happy that more and more EU consumers are becoming aware of the network and use its services. The numbers speak for themselves: in 2010, the network dealt with 71,000 cases, which is around 11,000 more than last year.

It therefore comes as no surprise that ECCs are the European network that citizens know best.

An annual report is a good opportunity to take stock but also to look ahead. The European Commission, which has proudly co-financed the ECC-Net from its beginnings, is now talking to Member States, as well as the ECCs themselves, about how the network should evolve to respond to the needs and expectations of consumers. An independent evaluation of the network, which is almost complete, will help us in this reflection.

My vision is that the ECC-Net should become a reference network for all cross-border consumer issues and they should strengthen their role in their relationships with consumers, EU institutions, other EU-supported networks and national authorities. This should be the overarching aim of the network's evolution.

On a more concrete level, we must ensure that the Centres co-operate even more closely in a genuine pan-European network and improve the network's statistical tools so that they can offer us fresh and accurate data on consumer problems; finally, we must enhance the network's common standards.

I want once again to thank the staff of the European Consumer Centres for their commitment and professionalism which has made the ECCs what they are today. I look forward to continuing this work together with the ECCs and with the other partners to offer an ever improving service to European consumers.

Mr John Dalli

European Commissioner for Health and Consumers



Your ECC-Net!

- Is present in all EU Member States plus Norway and Iceland
- Is free of charge for you!
- Its operations are co-financed by the European Commission and the national governments
- Informs you about your rights when you buy goods or services in another EU country
- Advises and assists you in finding a solution if you have a problem with a trader

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This report provides an overview of the main activities of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) in 2010 and highlights some of the key problems facing cross-border shoppers that the centres have identified. All the statistics, statements and conclusions in this report are based on the information collected from the cases handled by the network.

Increasing number of consumers turn to the European Consumer Centres for help

In 2010 the centres handled over 71,000 contacts with consumers. This showed an increase of more than 15% compared to 2009, when the ECC-Net handled over 60,000 contacts.

Nature of complaints

In 2010 problems with products and services purchased in another Member State remained on top of the list, compared to 2009, generating 29.5% of all complaints. Besides products and services, most complaints related to problems with delivery (23.7%), contract terms (12.2%) and price and payment (10.5%). E-commerce transactions represented 56.2% of all complaints which is a slight increase compared to 2009 (55.9%).

Transport remains the number one problem sector for consumers

In 2010, 33.2% of the complaints dealt with by the ECC-Net concerned the **Transport sector**, and 57% of these complaints related to air passenger's rights. The percentage of complaints in the transport sector increased by 10% compared to 2009 (30.6%) partly due to the closure of the European airspace because of the "volcanic ash cloud crisis". In the **Recreation and cultural services** area

Executive Summary

the number of complaints decreased compared to 2009 dropping from 26.2% to 23.7%. A similar drop in the number of complaints was registered in the sector of **Restaurants, hotel and accommodation**, from 13.3% to 11.5%.

ECCs to increase out-of-court dispute resolution settlements

In 2010, 41.6% of the cases were closed after the ECCs could find an amicable settlement with the trader, this showed a decrease compared to 2009 (48.18%). In 2010 when an amicable settlement was not possible, the ECCs transferred the case to other organisations or agencies (15.5%), in 2009 (13.2%). In 2010, 58.5% of the cases transferred to other organisations or agencies were transferred to ADR bodies. This shows a considerable increase compared to 2009, where only 50% of the cases were transferred.

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Identity Card of the ECC-Net

What is the ECC-Net?

The European Consumer Centres Network is an EU-wide network that provides – free of charge – information to consumers on cross-border shopping, ensures that they are aware of their rights and gives support in the event of a complaint.

In 2010, the network had offices in all 27 Member States plus Iceland and Norway.

The ECC-Net is co-financed by the EU and the participating countries. For the period covering the actions undertaken in 2010, the EU contributed over €4 million to support the ECCs.

The ECC-Net handled over 345,000 contacts during the last 6 years.

Why the ECC-Net?

The European consumers should feel as confident when purchasing in another EU country as they do at home. The ECC-Net is dedicated to helping European consumers enjoy the opportunities that the EU internal market offers when shopping across the borders. The network is there to promote consumer confidence by advising citizens on their rights as consumers and providing help when case goes wrong.

Services provided by the ECC-Net

The ECC-Net provides services to consumers. They focus on business-to-consumer problems when citizens shop cross-border either in person or via distance purchase (mainly e-commerce). The ECC-Net:

- Provides information on both EU and national consumer protection rules.
- Gives advice to customers facing a consumer related cross-border problem and support them in contacting the trader to reach an amicable solution.
- Helps consumers whose complaints are not solved amicably with the trader to reach an agreement via out-of-court dispute resolution mechanism (Alternative Dispute Resolution – ADR, http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress_cons/adr_en.htm) and/or informs them about other possible ways such as the European Small Claims Procedure (http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/consumers/protection_of_consumers/).
- Co-operates with other EU-wide networks, such as the FIN-NET (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finances-retail/finnet/), SOLVIT (<http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>) and the EJM (European Judicial Network, http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/index_en.htm) in civil and commercial matters.
- Provides valuable input for the European Commission on consumer policy issues.

What problems can ECCs help with?

ECCs deal with cross-border problems between a consumer and a trader. They cover consumer related issues such as air and rail transport, package holidays, timeshare, e-commerce issues, non-delivered or defective goods, unfair commercial practices, etc.

What problems can NOT the ECC-Net help with?

ECCs cannot help in business to business issues or if there is no cross-border element involved (national cases). ECCs cannot deal with a case if the other party is a governmental structure (ministry, national agency, etc). ECCs do not have enforcement powers, therefore they cannot sanction the trader, neither can they represent consumers before court or an ADR.

How to contact a European Consumer Centre?

Consumers from the EU, Iceland or Norway, wanting to know more about their rights within the EU or need assistance, can reach the ECC in their own country by phone, fax, e-mail or enquiry form (The contact details of the centres are available at http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/index_en.htm).

How does ECC-Net work?

If a consumer has a problem with a trader situated in another country, he first needs to contact the trader himself in order to find a solution. If a solution cannot be found, the consumer may contact the ECC in his country. The ECC in the consumer's country will liaise with the ECC in the country where the trader is located, then the ECC of the trader's country who knows the national rules contacts the trader in order to reach an amicable solution. The involvement of the ECC-Net considerably increases the chances of the consumer obtaining a result according to its rights and also helps in overcoming the language barriers consumers' face when trying to get in contact with the trader.

Where an ECCs' intervention does not lead to an amicable solution with the trader, ECCs will, as much as possible, advise consumers the appropriate national ADR bodies and/or propose other possibilities to solve their problems (such as the European Small Claims Procedure) so as to try to avoid the lengthy and costly normal court procedures.

HOST ORGANISATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRES IN 2010¹

COUNTRY	HOST ORGANISATION	TYPE OF ORGANISATION ²
AUSTRIA	Verein für Konsumenteninformation, VKI (Association for Consumers Information)	NGO
BELGIUM	Organisation Indépendante pour la Protection du Consommateur a.s.b.l – OIPC, Test-Achats (Independent Organisation for Consumer Protection)	NGO
BULGARIA	Commission for Consumer Protection	G
CYPRUS	Competition and Consumer Protection Service, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism	G
CZECH REPUBLIC	Czech Trade Inspection	G
DENMARK	Konkurrence – og Forbrugerstyrelsen (Danish Competition and Consumer Authority)	G
ESTONIA	Consumer Protection Board of Estonia	G
FINLAND	Finnish Consumer Agency and Ombudsman	G
FRANCE	Euro-Info-Consommateurs/Euro-Info-Verbraucher e. V.	NGO
GERMANY	Euro-Info-Consommateurs/Euro-Info-Verbraucher e. V.	NGO
GREECE	Hellenic Ministry of Development, Consumer General Secretariat	G
HUNGARY	Országos Fogyasztóvédelmi Egyesület (National Association for Consumer Protection)	NGO
ICELAND	Neytendasamtökin (The Consumers' Association of Iceland)	NGO
IRELAND	National Consumer Agency	I
ITALY	Adiconsum – Associazione Difesa Consumatori e Ambiente (Association for Consumer Protection and Environment)	NGO
LATVIA	Latvian Consumer Rights Protection Centre	G
LITHUANIA	State Consumer Rights Protection Authority	G
LUXEMBOURG	European Consumer Centre (ECC) – Groupement d'Intérêt Economique (GIE) Luxemburg	I
MALTA	Consumer and Competition Department within the Office of the Prime Minister	G
NETHERLANDS	Stichting Het Juridisch Loket (Foundation the Legal Service Counter)	G
NORWAY	The Consumer Council of Norway	G
POLAND	Urząd Ochrony Konkurencji i Konsumentów (Office of Competition and Consumer Protection)	G
PORTUGAL	Direcção-Geral do Consumidor (Directorate-General for Consumers)	G
ROMANIA	Romanian Association for Consumer Protection	NGO
SLOVENIA	Zveza potrošnikov Slovenije, ZPS (Slovene Consumers' Association)	NGO
SPAIN	National Institute for Consumption	G
SLOVAKIA	Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic	G
SWEDEN	Konsumentverket (Swedish Consumer Agency)	G
UNITED KINGDOM	The Trading Standards Institute (TSI)	NGO

¹ For updated information as from 2011 check: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/index_en.htm

² NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation. G: Governmental. I: Independent.

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Empowering and assisting consumers

The ECC-Net provides advice on ADR procedures for consumers who have been unable to reach an agreement directly with the trader. ADR schemes usually call in a third party, such as an arbitrator, mediator or ombudsman, to help the consumer and the trader find a solution. As part of the well functioning of the European single market, the ECC-Net co-operates in civil and commercial matters with other EU-wide networks, such as the FIN-NET, SOLVIT and EJN.

The ECC-Net provides valuable input for the European Commission on consumer policy issues. The network is in a unique position to know the everyday concerns and problems of consumers and it is increasingly providing input to policymaking at national and EU levels.

In 2010 the centres have received 44,232 requests for advice and assistance with cross-border complaints and disputes. The centres have handled 27,060 requests for information.

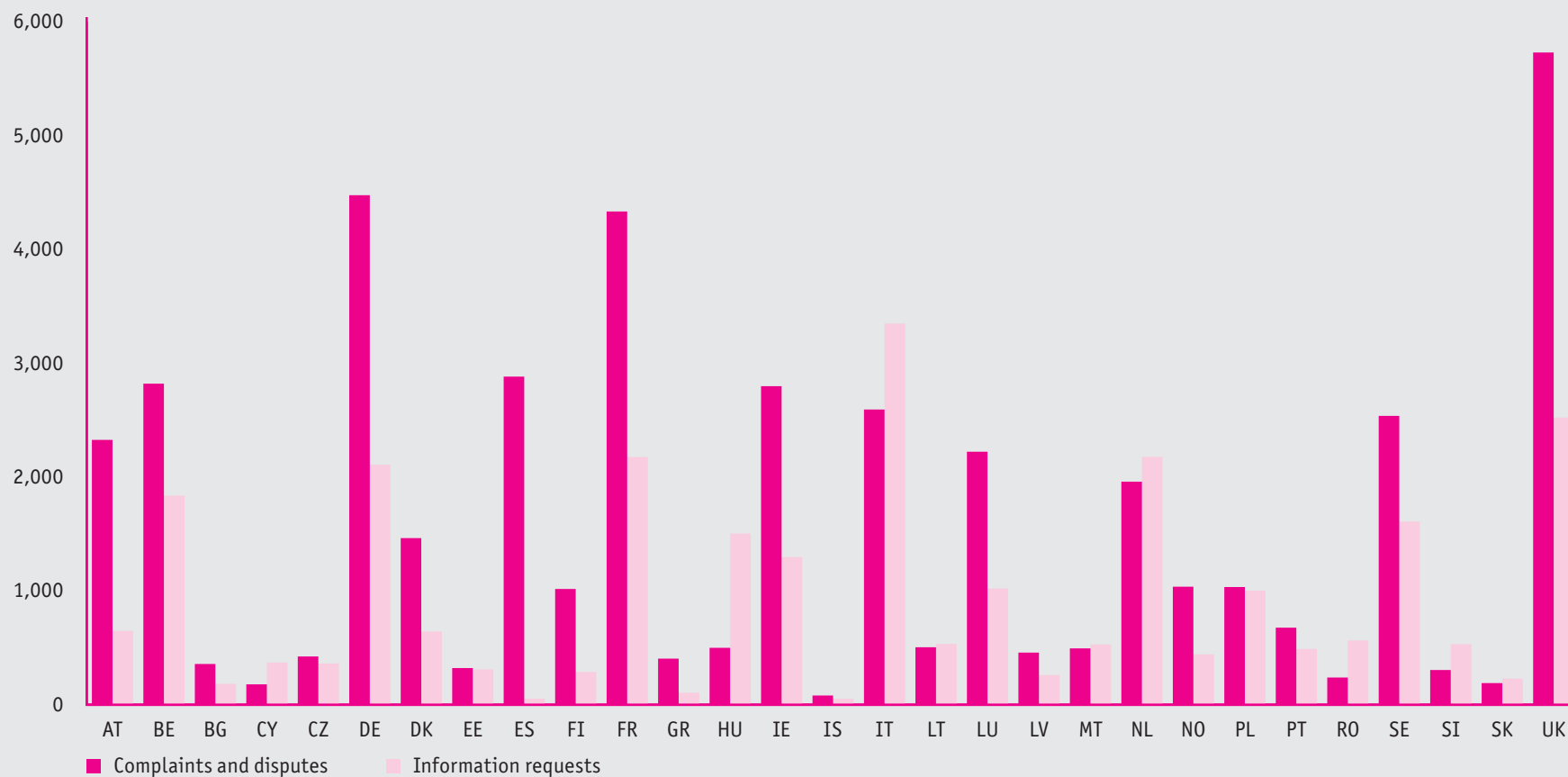
The overall amount of contacts in 2010 is 71,292 which compared with the total number of cases in 2009 (60,755) represents an overall increase of the 15%.

Volume of information requests and complaints



One third of the ECCs handled more than half of all complaints and information requests. The United Kingdom, Germany and France have contributed for about half of the total complaints handled by the ECC-Net.

Total complaints and information requests



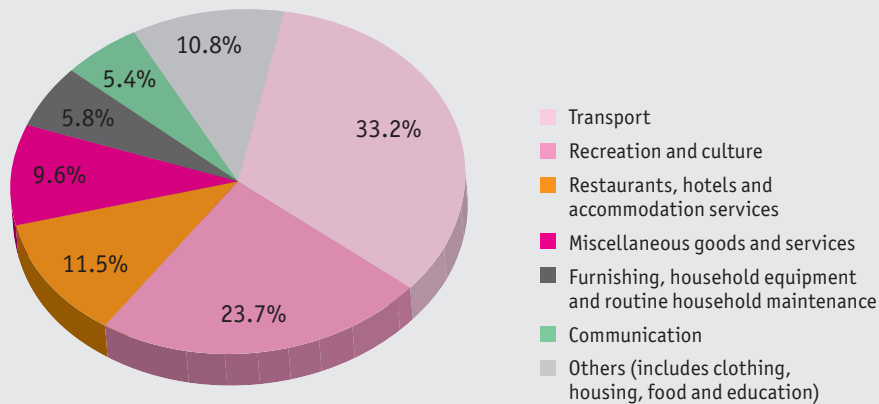
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In 2010 almost 33.2% (10,557) of the recorded complaints and disputes were in the area of Transport and 57% (6,038) of these concerned air passenger rights.

In April 2010³ the closure of the airspace and airports in more than 8 EU countries due the volcanic eruption in Iceland resulted in what was called the “volcanic ash cloud crisis”. It has contributed to the increase of complaints received by the ECC-Net during the year. The impact of the volcanic eruption on consumers and on the air transport industry was huge, in economical and distress terms.

23.7% of the complaints related to Recreational and cultural services and 11.5% related to Restaurants, hotels and accommodation services.

Complaints 2010

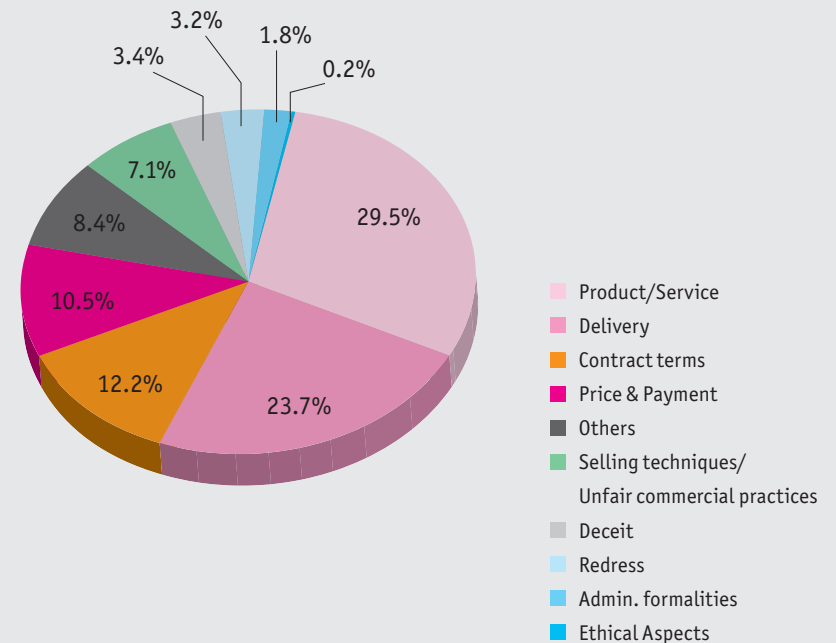


³ MEMO/10/131, Brussels, 15 April 2010 – <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

Statistics

Most of the consumers’ problems concerned the quality of the product or the service (29.5%), the delivery (23.7%) as well as contract terms (12.2%) and price and payment (10.5%).

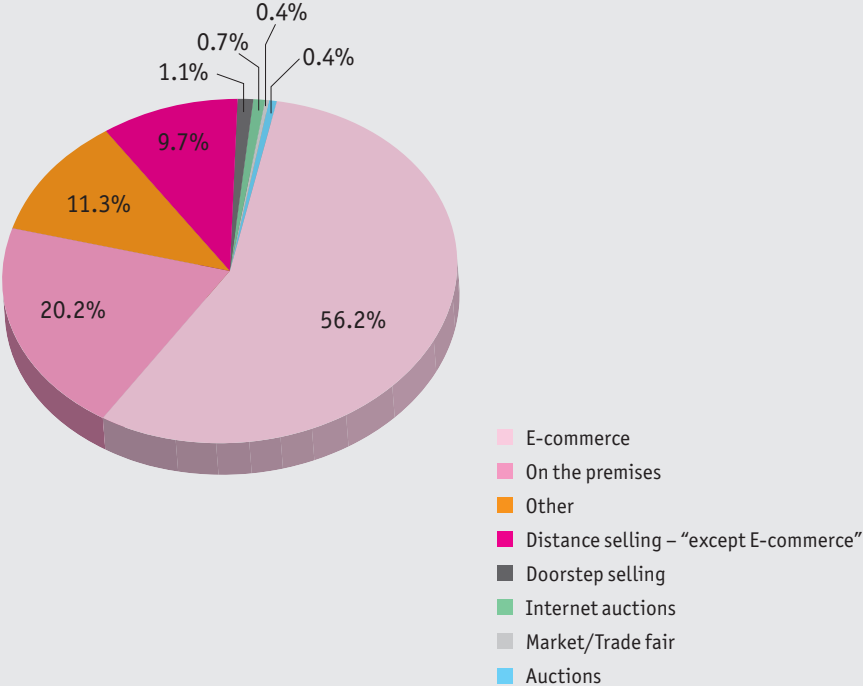
Nature of Complaints



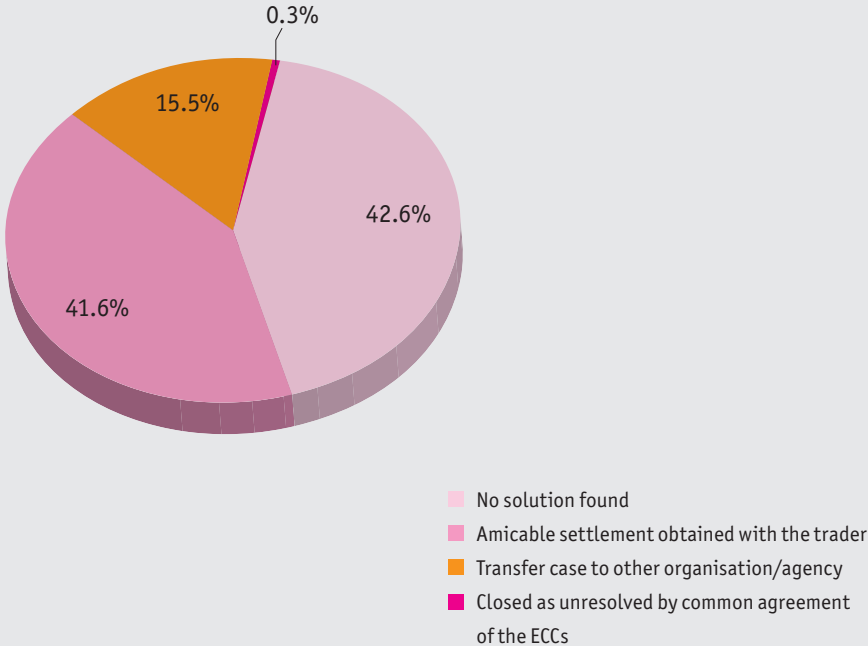
In more than half of the cases, the product or the service was purchased by the consumer on-line. The E-commerce transactions represent the 56.2% of all complaints.

41.6% of the cases have been closed after an amicable settlement was obtained with the trader while 15.5% were transferred by the ECC to another organisation/agency.

Selling Method



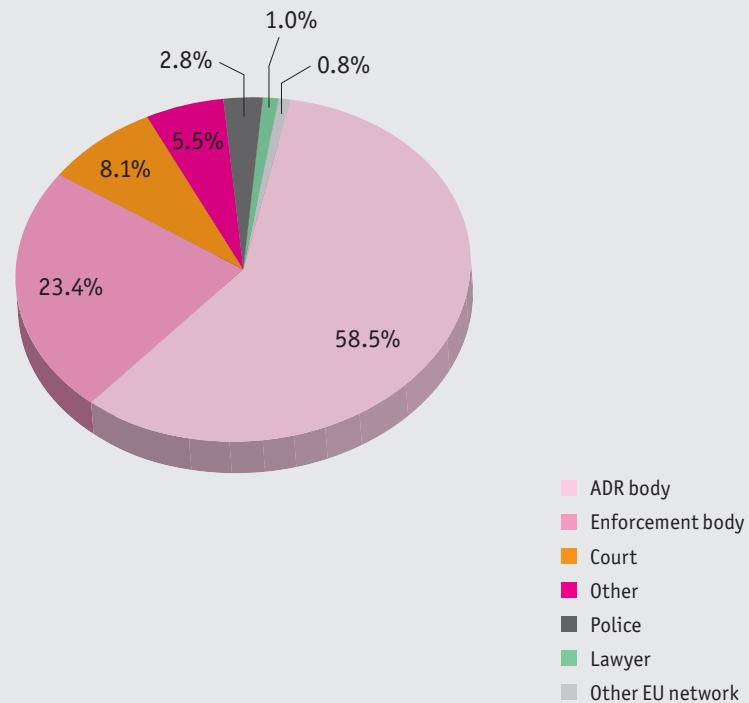
Type of closure



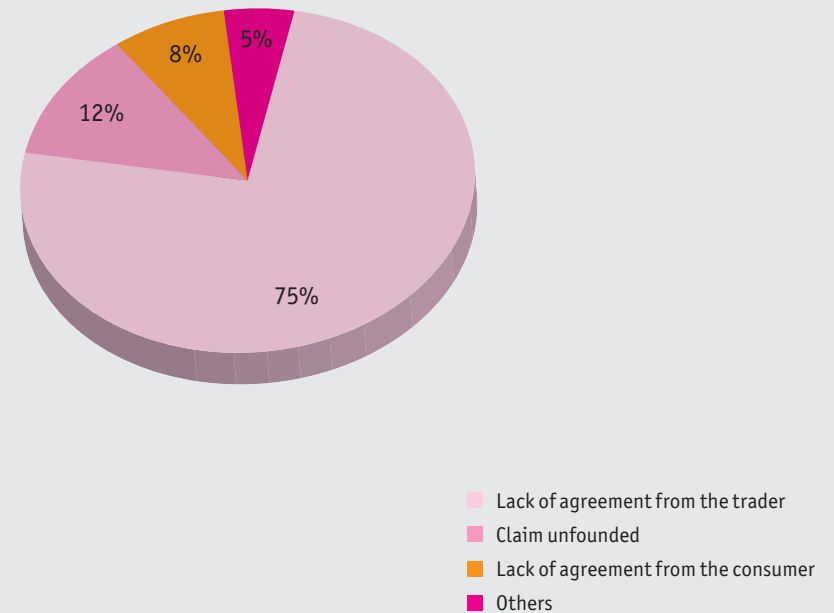
More than 900 cases (58.5% of the transferred cases) were passed on to out-of-court settlement bodies (ADR).

In the 75% of the cases (3,600) the lack of agreement with the trader was the main reason for not reaching positive solution of the complaints.

Transfer case to other organisation/agency



No solution found – Why



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National pages



Austria

Activities

One of ECC Austria's highlights in 2010 was the ECC-Net joint project "Ski-Resorts in Europe 2010/2011". ECC Austria carried out a survey of ski-resorts in 20 European countries, which led to a huge media echo all over Europe. The report is available at: www.europakonsument.at. ECC Austria also published a brochure on the hot topic of "Low Cost Carriers", which had a large print run of almost 1 million copies.

Success stories

A Slovenian consumer visited an Austrian ski-resort. Unfortunately, the chair lift left a black mark on the ski clothes. Therefore, the consumer had to wash his ski clothes more often. After ECC Austria's intervention, the company offered a free day ski ticket and paid the cleaning costs.

An Austrian consumer has a free German web mail account. On his birthday the company offered him the option of trying out a better account (more memory capacity, etc.) at no extra cost. After 3 months the contract was extended automatically and the consumer had to pay. After ECC Austria's intervention the contract was cancelled for free.

Consumer feedback!

"Due to ECC Austria's professional and high quality work, the case could be solved. Without your intervention I would have never received my money back. It's amazing. I don't know how to thank you. Best regards."

"Thanks a lot for your help in my case. I did try several times to solve my problems on my own, but never succeeded. I'm really thankful for ECC Austria's efforts and your great work! Best regards."



Belgium

Activities

One of ECC Belgium's highlights in 2010 was the publication of a brochure on fraudulent practices, in which 20 common misleading practices were described. The brochure – which explained how the swindlers operate, how to recognize a fraud and what consumers can do when they are trapped – was advertised in several media targeting consumers likely to be deceived by this kind of practice. There was a joint press release from ECC Belgium and Test-Achats, which raised the profile of ECC Belgium. ECC Belgium was also a major participant in the ECC-Net joint project working group on "Comparison of minimum criteria for 3-star hotels in the EU" (http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/report_3_star_hotels_2010_en.pdf).

Success stories

A Bulgarian consumer reserved an air ticket on a Hungarian air company's site for €355.96, but on the same day found out that there were cheaper tickets available. The consumer phoned the Hungarian company asking about the cancellation costs and was informed that these were €60 in total. Therefore, she expected to be refunded €295.96. However, later on the consumer discovered that the Hungarian company had only refunded her €79.98. After ECC Belgium's intervention the company refunded the difference of €215.98.

Consumer feedback!

"I just wanted to thank you so much. Europe does work! I hope other citizens know of your existence. I will certainly make an intense publicity about your services. Thanks again."

"I received today a cheque from Iberia for the amount of €1,044.27. You can close my file. I want to thank you for your professional and efficient help! It is nice to know that there exists a service which effectively speaks in defense of the consumer! Thanks and we wish you an excellent 2011!"



Bulgaria

Activities

In 2010 ECC Bulgaria organised two press conferences: one on air passenger rights regarding flight disruptions and another on online shopping. Both received huge media coverage.

Success stories

A Bulgarian consumer ordered and paid for children's clothes from a French web trader, but the package had still not arrived after two months. After a complaint to ECC Bulgaria the trader reimbursed the consumer €93.28.

An Irish consumer booked a car rental in Bulgaria. When the consumer arrived the car was not available and the trader offered a different one. The consumer refused this offer but the trader did not refund the money. After a complaint to ECC Bulgaria and negotiations with the trader, €332 was repaid to the credit card.

Consumer feedback!

"I am very satisfied with my case-handler and I often share with my friends that I was not expecting in Bulgaria there is an institution that works so conscientiously and strictly. If all institutions were working like you, our country would be far ahead in its development."

"I am very happy about the communication with the centre's staff, they are polite."

Collaboration

In May 2010 ECC Bulgaria, together with many other networks, organised an open air event in the Central Park of Sofia. A Bulgarian Member of the European Parliament (MEP) opened the event and ECC Bulgaria provided info materials. A special train brought people from a famous gathering point in the city to this event.



Cyprus

Activities

In 2010 ECC Cyprus put a lot of effort into making consumers, stakeholders and the media aware of the existence and role of ECC-Net. It published articles, brochures and other informative material on topics of consumer interest, organised seminars on air passenger rights and online shopping and also on the general scope and aims of ECC Cyprus. It also participated in various ECC-Net joint projects.

Success stories

A Cypriot consumer visiting Germany rented a car. The car was not checked for damage, either on delivery or return. Afterwards, the company sent a letter to the consumer requesting €704.48 for damage. Since the consumer was not responsible for any damage, he turned to ECC Cyprus for help. As a result, the trader withdrew all accusations and the damage claim.

Collaboration

ECC Cyprus organised a seminar on air passenger rights with the active participation of the NEB (Department of Civil Aviation of Cyprus) and the Board of Airline Representatives. Furthermore, ECC Cyprus worked in close cooperation with the Competition and Consumer Protection Service, the Cypriot Consumer Associations, the Association of Cyprus Travel Agents, national trade unions, the Cyprus Organisation of Standardisation, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, SOLVIT and CPC Cyprus in the organisation of seminars/joint events.

Consumer feedback!

"I just got an additional compensation of €48 from the trader and this satisfies me 100%. Please close my case but I also wanted to tell you that I am 101% satisfied with you and impressed from your team here and abroad. This is a wonderful job you are all doing. EU is a wonderful idea!"



Czech Republic

Activities

The highlights of ECC Czech Republic in 2010 were: 1) lectures given at Trade Licensing Offices, Czech universities; 2) the national media coverage on the report of ECC-Net joint project "Ski-Resorts in Europe 2010/2011" and on the ECC Czech Republic consumer competition.

Success stories

In August 2009, a Czech consumer deposited precious objects and cash in a Spanish hotel's safe. After burglars stole everything from the safe, she was assured she would be reimbursed the value of €1,350. She waited and it was only when the ECC-Net intervened that she received the total amount back in October 2010.

A Czech consumer purchased a shower bath from a Polish trader, who also installed it. Later on, the surface of the bath cracked. The trader accepted the claim, but was only willing to send a new bath and refused to remove the old one and install the new, stating that this was only possible in Poland (despite the fact that, at the time of purchase, the trader had promised to do so in case of a claim). Thanks to the ECC-Net assistance the trader fulfilled his promise and completed the work.

Consumer feedback!

"You can only barely guess how happy I am! Huge thanks to you and your colleagues both in Prague and in Budapest! Once again, big big thanks!"

Collaboration

ECC Czech Republic submitted notifications of Czech traders' practices to its host organization Czech Trade Inspection. As regards air passengers' disputes, it successfully cooperated with the Civil Aviation Authority. Excellent collaboration has developed with SOLVIT, Eurocentres and Europe Direct (<http://europa.eu/europedirect/>) contact points in Czech Republic.



Denmark

Activities

One of ECC Denmark's highlights in 2010 was the publishing of the ECC-Net joint project report on ADR "Cross-border dispute resolution mechanisms in Europe – practical reflections on the need and availability" (<http://www.forbrugereuropa.dk/indhold-FE/Publikationer/~//media/ForbrugerEuropa/Publikationer/crossborder%20dispute%20resolution%20mechanisms%20in%20europe.pdf>). During 2010, ECC Denmark also introduced a completely redesigned and more user-friendly website and dealt with more than 2,000 cases.

Success stories

A Danish consumer bought a package holiday from a German trader. Later the trader postponed the departure dates by 3 months and claimed that the consumer had not notified the trader of his dissatisfaction in time. As a result, the consumer was obliged to pay €1,250 for the trip. ECC Denmark shared the case with ECC Germany and after having been contacted by ECC Germany, the trader agreed to drop his claim.

Collaboration

A good example of successful collaboration by ECC Denmark with enforcement bodies and/or other networks was the Seminar of Consumer Rights Protection within the EU. Organised by ECC Denmark in cooperation with the European Commission's Permanent Representation in Denmark and the Danish Consumer Council, the seminar was attended by 50 people and was broadcast on TV.

Consumer feedback!

"I am very impressed with the fact that a service like the ECC-Net exists and that their services are for free. ECC Denmark has done a great job and their information to me during the process was first class."

"Thank you very much for your help and also thank you to ECC Austria. I received the money today. If you happen to be in the area you are more than welcome to drop by for a cup of coffee. Thank you."



Estonia

Activities

One of ECC Estonia's highlights in 2010 was the participation at the Travel Fair TOUREST 2010 – an excellent place for ECC Estonia to promote its activities and services to consumers. During TOUREST the staff of ECC Estonia informed consumers about cross-border issues, answered concrete questions and promoted the services of ECC-Net. Large amounts of relevant promotional material with the ECC-Net logo were distributed to the public to help make ECC Estonia more visible.

Success stories

A Finnish consumer bought a Yamaha XV 1100 motorcycle for €3,000 from an Estonian trader. The trader imported the bike from the United States and registered it in Estonia as a bike with the serial number XV 1100. When the consumer wanted to register the bike in the Finnish register, it turned out that the bike actually had a different serial number, i.e. XV 750E. According to the consumer, this model had a cheaper price than the one which he had purchased. The consumer asked the trader to reduce the price by €500, which the trader refused. ECC Estonia became involved and the trader denied any responsibility, arguing that it was acting in a good faith when importing the bike from United States. Moreover, the bike had been registered in the Estonian Motor Vehicles Register as a model XV 1100. The case was forwarded to Estonian ADR, which decided that the consumer shall be compensated with the price difference requested. The case was closed ECC Finland confirmed that the consumer had received the money.

Consumer feedback!

"Many thanks for your kind assistance. Advices you have given are very useful and have in some aspects prevented me from taking wrong steps. I find you are doing a highly valuable work! I wish you all the best."



Finland

Activities

One of ECC Finland's highlights in 2010 was a seminar arranged at the Finnish Representation of the European Commission in December. The topic of the seminar was "mobile telephone services". Experts presented actions taken in terms of supervision and future work. ECC Finland's activities were also presented.

Success stories

A Finnish consumer ordered a T-shirt from a web store in Germany. The trader did not deliver the shirt. Several emails were sent to the trader and 5 months passed without result. ECC Finland contacted ECC Germany. Within 3 weeks the consumer got his money back.

A Finnish consumer, with two co-travellers, was stranded in Spain when their flight was cancelled due to airspace closure. They chose re-routing and had to stay 7 extra days in Barcelona. The airline did not offer any assistance during that time. Safely back at home they contacted the airline and requested that their expenses of €1,167 should be covered by the airline. The airline accepted the claim but only refunded €250. With the assistance of the ECC-Net, the consumers were refunded €917.

Consumer feedback!

"The refund has arrived. Thank you for your assistance."

"Dear ECC staff, finally I have received a refund of the €364. Thank you for your help."

Collaboration

2010 was a year of close co-operation between ECC Finland and Europe Direct in Finland: presentations were given on current cross-border topics and the proposed harmonisation of European consumer legislation in towns from northern, eastern and western parts of Finland.



France

Activities

The highlight of 2010 was the conference on Cyber crime “Does Europe protect its consumers?” organised by ECC France and ECC Germany. Both ECCs also organised the first ECC-Net Communication workshop, as well as a guest lecture on the Proposal for a Directive on Consumer Rights. Moreover, for the first time ECC France organised a training session for national consumer associations to inform them of European consumer rights protection issues.

Success stories

An Irish consumer rented Bed & Breakfast accommodation for 4/6 people in France. On the premises, two rooms were occupied by the consumer and two by his three children. The third one had to sleep on the couch in the living-room. On their return to Ireland, the French owner refused to reimburse/return the deposit and asked for a supplementary charge of €100 per week for the use of the sofa. After checking the general conditions of the rental, the surplus was required in case of a rental for 6 persons and it was not expressly related to the use of a sofa. ECC France contacted the owner: he should have informed the consumers precisely and in detail of the general terms and conditions of the rental. Eventually, the deposit was reimbursed.

Collaboration

The Cyber crime conference was also for ECC France the occasion to finally sign a formal cooperation protocol with the CPC France which foresees, besides rules for case sharing, punctual joint activities or meetings as well as exchange of experiences, if and where relevant.

Consumer feedback!

“Thank you very much for your clear and quick answer. Congratulations on your professional behaviour and acute tips.”



Germany

Activities

The highlight of 2010 was the conference on Cyber crime “Does Europe protect its consumers?” organised by ECC Germany and ECC France. In 2010, ECC Germany also launched a large information campaign about cost traps on the internet; the core is a new website with videos, a quiz game and a discussion forum. Also, together with ECC France it organised the first ECC-Net communication workshop, as well as a guest lecture on the Proposal for a Directive on Consumer Rights.

Success stories

A German consumer lost his luggage on a flight from Hamburg to New York. Weeks later, the luggage (with gifts for friends and clothing) had still not reappeared. The Dutch airline did not reply to letters asking for a refund. The consumer contacted ECC Germany and, with the help of colleagues at ECC Netherlands, the airline finally paid €600.

Collaboration

The number of complaints in the sector of air passenger rights is rising from year to year at ECC Germany and the cooperation with the NEB (the Luftfahrt-Bundesamt) has been strengthened in 2010 following a directors’ meeting in Braunschweig.

Consumer feedback!

“Thank you for your help with my claim! I received a letter from the airline yesterday agreeing to settle my claim in full.”

“We are extremely grateful for your efforts and for the efforts of everyone at ECC Germany who was involved in helping us. I think it is very unlikely that we would have been able to recover our loss without your help.”



Greece

Activities

Some of ECC Greece's highlights in 2010 are: 1) ECC Greece produced leaflets on passenger rights when travelling by boat, and also on product guarantees; 2) ECC Greece participated in the ECC-Net joint project on E-commerce; 3) ECC Greece produced 6 newsletters, which were used as the main promotional tool of ECC Greece's activities; 4) ECC Greece publicised two press releases: one on product guarantees and the other on passenger rights when travelling by boat.

Success stories

A Greek consumer ordered a transportable baby car seat and accessories via internet from a German company. After about a month the product was delivered without some of the accessories. The consumer contacted the trader several times without success asking for the full delivery of the order. The consumer bought the accessories from another supplier. So the consumer asked the German company for a refund for the undelivered part of the order, but he did not receive any money. ECC Greece became involved and contacted ECC Germany. The trader was contacted and three weeks later the consumer received the full refund.

Collaboration

During 2010, ECC Greece held meetings with SOLVIT, FIN-NET and Europe Direct. Formal and/or informal contacts were held regularly with the Consumer Ombudsman in Greece. ECC Greece also attended the meeting on Article 21 of the Services Directive 2006/123/EC with Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) (http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm) and the Ministry of Economy of Greece in September 2010. Lastly, ECC Greece contributed to the follow-up of the meeting and was invited to the annual EEN Hellas event.



Hungary

Activities

One of ECC Hungary's highlights in 2010 was its participation in the publication of ECC-Net joint project report on E-commerce "European Online Marketplace: Consumer Complaints 2008-2009" (http://www.consumenteninformatiepunt.nl/bin/binaries/13-102-ecc_brochure2010-final-lage-resolutie--2-.pdf). The report was translated into Hungarian and was also published in Hungarian.

Success stories

A consumer advertised her property (holiday house) on a website which was free of charge for the first month. The consumer withdrew the contract after one month but the company asked the consumer for an extra fee for the advertisement. After ECC Hungary's intervention the trader agreed to drop the claim.

Collaboration

During 2010, ECC Hungary together with Europe Direct organised a three-round national consumer protection contest for high-school students. The main aim of the contest was to enhance knowledge of Hungarian students in the field of consumer rights protection within the EU in an entertaining way. ECC Hungary also participated in the "Splash in Europe" roadshow organised by the European Commission's Permanent Representation in Hungary. Other EU networks, such as Europe Direct, EURES (<http://ec.europa.eu/eures/>) and DOLCETA (<http://www.dolceta.eu/>), also participated in the roadshow. ECC Hungary signed a cooperation agreement between ECC Hungary and EEN in Hungary, the aim of which was to develop a more effective cooperation between the two networks.



Iceland

Activities

In 2010, ECC Iceland published two brochures on how to file a complaint and on E-commerce. ECC Iceland also published online an overview of the works of ADR on travel matters, available at: http://ns.is/ns/neytendasamtokin/thjonusta/evropska_neytendaadstodin/skyrslur/.

Success stories

A Finnish consumer bought a product from an Icelandic web trader, but never received it. The consumer contacted ECC Finland who forwarded the case to ECC Iceland. The trader believed he had sent the product twice already, but since it never arrived, the trader agreed to refund all of the consumer's costs due to non-delivery.

A Dutch couple bought a four-day package trip to Iceland. Due to the volcanic eruption in Eyjafjallajökull, the flight was delayed. This caused them to miss out on one night's stay, which had already been paid for. After ECC Iceland's intervention, the trader agreed to refund one night's accommodation as well as costs for refreshments the couple bought during the delay.

Collaboration

2010 was a year of close co-operation between ECC Iceland and FIN-NET, the NEB Iceland, the CPC Iceland and the Icelandic Tourist Board. The airspace crisis and strikes in Iceland dominated for the first half of the year, and informal cooperation continued between ECC Iceland and the NEB Iceland regarding air passengers' rights. Furthermore, ECC Iceland held two meetings with the CPC Iceland – where amongst other things the ADR system and the possibility of notifying more ADRs in Iceland were discussed.



Ireland

Activities

For ECC Ireland 2010 was an exceptionally successful year in terms of media. ECC Ireland identified stories to highlight, such as the safety of children's clothing issued by the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO). ECC Ireland also generated its own stories, through its research on consumer issues and arising out of an analysis of consumer complaints received. ECC Ireland launched a major Safe Online Shopping Campaign in November designed to raise consumer awareness of the possibility of fraudulent online traders and providing consumers with information on how to identify a safe website on which to shop. ECC Ireland published a report on the European Small Claims Procedure, First Year of Operation in Ireland (<http://www.eccireland.ie/downloads/ESCP.pdf>), analysing the operation of the European Small Claims Procedure during 2009 in the Courts system in Ireland. Furthermore, ECC Ireland staff were invited to give presentations, on subjects such as dealing with conflicts, complaint handling, ADR, Small Claims Procedure and Collective Redress.

Success stories

An Irish consumer attempted to book a return flight with a Dutch airline. She tried to pay for the transaction with her 'laser card' but to no avail, so she used her credit card instead. When later she checked her 'laser card' statement she discovered that she had been charged twice for the cost of the air ticket of €1,766.66 (€3,533.32 in total). The consumer contacted the airline and was eventually reimbursed €1,766.66, but there was still another €1,766.66 to be refunded. ECC Ireland brought the complaint to the attention of ECC Netherlands, which in turn contacted the airline. Shortly afterwards, the consumer was refunded the outstanding sum of €1,766.66.

Italy

Activities

During 2010, ECC Italy arranged a number of promotional activities, including: 1) Help desks in the airports and train stations, during celebrations of European Consumer Day and Europe Day; 2) Some large conferences and seminars were organised, devoted to E-commerce and ADR, as well as several courses in schools and universities; 3) ECC Italy led the ECC-Net joint project on the European Small Claims Procedure.

Success stories

An Italian consumer had serious health problems due to an unprofessional dental implant made by an Austrian dentist. After years of complications another dentist removed the implant. With the help of ECC Austria and an arbitration board, the insurance of the Austrian dentist paid €11,600 to the consumer.

A Belgian consumer hired a car in Italy. The consumer entered a limited traffic area several times. The car rental company received 7 fines from the Municipality of Bologna as the number plate had been photographed by street cameras. The consumer was charged 7 administration fees (one for each fine) by the company – a total of €420. After ECC Italy's intervention the consumer was reimbursed €360.

Collaboration

ECC Italy attended several meetings and visibility events with all of the European assistance networks, at the initiative of the European Commission's Italian Representation, and arranged a major conference with the NEB Italy on air passengers' rights.

Consumer feedback!

"I'm really glad that I've known your serious and effective Centre. Your support provided me with trust in cross-border purchases. God bless you!"

Latvia

Activities

One of ECC Latvia's highlights in 2010 was the participation in the International Balttour 2010 exhibition in Riga – the leading tourism industry event in Latvia. Representatives of ECC Latvia informed visitors about ECC-Net and ECC Latvia's main activities, distance selling and air passengers' rights in the EU and how consumers should complain in case of problems. ECC Latvia distributed promotional materials and brochures about distance selling and air passengers' rights in the EU. Over 40,000 visitors attended the fair.

Success stories

A consumer ordered 2 double superior rooms in a Riga hotel for the New Year celebration. On arrival the consumer realised that one of the rooms was double standard, not double superior. The registration office explained that it was a mistake. As it was New Year's Day, the consumer decided not to make an issue of it. The hotel's website said that the consumer would receive food, drinks, games, surprises and music during the New Year night, but the hotel forgot what it had promised in its website. Back home the consumer checked the bills and realised that they had been charged for 2 double superior rooms and had been charged for services they did not use. In cooperation with ECC Lithuania and ECC Latvia, the hotel agreed to refund consumer €155.

Consumer feedback!

"Thank you for your assistance. I believe that without your intervention I wouldn't be taken off from 'this hook' so easily. I wish you all the best in your hard work with dishonest traders."



Lithuania

Activities

Some of ECC Lithuania's highlights in 2010 were: 1) Organised on-line web-conference in the best-known website in Lithuania on European Consumer Day; 2) Organised 51 seminars in scholastic institutions and provided information to over 1,800 consumers; 3) Together with Mykolas Romeris University of Lithuania and University of Savoy of France organised the international scientific-practical conference "Legal Aspects of Consumer Protection in the EU"; 4) Together with ECC Hungary, ECC Poland, ECC Netherlands published the report "The European Online Marketplace: Consumer Complaints 2008-2009" and organised a press conference in Brussels on 11 October; 5) 13 TV and 23 Radio reports; 6) Info-desk in Vilnius International Airport together with Civil Aviation Administration of Lithuania.

Success stories

A Lithuanian consumer booked an apartment in Norway, but could not find it due to a lack of information. The trader did not answer the phone or e-mails. The consumer turned to ECC Lithuania which forwarded a claim to ECC Norway and the consumer received his money back.

Collaboration

ECC Lithuania together with EEN organised seminars to businesses in 6 different cities in Lithuania. The State Consumer Rights Protection Authority attended as well. ECC Lithuania also signed a cooperation agreement with Civil Aviation Administration of Lithuania in order to share knowledge and also cooperate under the Regulation 261/2004 on Air Passengers' Rights.

Consumer feedback!

"Good day! The reimbursement showed up. Thank you so much! Will I be able to find you in Odminių str. 12? I just wanted to hand over a little present!"



Luxembourg

Activities

One of the major events of ECC Luxembourg in 2010 was the launch of the complete renewed website www.cecluxembourg.lu not only from the technical point of view but also regarding design and layout. ECC Luxembourg participated in the "25-years-of-Schengen Agreement" festivities in July 2010 and repeated its "Operation Train Station" (distributing information and promotional material to consumers travelling abroad from the main railway station). ECC Luxembourg also published several brochures, 10 newsletters, sent out 35 press releases and gave numerous interviews to newspapers, radio and television stations on consumer rights.

Success stories

A Luxembourg consumer bought a suit on a German online site. He paid by bank transfer but the suit was never delivered. ECC Luxembourg transferred the case to ECC Germany, which obtained a full reimbursement from the trader.

Consumer feedback!

"I consider this file to be closed and I will not hesitate to contact you, if needed – your organisation showed me great efficiency. Without your help I don't think that I would have been able to get this matter settled. Best regards."

Collaboration

ECC Luxembourg co-organised, together with the European Commission's Representation in Luxembourg, the Information Office of the European Parliament and the "Mouvement européen", a cycle of monthly conferences for consumers. ECC Luxembourg also continued in 2010 to operate a special weekly consultation service for consumers at the premises of the "Maison de l'Europe" in Luxembourg City.



Malta

Activities

During 2010, ECC Malta launched an application, called "Howard – the Shopping Assistant" at a press conference which was also addressed by the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for consumer affairs. ECC Malta was part of the working group for the ECC-Net joint project on Comparison of minimum criteria for 3-star hotels in the EU. The report issued attracted considerable media attention.

Success stories

A consumer booked a tour with an Icelandic company during which there were a number of shortcomings. A complaint was made via the operator's online form but no reply was received. After ECC Malta's intervention, the consumer received a reply and €300 reimbursement.

A consumer purchased a mobile phone from the United Kingdom but the phone's camera stopped working. The consumer returned the item for repairs, but did not get any feedback. After ECC Malta's intervention, the trader issued a refund for €114.98.

Consumer feedback!

"Many thanks for your help and kind co-operation."

"Thanks for all your help and speedy replies."

Collaboration

ECC Malta, as the designated body for the Services Directive 2006/123/EC, established collaboration with Malta Enterprise, as the designated body for businesses. ECC Malta also collaborated with the Law Courts about the European Small Claims Procedure. ECC Malta and the Civil Courts Registry discussed the process of opening a claim under the procedure and agreed to keep in close contact to make the procedure more accessible to consumers.



Netherlands

Activities

Some of ECC Netherlands's highlights in 2010 were: 1) Publication of the report "The European Online Marketplace: Consumer Complaints 2008–2009"; 2) ECC-Net stand at Vakantiebeurs 2010 (yearly tourist fair); 3) European stand at Libelle Zomer week with the Representative of the European Commission and the CPC (yearly consumer fair).

Success stories

A French consumer paid €498.12 to make a car rental reservation in Italy via a Dutch company. On arrival in Italy he was not able to rent the car, as the car rental company said that the reservation had not been confirmed by the Dutch intermediary. The consumer immediately contacted the trader by phone using the emergency number given on the voucher, but no solution was found. He had to rent a car from another company for a much higher amount. The French consumer wrote to the trader to claim a refund, to no avail. After the intervention of ECC Netherlands, the company provided the refund and compensation for the extra costs.

Consumer feedback!

"I greatly thank you and your organisation in the firm handling and picking up of my complaint. We will accept the proposal of a refund of €250. Especially given your comment that possible rejection of the proposal can have the consequence that no settlement will be reached. And especially considering the fact that this settlement increased my "honor". Again. Thank you for your efforts and help!"

Collaboration

ECC Netherlands presented the ECC-Net activities at the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN, <https://icpen.org>) meeting in Noordwijk in November. ECC Netherlands together with the Representative of European Commission and the CPC had a joint promotional stand at the Libelle Summer Fair at Almeerder Beach in the Netherlands. The fair was visited by about 80,000 consumers.



Norway

Activities

Some of ECC Norway's highlights in 2010 were: 1) Consumers can now find ECC Norway on Facebook and Twitter; 2) ECC Norway created a new, more consumer-friendly, website with information in Norwegian, English, Spanish and French; 3) ECC Norway focused on three main ECC-Net joint projects: the report "The European Online Marketplace: Consumer Complaints 2008–2009", the project "Ski-Resorts in Europe 2010/2011" and the Mystery Shopping project; 4) ECC Norway staged an information campaign in cooperation with the Travel department of the Norwegian Trade Association. As a result every consumer who booked a holiday through a travel agent member of the Trade Association received an explanatory note together with the travel documents, 5) ECC Norway also held a one-day information campaign at Moss Airport (Oslo) on passenger rights issues.

Success stories

A Norwegian company resells tickets for various events. Under Norwegian Law it is illegal to resell tickets in Norway at a higher price than the original ticket price. The company often sells more tickets to consumers than they have at the time of the sale agreement, and then tries to get enough tickets before the event. In 2010, not a week passed without ECC Norway receiving complaints against this company. In several cases ECC Norway succeeded in conciliating the parties, but was not satisfied with the overall conciliation process. A long response time and many mistakes in the reimbursement process have forced ECC Norway to forward unresolved cases to the Norwegian ADR. In 2010, 65 cases were brought to this ADR body, whose decisions are binding. The company has so far been ordered to pay back €37,000 to consumers.

Consumer feedback!

"Hi, thanks for a great job with this case. We have received the refund and we are very pleased. It is incredible that your centre is able to assist consumers like you did for me. I thank you again for your assistance in this case."



Poland

Activities

Some of ECC Poland's highlights in 2010 were: 1) Co-leadership in the ECC-Net joint projects on "The European Online Marketplace: Consumer Complaints 2008–2009" and on European Small Claims Procedure; 2) Organisation of the 5th Anniversary of ECC-Net one-day conference and European Fair with active participation of consumers and other ECCs, and production of audio-video materials.

Success stories

A Polish consumer bought a package travel holiday to Thailand from a German travel agency. The package was for a stay in a five star hotel. After a 25 hour delay of the flight, the stay was two days shorter. In Bangkok the consumer's luggage was lost for one day. The beach near the hotel was badly served and the use of the pool without a lifeguard was forbidden. After ECC Poland's intervention, the consumer was reimbursed €1,200.

Consumer feedback!

"It is a great pleasure to be aware that there are some institutions which help and assist in solving problems of Polish consumers deciding to buy outside our country."

"The received amount fulfills my claim in full extent. Personally I would like to stress that thanks to ECC Poland's intervention it was possible to finish the case without long-lasting court proceedings."

Collaboration

ECC Poland organised a conference "Networking – how to find myself in Europe?" in cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the European Commission and the European Centre of Warsaw University. ECC Poland also gave a presentation on the Proposal for a Directive on Consumer Rights during the workshop "Consumer law – the present and the future" organised by the EEN in cooperation with ECC Poland.



Portugal

Activities

Some of ECC Portugal's highlights in 2010 were: 1) Distribution within the country and abroad of more than 560,000 leaflets and brochures on cross-border topics; 2) Outdoor promotion activities in two major cities of the country (Braga and Coimbra) in cooperation with regional ADR entities, partners of ECC Portugal in solving cross-border conflicts. These activities included outdoor stands, promotional gadgets, press articles in regional newspapers, a video on ECC-Net work and European Commission campaigns, and also presentations on ECC Portugal's website; 3) ECC Portugal also made presentations on the ECC-Net and its activities, the Services Directive 2006/123/EC and the Small Claims Procedure during a training session to consumer advisers in the municipalities.

Success stories

A Portuguese consumer bought air tickets with an online travel agency and he was incorrectly charged twice the price. After the intervention of ECC Portugal in cooperation with ECC Spain, the company reimbursed the consumer €531.32.

Collaboration

During 2010, ECC Portugal met with the Civil and Commercial Extrajudicial Network to exchange views and agree on cooperation to be developed in the near future, namely regarding the Small Claims Procedure and how Portuguese consumers can effectively take advantage of this judicial tool. ECC Portugal also actively cooperated with ECC Luxembourg in the information session organised for the Portuguese community in Luxembourg – making presentations on the ECC-Net, the legalisation of vehicles and buying a house in Portugal.

Consumer feedback!

"I'm impressed: it was speedy and effective."



Romania

Activities

Some of ECC Romania's highlights in 2010 were: 1) ECC Romania produced and distributed brochures on payment methods in the EU, shopping and travelling to Greece, Small Claims Guide, hotel services in Romania, 6 info sheets in Romanian and English; 2) ECC Romania coordinated a comparative study on "Comparison of minimum criteria for 3-star hotels in the EU". The purpose was to provide a practical tool for consumers to compare criteria of classification for 3-star hotels.

Success stories

A French consumer reserved and paid for a bus ticket on the internet. Afterwards she was informed that she had to pay a price difference as the price indicated was wrong due to technical problems. ECC Romania contacted the trader and the consumer travelled without paying any price difference.

Consumer feedback!

"Without the involvement of ECC Romania I wouldn't have got my money back. I welcomed the efficient way of communication and solution of my problem."

"When I found out that my €500 was recovered I was impressed by the quickness and efficiency how my case was solved."

Collaboration

ECC Romania signed an agreement to promote and assist in the notification process of the Union of Banking Mediators from Romania. This deals with mediation between consumers and banks. Also, ECC Romania started to offer assistance to the newly established Trust Mark scheme on E-commerce, which will also offer ADR services for E-commerce.



Slovakia

Activities

Some of ECC Slovakia's highlights in 2010 were: 1) The launch of the ECC Slovakia's website www.esc-sr.sk; 2) Seminar on Protection of Consumer Rights in Courts, organised by ECC Slovakia; 3) Promotional material, brochures on shopping online, information stand at the shopping centre on 12 March 2010, on the occasion of International Consumer Day.

Success stories

A Slovak consumer ordered via a Czech travel agency accommodation for 2 weeks for 4 people in Bulgaria. The consumer booked a special room with two bathrooms because of her two seriously ill children, and the trader was informed about this. After arrival the consumer found out that this was not taken into account. The consumer was accommodated in a standard room with double bed and two extra beds with only one bathroom. Although the consumer received lower compensation than requested, the case was solved amicably with the help of ECC Cyprus.

Collaboration

ECC Slovakia has good cooperation with the Slovak Trade Inspection and Ministry of Justice of the SR, which was enhanced in 2010 by safeguarding a common approach towards companies using unfair commercial practices and unfair contract terms when operating websites which provide free accessible information for compulsory paid registrations over a long period. This collaboration resulted in a document published on ECC Slovakia's website warning consumers about their rights. In November 2010 ECC Slovakia actively attended the meeting of EURO INFO regional centres.

Consumer feedback!

"I would like to thank you for your willingness and help when dealing with my complaint. There is a lack of people willing to help and provide advice in such a way. Thank you very much!"



Slovenia

Activities

During 2010, ECC Slovenia provided assistance to 837 consumers, undertook 53 media-related works for different kinds of media, presented its activities at 18 fairs and stalls, prepared 11 lectures on consumer rights, printed 4 publications and participated in 3 ECC-Net joint projects.

Success stories

A consumer bought sport clothes from a German online retailer as a Christmas present for her husband. The clothes turned out to be too small and not as appealing as the pictures on the site. The consumer contacted ECC Slovenia and was informed about her rights. A month later the consumer said that thanks to the information and advice given by ECC Slovenia she had solved the problem with the trader successfully.

Consumer feedback!

"You are really doing an excellent job!"

"I am really happy to inform you that the seller reimbursed the full amount we asked for. Once again, thank you very much for your help."

Collaboration

A good example of successful collaboration by ECC Slovenia with enforcement bodies and/or other networks is a workshop prepared by ECC Slovenia for the annual meeting of all EURES advisers from Slovenia. Also, ECC Slovenia prepared two workshops for students on study visit to the Permanent Representation of the European Commission in Slovenia.



Spain

Activities

Some of ECC Spain's highlights in 2010 were: 1) ECC Spain hosted the Cooperation Day in Palma de Mallorca, which included a discussion on ECC-Net Case handling protocol, the IT-Tool manual, and the visibility of ECC-Net etc; 2) One day campaign in Madrid Airport distributing leaflets on different topics of consumer rights protection; 3) Participation in several workshops on E-commerce, car hire, consumer rights' application, international judicial competition within the EU, international consumer contracts in the framework of ECC-Net etc; 4) Organisation of a visit of a Chinese delegation from the most important consumer association in China.

Success stories

A consumer had a ticket to travel by train from Coventry to London. He had to reach Stansted airport to fly back to Spain. The train was cancelled and the consumer had to go to his final destination by taxi. The consumer said he had to pay €220 for the taxi. After ECC Spain's intervention the consumer got €250 compensation. Train companies do not normally offer compensation for this kind of problem.

Consumer feedback!

"Dear Sirs, thank you, thank you, whatever you did, it worked. This morning I received a letter and a cheque for €55.45. This is truly wonderful... I only wanted the price of the ring back and they have returned the package & postage as well... Again, thank you for your help in this matter."

Collaboration

During 2010, ECC Spain successfully collaborated with the EJN, CPC Spain, SOLVIT, FIN-NET, the Permanent Representation of the European Commission and other international stakeholders.



Sweden

Activities

Some of ECC Sweden's highlights in 2010 were: 1) ECC Sweden organised a workshop "Cross border scams and frauds aimed at European consumers"; 2) ECC Sweden participated in an event with DOLCETA and in an open meeting about travel in Europe, organised by Europe Direct during the European week. ECC Sweden also participated in a debate at the annual Consumer Conference in Sweden.

Success stories

A consumer purchased spare parts for his car but the trader failed to deliver the parts. The consumer made a complaint to ECC Norway when the trader refused to make a refund. ECC Norway shared the case with ECC Sweden who contacted the trader and a refund was made.

A consumer stranded in Spain during the volcanic ash crisis didn't receive any assistance. After trying to get compensation for the economic damage, without succeeding, he contacted ECC Sweden. The case was shared with ECC Spain and the trader compensated the consumer.

Collaboration

ECC Sweden has an ongoing collaboration with the Swedish NEB on air passengers' rights. ECC Sweden organised a workshop in cooperation with NEB, CPC, SOLVIT, the police and the Permanent Representation of the European Commission. ECC Sweden also has good collaboration with CPC Sweden.

Consumer feedback!

"We have contacted T and informed them that we are pleased with the paid compensation and that we have no further claims. We have also contacted the NEB and thanked them for their fantastic help. We would also like to thank ECC Sweden for the same type of help."



United Kingdom

Activities

In 2010, ECC United Kingdom dealt with more than 8,200 complaints, disputes and information requests. ECC United Kingdom has a programme of educating consumers before making purchases to try to prevent problems later on. This work included engaging with Trading Standards officers at Trading Standards Institute's Conference, supplying leaflets to consumer-facing outlets such as a library, school and residents' association; and liaising with the media. ECC United Kingdom also supported the European Commission and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills by sharing best practice and feedback on consumer problems and issues.

Success stories

After involvement of ECC United Kingdom and colleagues at ECC Malta, a consumer received a 50% refund of the total cost of a mini-cruise organised by a Maltese trader. He had been "totally dissatisfied" with the mini-cruise and felt that the trip did not correspond with the description of the cruise on the trader's website.

Consumer feedback!

"I would like to strongly commend a consumer advisor at your organisation. At all times she has proved helpful and knowledgeable. Not only does she promptly respond to my queries, but she more importantly thinks ahead and makes useful suggestions."

Collaboration

ECC United Kingdom: 1) engaged with the EJM to discuss issues on processes and synergies between ECC United Kingdom and EJM; 2) discussed with the Office of Fair Trading enforcement body on how to create a better service for dealing with European cross-border complaints; 3) engaged with the Financial Ombudsman Service on operational issues and collective redress in financial services.

2010 National reports were provided by the following organisations⁴

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There is no ECC in Greece at the moment. For latest news check: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

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⁴ For updated information as from 2011 check: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/index_en.htm

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