15 YEARS OF ECC-NET

HELP AND ADVICE FOR CONSUMERS IN EUROPE



15 years ECC-Net

Co-funded by
the European Union

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRES NETWORK

ANNIVERSARY REPORT

2005-2020

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15 years ECC-Net

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FOREWORD



Didier Reynders

EU Commissioner
for Justice and Consumers

The 15th anniversary of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECCs) is an opportunity for us to look back and reflect on the success of the single market. For both face-to-face and online shopping, European Consumer Centres have remained relevant all along, as they have adapted very well to the new market trends and the new consumer shopping behaviours.

The European Consumer Centre Network receives more than 120,000 requests from consumers each year. This year, as you can imagine, the ECC phone lines have been busier than ever due to the sharp increase in complaints at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic; earning ECCs even more consumer trust.

Daily contacts with consumers allow the ECCs to harness market knowledge, which is crucial for evidence-based policy-making, development and measuring the effectiveness of enforcement actions. Looking forward, I have no doubt that the ECC Network will continue to play a vital role in consumer protection. Indeed, under the revised Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation, the ECCs were given the power to send external alerts to enforcement authorities and the Commission when they detect wrongdoings.

ECCs will also be key for the successful roll out of the European Green Deal and the Digital Agenda for Europe through awareness-raising campaigns to promote sustainable consumption.

ECCs have a bright and promising future ahead of them. I commend their work and the quality services they have been delivering to EU citizens over the past 15 years. I know we can count on them for the next years, they are a key asset for the European consumer policy and its future.

ANNIVERSARY MESSAGES

Didier Reynders

EU Commissioner for Justice and Consumers

"I am convinced that the European Consumer Centres Network with its practical support to consumers will remain in the future as an essential feature of the Union's consumer cooperation. I wish the ECC-Net a happy birthday!"

Ivo Mechels

CEO of Euroconsumers

"As a matter of fact, the complementarity between the work of national consumer organisations and the work that you do is key. Good luck and here's the next 15 years of collaboration together!"

Jolanda Girzl

Senior Legal Advisor for the Swedish Trade Federation

"You enable consumers to be confident to take full advantage of the internal market. You also provide services that help consumers to trust the digital economy, in order to make the most out of the European Single Market. This benefits both EU consumers and businesses."

Prof. Dr. Christian Kastrop

State Secretary in the Federal German Ministry for Justice and Consumer Protection

"The close collaboration between ECC Germany and France in their joint location in Kehl, near Strasbourg is a prime example of European cooperation and unity. Together with the other partners, the ECCs form an unique European network to the benefit of consumers. I congratulate the ECC-Net on 15 years of important work for consumers all over Europe!"

Petra de Sutter

Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium

"I can't help but support the work that your centres undertake on a daily basis. We as legislators can make as many regulations as we want to protect consumers. Nevertheless, consumers have to be aware of the existence of this protection. I hope that the upcoming 15 years of your network, at least, will be as fruitful as the past ones."

Monique Goyens

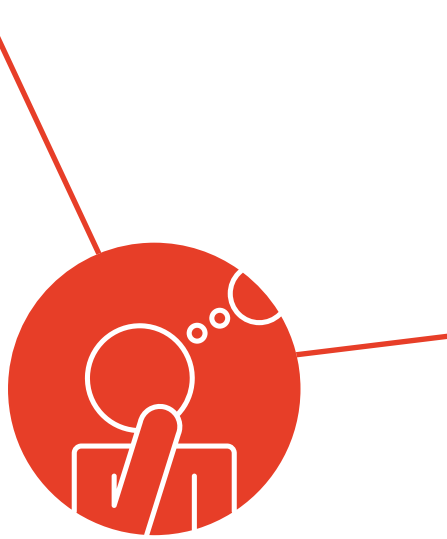
Director General of BEUC

"You are providing very pragmatic and concrete guidance to consumers when they try to navigate the jungle of European consumer law in cross-border cases. We see the ECC-Net as a very legitimate and reliable partner. I look forward to working with you for many, many more years to come."





Who We Are



24 languages

15 YEARS OF CROSS-BORDER CONSUMER PROTECTION

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) operates in all EU Member States as well as Norway, Iceland and the UK, with support from the European funds and co-financing from national governments. Our main prerogatives are:

- Provide free information and advice to consumers who purchase products and services within the European Union, so that they are fully aware of their rights.
- Assist with out-of-court settlement of disputes arising between traders and consumers from different EU Member States.

OUR HISTORY

Almost 30 years ago, the European Commission started to support the provision of information and assistance in cross-border consumer issues. The 'Euroguichets' network was thus created, with offices located and active mainly in border regions. Over time, the European Commission focused on establishing network partners in the Member States and named them 'European Consumer Centres'. In 2001, the European Extrajudicial Network (EEJ-Net) of information and assistance centres was founded to forward consumer disputes to competent Alternative



30 European Consumer Centres

One in each EU country, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom

More than 150 legal experts

Dispute Resolution (ADR) bodies. Some Member States entrusted their existing European Consumer Centre (ECC) with this task, others opened separate contact points. In 2004, 13 Member States had ECCs, while the EEJ-Net covered 17 centres in 15 others. Two very similar networks were now responsible for cross-border consumer issues.

THE ECC-NET WAS BORN

In 2005, both networks merged into one: the ECC-Net. Today, there is an ECC in every EU country as well as in Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom. More than 150 legal experts provide assistance in 24 different languages, free of charge. The ECC-Net continues to help consumers defend their rights, increase trust in the internal market and maintain a high level of consumer protection in Europe. It also continues to increase its influence on European policy- and decision-makers.

Over time, complaints have become more complex and the number of consumers needing our help is increasing. While it fulfils an indispensable role in protecting consumer rights successfully, after the introduction of the euro in some EU Member States and in light of ever-more-advanced digital commerce and other cross-border technologies all over Europe, the ECC-Net faces new challenges all the time.



Our Mission

The network of 30 European Consumer Centres (ECCs) empowers consumers to know their rights and to take full advantage of the opportunities the Single Market offers.

How we accomplish our mission

The ECC-Net's legal experts assist consumers to solve their cross-border problems free of charge by providing strong legal expertise. The network offers a unique overview and reliable information about consumer affairs in the Internal Market which can be used for policy making in collaboration with European and national stakeholders.

COMMON PROJECTS

2005

Car rental for holidays
Raising awareness about the most common unfair commercial practices

2006

Charges for money withdrawals from cash dispensers
Comparative study on withdrawal fees across Europe

Air passenger rights: Consumer complaints 2005
Analysis of consumer complaints

Money changing in EU member states outside the eurozone
Field studies of practices and information materials for tourists

2007

Air passenger Rights: Consumer complaints 2006
Country-by-country analysis of air travel-related complaints and recommendations on sectorial law improvements

2008

The European online marketplace: consumer complaints 2007
Analysis of the main issues in online cross-border consumer transactions from cases handled by the network

2009

Classification of hotel establishments within the EU
Practical guidance helping consumers to understand the 29 hotel rating categories in the EU, Iceland and Norway

Price research, price differences in Europe
Price comparison of the most common textile and cosmetic products within 27 European countries

2010

Ski resort holidays in Europe 2010/2011
Pan-European market survey on ski resort offers

The European online marketplace: consumer complaints 2008-2009
Analysis of the main consumer issues with online cross-border transactions

COMMON PROJECTS

2011

Online Cross-Border Mystery Shopping – State of the e-Union
Mystery shopping exercises to measure online traders' compliance with consumer law

ECC-Net Air Passenger Rights Report - in the aftermath of the "Volcanic Ash Crisis"
Analysis of mass cancellations due to the Icelandic volcanic eruption

2012

European Small Claims Procedure report
EU-wide Study on the implementation of the procedure and the awareness of the competent national courts

The costs of paying
Study on currency and credit card charges in the airline sector when booking and paying online

Too good to be true? It probably is!
Practical guide on avoiding subscription traps

2013

Enhanced Consumer Protection – Services Directive 2006/123/EC
Trust marks in Europe and their impact on consumer choice

Trust marks report:
Overview of trust marks in Europe and their impact on consumer choices

Fraud in cross-border e-commerce
Problems and risks consumers face when shopping online and how to avoid scams

2014

Commercial Warranties: Are they worth the money?
Comparison between legal guarantee and commercial warranty schemes in the EU

Chargeback in the EU/EEA: A solution to get your money back when a trader does not respect your consumer rights
Guidance on how to obtain a refund via credit card

2015

Cross-border car purchases
Guidance on purchasing from abroad

Timeshare
Guidance to consumers on purchasing timeshare and long-term holiday products

ECC-Net: Travel App
Free mobile application helping consumers to manage issues while travelling abroad, available in 25 languages

2016

Online travel - Is the initial price the final price?

Study on price increases in an online booking process and analysis of legal aspects of pricing transparency

2016 Rio de Janeiro: helpful advice for a safe journey

Guide for European consumers travelling to the Olympic Games in Brazil

2017

The impact of counterfeiting on online consumer rights in Europe

Risks associated with buying counterfeit products and tips on how to avoid unpleasant surprises

Subscription traps

Study on subscription traps in six countries

Air passenger rights position paper

Feedback on the revision of Regulation 261/2004 and proposal to address the deficiencies in the sector

2018

'CarPass' position paper

Proposal for the implementation of a "CarPass"rating to counter odometer manipulation in second-hand cars in order to improve consumer security and increase confidence in the automobile market

2019

Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Air Passenger Rights Sector

Evaluation of ADR options in the sector

Geoblocking position paper

Study on consumer issues concerning the application of the Geoblocking Regulation

2020

Car rental and brokers

Proposal for a secure and transparent sector-specific legislation

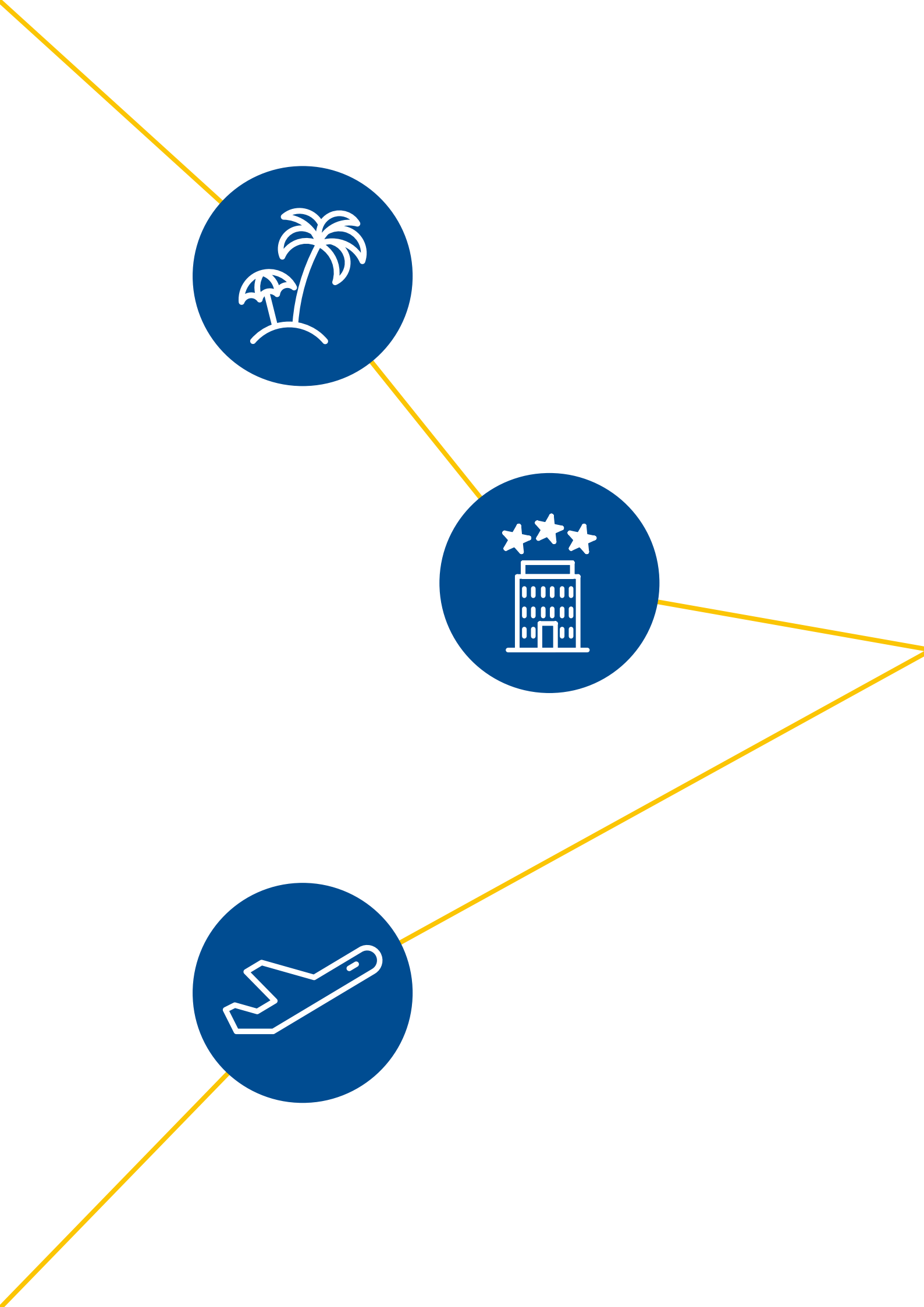
Online platforms in the travel sectors

Position on the need to define online platforms and their liability

Marketplaces and purchases in third countries

Position paper on the responsibilities of digital platforms in dealing with illegal content/products from traders based in third countries





fields of expertise

15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND UNIQUE EXPERTISE

30 centres – 15 years of experience and unique expertise

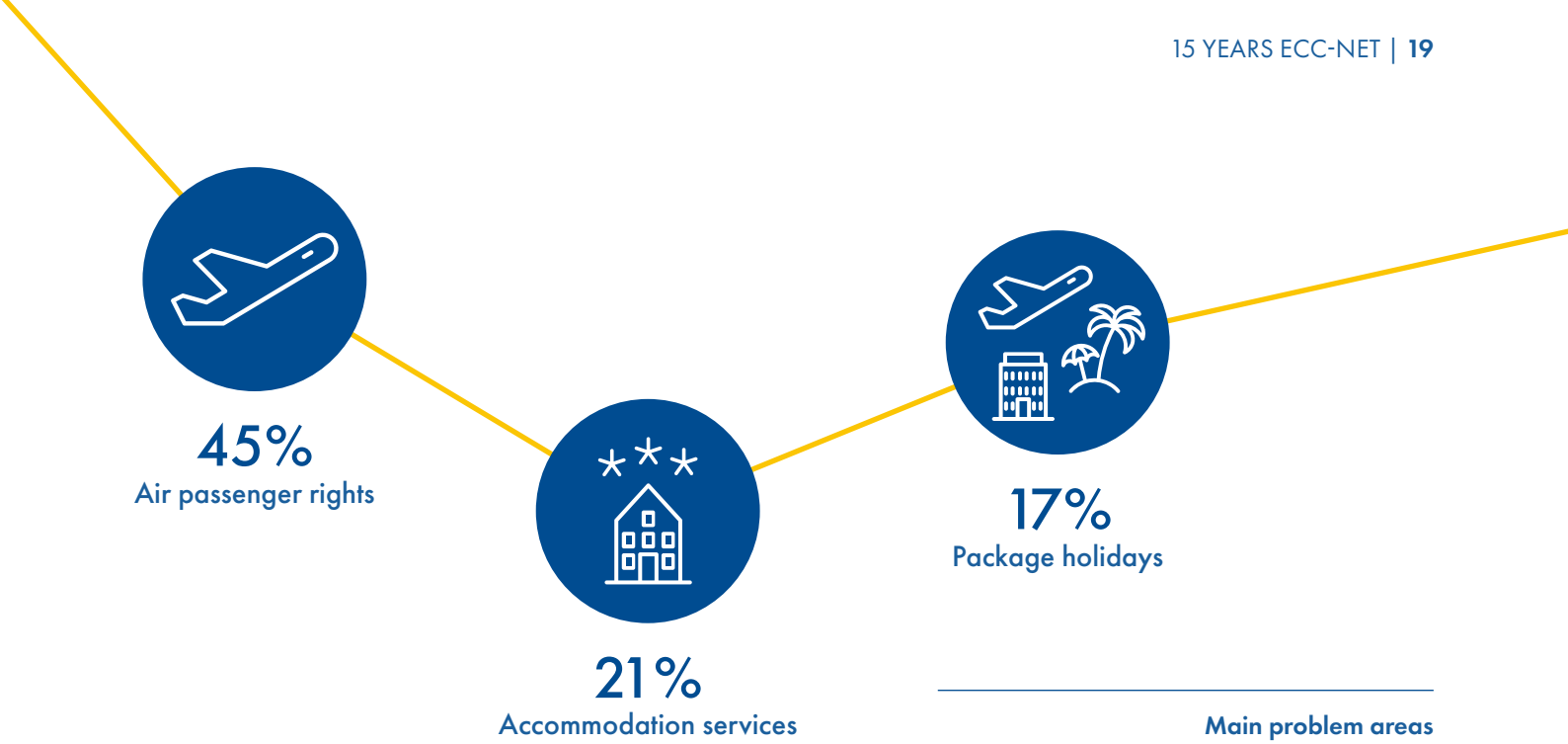
The primary role of the ECC-Net is to increase consumer confidence when they engage in cross-border transactions by providing free information and advice on their rights, as well as assistance with resolving their cross-border consumer complaints. As a collective external alert mechanism, ECCs will also increase their cooperation with national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC-Network). From 12 December 2020[1], the ECC-Net will also join the Single digital gateway implemented by the European Commission and the Member States as an information and advice service. The ECC-Net is a vital on consumer rights service within the EU and for resolving problems with traders from another EU Member State, Iceland, Norway or the UK. The Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 shows that the ECC-Net receives more cross-border complaints than Alternative Dispute Resolution bodies or the European Small Claims Procedure.

Direct continuous contact with consumers across Europe enables us to identify the challenges EU citizens face in countries across the Internal Market and to address them with EU policymakers.

Recent consumer difficulties relate to technological developments such as artificial intelligence, use of smart connected objects and self-driving vehicles. However, basic consumer rights still need to be further strengthened and harmonised for both normal and exceptional situations.

The ECC-Net works closely with national consumer organisations, policymakers, academics and stakeholders such as business organisations and public-interest NGOs. Nowadays, a solid and comprehensive consumer rights policy helps businesses grow their market share, contributes to the optimal functioning of commercial markets and guarantees the implementation of consumers' rights and entitlements.

[1] Single market programme beyond 2020: "The network also intends to develop reciprocity arrangements with similar bodies in third countries."



45%
Air passenger rights

21%
Accommodation services

17%
Package holidays

Main problem areas

The ECC-Net has always had high case numbers in these three economic sectors. Most complaints relate to the terms for terminating contracts, cancellations of or changes to bookings (especially by the operator but also by the consumer). Over 15 years, more than 60% of all travel contract transactions were concluded online; 16% of online transactions were processed through third-party booking agents.

ECC-Net and COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic is having a great impact on both consumers and businesses. Many economic sectors have been severely affected, especially tourism. From the very beginning of the health emergency period, the staff of all European Consumer Centres was there to answer the many questions and complaints received from European citizens regarding the cancellation of their transport options, hotel bookings, rental reservations, package holidays and flights. The imposition of lockdowns and travel restrictions had led to increasing numbers of complaints well beyond travel and transport. Problems were experienced across the board with all things such as online shopping delays, cancellation of cultural and sporting events, disruption of academic studies and scheduled training.

In times of crisis, consumer rights are of utmost importance. Their preservation and application form our main objective. The ECC-Net received a total of a record 88,585 of questions and complaints between January and July 2020.

WORKLOADS INCREASES

Whereas the first weeks of the crisis generated increased volumes of questions on consumer rights for all of our ECCs, as of late, our focus as a network is on collaborating to help resolve disputes between consumers and traders following cancellations and refund issues primarily. The following ECCs are the 10 most impacted.



ECC Austria
2019: 4,670
2020: 5,545
+ 18%



ECC Belgium
2019: 7,161
2020: 10,137
+ 41%



ECC Denmark
2019: 1,487
2020: 3,887
+ 61%



ECC France
2019: 4,624
2020: 5,623
+ 21%



ECC Italy
2019: 3,640
2020: 7,576
+ 108%



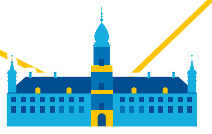
ECC Germany
2019: 6,454
2020: 7,367
+ 14%



ECC Sweden
2019: 7,177
2020: 6,567



ECC Lithuania
2019: 792
2020: 1,506
+ 90%



ECC Poland
2019: 2,805
2020: 3,710
+ 32%



ECC UK
2019: 5,789
2020: 6,566
+ 13%

Comparison: Total number of consumer queries received between January and June 2019 and 2020, respectively, and the increase

KEY AREAS

The increase in caseload across our network of offices has been unprecedented and many ECCs have had to adopt emergency case handling measures to cope with the additional workload. April was the busiest month in the history of the network in terms of consumer queries: **17,600 consumers contacted us for assistance**. The overall workload increase was compounded by a high number of non-coronavirus cases, far more than those received over 2019.

COVID-19 has also impacted existing consumer law in many countries and the ECCs need to keep themselves and consumers up to date with national legislative changes and developments related to the following key areas:



Hotels



Package travel



Event tickets



Accommodation



Passenger transport and air travel



Car rental



Prescription periods

REMOTE WORKING IN THE ECC-NET

In order to comply with local and national health regulations in their various countries, some of our offices have continued to work remotely so as to provide our services to consumers. As such, our service provision model remained unchanged - throughout the crisis, we continued to dispense direct assistance to consumers via our communications channels, through our digital and social media platforms, and in partnership with European media outlets.



While working remotely during confinement, between January and June 2020, the ECC-Net's legal experts informed and assisted 88,585 European consumers.

The European Consumer Centres exchange information on a daily basis about legislative changes introduced in the aftermath of the crisis. For example, some European countries have temporarily adapted their legislation on travel and refunds for cancelled events, in particular.

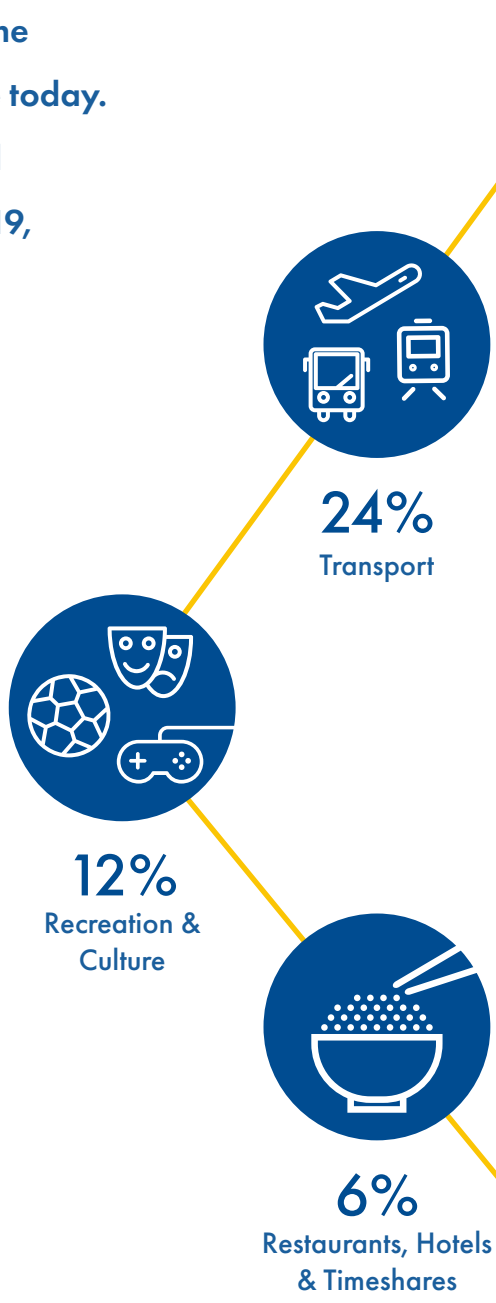
In addition, we have implemented a series of efficiency processes in our query processing work. For example, our case-handlers across our 30 offices in the EU/EEA share a database that is constantly updated with the latest information on COVID-19 national legislative changes, as soon as these come into force.In times of crisis, European consumers must be able to rely on expert qualified advice so as to be able to exercise their rights and be fully protected. Since the beginning of the crisis, the European Commission has been committed to protect consumers online. In this context, the ECCs provided a wealth of information that helps consumers deal with serious issues such as online scams and counterfeit products.

Another source of grave concern is the proliferation of unfair commercial practices on online platforms. Some traders try to leverage the vulnerabilities of consumers to sell products such as face masks, sanitising products and medicines that are advertised as capable of preventing or treating Coronavirus infections.

These unfair practices have been investigated and confirmed by the European Commission, which then launched a joint action to protect consumers from such rogue traders. In this context, cooperation between the ECC-Net, the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC), the European Commission and other enforcement authorities is essential.

Our expertise

On the following pages ECC-Net shares insight on some of the most important issues European consumers face today. Consumer policies must constantly adapt and respond to changes and developments in our daily lives. In 2019, the ECC-Net published the paper 'For a Europe which protects its consumers in their daily lives based on feedback from different Member States' highlighting current consumer issues and making suggestions on how to close legislative gaps[2].



Out of a total number of cases received between 2005 and June 2020. Since the beginning of ECC-Net, among the strongest categories are: Transport, Recreation & Culture and Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshare.

TRANSPORT SERVICES: AIR TRAVEL

As the number of people travelling is increasing every year, air passenger rights have become one of the most important consumer rights sectors. As passengers tend to purchase their tickets either directly from the airline or from booking intermediaries, which often are licensed in another EU Member State, air transport was often the main reason to contact the ECC-Net when problems arose.

The total number of cases received related to air passenger rights over the network's 15-year existence is more than 210,000.

[2] www.europe-consommateurs.eu



Booking intermediaries



Other air-related queries (airport taxes, fees, card charges)

There is a need to ensure that passengers enjoy easier access to information about their rights when travelling by air. The area of air passenger rights encompasses a wide range of issues[3]:



Flight delays and cancellations



Claims for damages



Return and one-way flights



Denial of boarding

The Icelandic volcanic eruption of 2010 and the coronavirus pandemic 10 years later clearly showed the fragility of the air transport industry and how such events can affect everyone. It also highlighted the need for strong consumer protection in this areas as the legislation exists but enforcement is the weak link.

The ECCs proactively provide information on passenger rights, e.g. when airlines ground or cancel flights, airport personnel is on strike or travel agencies are in difficulty. They frequently operate stands at travel fairs and issue special reports to support consumers and inform policy makers.

Regulation 261/2004[4] protects air passengers flying from/to EU airports or with EU-licensed carriers. Clarity on consumer rights and enforcement mechanisms is paramount. The ECC-Net welcomed the European Commission's initiative to revise both Regulation 261 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding, cancellations or long delays of flights, as well as Regulation (EC) 2027/97 on air carrier liability in the event of accidents.

The ECC-Net encourages policy makers to agree on a final version that balances the rights of passengers with the financial and technical difficulties encountered by air carriers.[5]

In order to achieve the best possible results for air travel consumer rights, there must be increased cooperation between consumers, airlines, national consumer protection authorities, ADR and National Enforcement Bodies (NEB). The ECC-Net continuously strives to encourage and enhance communication and cooperation with all stakeholders involved. Only a solid system based on mutual cooperation will guarantee strong air passenger rights and strengthen trust in EU legislation.

[3] www.ec.europa.eu - ECC-Net Air Passenger Rights Report 2015. Do consumers get the compensation they are entitled to and at what cost? | [4] Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 295/91 (Text with EEA relevance).

TRANSPORT SERVICES: CAR RENTAL

Car rental is another major source of complaints for the ECC-Net.

Since 2008, the network has frequently notified the European Commission and national enforcement authorities of unfair imbalances in the relationship between consumers and car rental companies.

Number of total cases handled between 2005 and the end of June 2020: 35,792.

It should be noted that the industry has improved in recent years, thanks to its active engagement with the European Commission, the ECC-Net and national enforcement authorities (CPC-Network), via the promotion of codes of conduct, alternative dispute resolution and other undertakings.[6]

However, based on ECC-Net's experience, the industry's shortcomings, especially when trading via third-party intermediaries, cause massive harm to consumers. Sector-specific legislation for car rental services would help clarify the obligations of service providers, including intermediaries, and strenghten consumer trust in the industry. Between 2018 and 2019 the total of car rental cases, both complaints and information requests, received by the ECC-Net doubled.

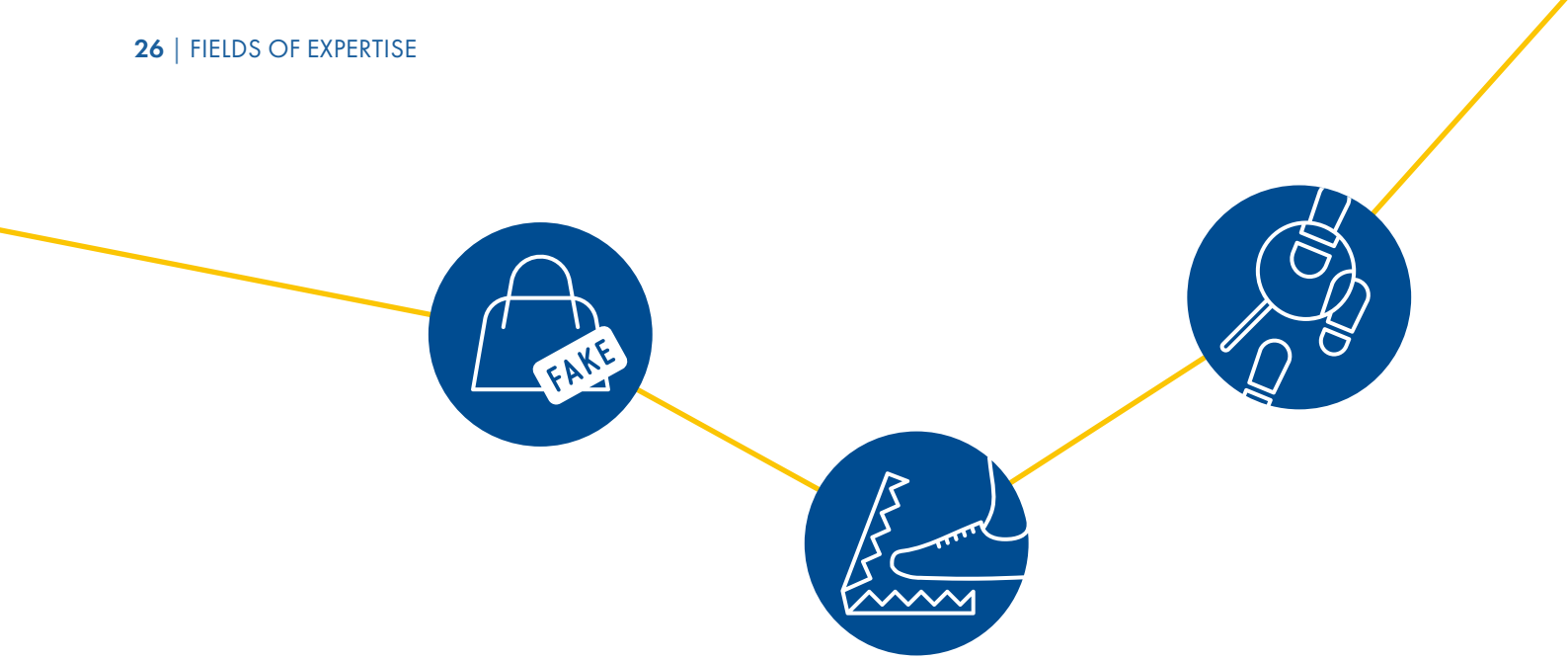
SHOPPING: E-COMMERCE AND MARKETPLACES

E-commerce is growing at a phenomenal rate globally. As markets evolve and online shopping increases, the global retail sector grows from strength to strength every year. According to a new eMarketer report, global online retail sales alone will rise to $4,058 trillion in 2020.

As cross-border online retail grows all the time, so must consumer confidence and cross-border shopping protection. Enforcing clear and strong consumer safeguards will benefit both traders and consumers and will result in increased European and international trade. Specifically, consumers must be provided with clear and reliable information about the businesses they engage and contract with, both on- and off-line. The proposed EU Digital Services Act will require online marketplaces to clearly inform consumers about the identity of the party with whom they are concluding a contract (if it is a professional trader or a private individual). The responsibilities of both trader and platform, as well as the contact details for complaints, should be made very clear, as online purchases now involve three parties: the consumer, the trader and the marketplace.

The ECC-Net has been involved in the stakeholder consultations of the European Parliament on the Digital Services Act Initiatives and expects to see a high-quality piece of legislation that offers complete and reliable protections for all European consumers. It is time to focus on *ex ante* regulatory instruments and on proactive and strong collaboration with enforcement authorities.

5 Revision of EU air passengers rights legislation: European Consumer Centres Network position paper (Update by ECC France and Germany 2017) www.europe-consommateurs.eu | 6 www.ec.europa.eu



SHOPPING: COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE EU

A pan-European investigation found two-thirds (66%) of products – including carbon monoxide alarms, baby toys and travel adaptors – bought from third-party sellers on the most popular sites in the EU failed EU safety standards. BEUC (The European Consumer Organisation) and its consumer members tested 250 products across 18 categories during 2019 and 165 of them failed official safety tests. Many were deemed to constitute a safety risk for consumers as they contain harmful substances, have a sub-standard design or unclear information.

E-commerce comes with a higher risk for consumers to fall victim to online fraud. Deceptive practices have been developed to make the consumers think they bagged a bargain. These 'bargains' may in fact turn out to be illegal products, advertised in such a way that the buyer is unaware that the product falls foul of legislation on health, safety certification or intellectual property rights.

In 2017, the ECC-Net published a report on the impact of counterfeiting on online consumer rights in Europe, the risks of buying counterfeits on the Internet, and tips from the ECC-Net for consumers in Europe who want to avoid unpleasant surprises. Having traditionally targeted the luxury market, counterfeit products now extend to medicines, cosmetics, children's toys, shoes and automobile parts, all available for sale online. These online bargains seem incredibly attractive, but counterfeit products may pose health, safety and financial risks to consumers and expose them to various legal sanctions in all EU countries. ECC-Net's online shopping leaflet advises consumers on how to avoid buying fake products on the Internet.

ECC-Net receives complaints from consumers who, consciously or not, purchased counterfeit items every day. According to Europol statistics, counterfeit and pirated products account for approximately 5% of all imports into the EU.[8]

[7] BEUC: Two-thirds of a total of 250 online products tested bye BEUC failed safety tests; www.beuc.eu | [8] https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/intellectual-property-crime/counterfeiting-and-product-piracy

European Consumer Centres



Put consumers at the heart of EU consumer policy



Help consumers to get better-value goods and services in the EU



Help consumers to get all the benefits of technological advances in a safe way



Provides consumers with the information and tools to obtain redress



Equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to exercise their rights and make informed purchasing decisions



Support a sustainable products policy and promote the transition towards a green economy

THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRES


Reykjavik
Oslo
Karlstad
Helsinki
Tallinn
Riga
Dublin
Copenhagen
Vilnius
Basildon
Utrecht
Warsaw
Brussels
Luxembourg
Prague
Kehl
Bratislava
Vienna
Budapest
Ljubljana
Bolzano
Zagreb
Bucharest
Lisbon
Madrid
Rome
Sofia
Athens
Valletta
Nicosia

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info@europakonsument.at
www.europakonsument.at

STAFF

1 Director

6 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

VKI

ABOUT US

Our ECC is located on Austria's busiest shopping street, the Mariahilferstraße in Vienna. Therefore, many consumers visit our office. Our ECC is well known for decades as an organisation which provides information and assists consumers.

We benefit a lot from the strong brand of our host-structure, the Verein für Konsumenteninformation (VKI). This cooperation of ECC Austria translates into many advantages for consumers.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



62%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



15%
Transport



5%
Recreation & Culture



6%
Health

Georg Mentschl
Director

"High motivation, a clear sense of mission, effective communication between staff members and complementarity in the composition of the whole team are the main indicators for the success of the European Consumer Centre Austria. Everything is focused on one goal: the benefit of consumers throughout Europe!"



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **BELGIUM**

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www.eccbelgium.be

STAFF

- 1 Director
- 5 Case handlers
- 1 Communication officer
- 1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

ABOUT US

Belgium, the small country at the heart of Europe, with three national languages, a large community of expatriates and 11,5 million consumers. Sharing a border with four other countries, all about a two-hour drive away.

The Belgians know what cross-border shopping is all about. We can see this in the increasing number of consumers we help, through our website, social media and direct legal advice. Being part of a strong ECC-Net we can inform and collaborate with various stakeholders and co-funders and reach many European consumers.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



24% Miscellaneous Goods & Services



22% Transport



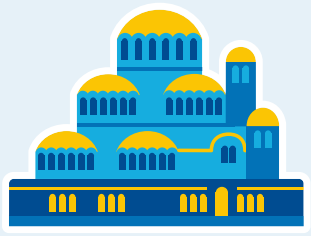
21% Recreation & Culture



8% Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

Karen Ghysels
Director

"In ECC Belgium we are juggling every day with 3 different languages, a diversity of team members, a lot of consumer questions and all this we do with great enthusiasm. The increasing amount of requests is our biggest challenge. What motivates us most is working within this fantastic network, alongside great colleagues and for the benefit of all consumers in Europe."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **BULGARIA**

CONTACT

ECC Bulgaria
14 Bacho Kiro Str
1000 Sofia

info@ecc.bg
www.ecc.bg

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES



HOST

COMMISSION FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

ABOUT US

We are a cohesive ECC, focused on being in the right place at the right time for our stakeholders and partners.

ECC Bulgaria is supported by our host organisation, the Commission for Protection of Consumers, providing multidisciplinary expertise and skills for the safety of consumers in a trustworthy EU Single Market. We strive to add value through effective improvements in what people get out of their everyday choices. ECC-Net traditions of support and trust are standards we believe in and adhere to.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



28%
Transport



15 %
Clothing & Footwear



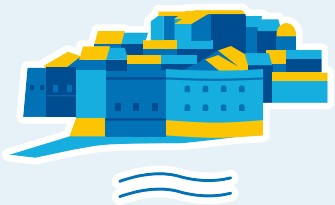
12%
Recreation & Culture



10%
Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

Sonia Spasova
Director

"ECC Bulgaria is part of a big family, the ECC-Net. Sometimes we argue with one another, but we always support each other. And we always have one common goal: to inform and empower consumers by enforcing their rights."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **CROATIA**

CONTACT

ECC Croatia
Ulica grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb

ecc-croatia@mingor.hr
www.ecc-croatia.hr

STAFF

1 Director

4 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

REPUBLIC of CROATIA
Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development

ABOUT US

ECC Croatia is a part of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. We are here to help consumers and give them advice on their consumer rights and to make them feel protected and confident when shopping cross-border.

We work in close collaboration with other national consumer organisations, business associations and ADR bodies to raise awareness on cross-border consumer rights.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



19%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



13%
Transport



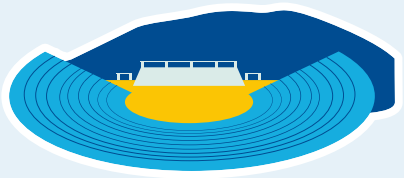
11 %
Clothing & Footwear



4%
Recreation & Culture

Danijela Markovic Krstic
Director

"Although we are a network of 30 countries around Europe, there is a great feeling of togetherness and dedication to help consumers and colleagues. ECC Croatia is honoured to be a part of this big family."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **CYPRUS**

CONTACT

ECC Cyprus
Ministry of Energy,
Commerce and Industry
2 Agapinoros, IRIS Tower, Nicosia
1421 Cyprus

ecccyprus@meci.gov.cy
www.ecccyprus.gov.cy

STAFF

1 Director

1 Case handler

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

CONSUMER PROTECTION SERVICE
Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism

ABOUT US

Though we are small in size, we make a big effort to promote our services and the ECC-Net. ECC Cyprus demonstrates a proactive approach towards consumers through various promotion channels.

One of our most important aims is to educate consumers on their rights, to empower and enable them to take full advantage of what the Single Market has to offer.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

45% Transport

16% Communication

15% Recreation & Culture

9% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

Anastasia Stylianidou
Deputy director

"It's a great experience to work daily with people from 30 countries in Europe, with different languages, cultures, customs and overcoming these obstacles as a network! ECC Cyprus tries to help consumers and protect their rights in their daily life. The increasing amount of complaints and requests every year is our biggest achievement as ECC."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **CZECH REPUBLIC**

CONTACT

ECC Czech Republic
Štěpánská 15
120 00 Prague

eccnet-cz@ec.europa.eu
www.evropskyspotrebitel.cz

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

ABOUT US

It is our great pleasure to serve consumers with help and advice on how, for example, to shop safely online, which has become increasingly important in our everyday lives.

Environmental protection is very important to us. In our office, we try to be as eco-friendly as possible. Striving for excellence, we wield the sword of consumer protection with great honour, empathy and dedication.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

38% Transport

15% Recreation & Culture

13% Clothing & Footwear

12% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

Eva Petrážová
Director

"At ECC Czech Republic I met a team of dedicated young people with great knowledge of law, communication and languages. The network of 30 centres shows the strength of cooperation among European states in a very specific field of the consumer law enforcement. I am happy to say that our work is beneficial for consumers dealing with cross-border complaints when they don't know the local language or law."

consumer feedback

"THANKS TO YOU, A MIRACLE HAPPENED IN MY EYES: THE TRADER RESPONDED TO MY COMPLAINT. MY HOME BANK DID NOT PROVIDE ME HELP BUT INSTEAD YOU DID."



"I HAVE NO WORDS TO THANK YOU. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY SATISFACTION FOR YOUR SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION. I AM SO HAPPY THAT THERE ARE ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE ECC-NET PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM INJUSTICE."

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP, TIME AND EFFORT. GREATLY APPRECIATED! I REALLY LOVE THIS EUROPEAN SERVICE. IT IS QUITE DIFFICULT TO FIND YOUR WAY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY."





"I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR EFFORTS BECAUSE IT'S DIFFICULT AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN TO GET COMPANIES TO UPHOLD THE LAW AND GIVE US OUR RIGHTFUL COMPEN-SATION. THANKS!"

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **DENMARK**

CONTACT

ECC Denmark
Carl Jacobsens Vej 35
2500 Valby

info@forbrugereuropa.dk
www.consumereuropa.dk

STAFF

1 Director

6 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

KONKURRENCE- OG FORBRUGERSTYRELSEN

ABOUT US

ECC Denmark is a part of the Danish Competition and Consumer Authority. We work to ensure that consumers make active and informed choices, therefore contributing to well-functioning and competitive markets.

Through regular meetings with business and consumer organisations as well as ADRs, we keep up to date and share valuable insights from our casehandling.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

60% Transport

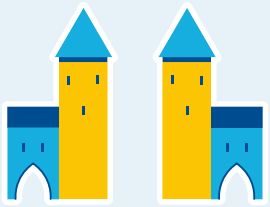
10% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

8% Recreation & Culture

6% Clothing & Footwear

Lars Arent
Director

"In the ECC, I have experienced first-hand professional and personal gains of working in a cross-border European environment. Professionally, we learn so much from each other, and personally, the relations and friendships in the ECC are truly unique. I am proud to be part of an initiative that brings the EU closer to its citizens and shows what the benefits of European cooperation are!"



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **ESTONIA**

CONTACT

ECC Estonia
Endla 10A
10122 Tallinn

consumer@consumer.ee
www.consumer.ee

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

TARBIJAKAITSE JA TEHNILISE JÄRELEVALVE AMET

ABOUT US

We are a small, efficient team, who always tries to give 100% and achieve results. Our aim is to reach every consumer personally and offer the best possible solution. In our daily work we prioritise case handling and information dissemination, including cooperation with the media.

We believe that the information we receive from consumer complaints is a valuable source for enforcement bodies. Our work contributes to a well-functioning EU internal market.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

51% Transport

9% Recreation & Culture

8% Clothing & Footwear

6% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Kristina Vaksmaa-Tammaru
Director

"The gratitude we receive from consumers shows us that our work really matters! In ECC Estonia we appreciate the happy atmosphere and great colleagues. The friendly and professional attitude within the network makes working in the ECC-Net enjoyable."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **FINLAND**

CONTACT

ECC Finland
Lintulahdenkuja 2
P. O. Box 5
00531 Helsinki

ECCNET-FI@ec.europa.eu
www.ecc.fi

STAFF

1 Director

5 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

KKV Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority

ABOUT US

In Finland we work in close cooperation with the Consumer Ombudsman and National Consumer Advisory Services to share information about consumer problems, help enforcement bodies and offer legal advice to consumers.

Our small but efficient team is dedicated to customer service and ensuring smooth cooperation with other ECCs. We learn from each other and are proud to be part of this Network helping European consumers in their cross-border questions.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

40% Transport

20% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

17% Recreation & Culture

7% Clothing & Footwear

Milla Lahtinen
Director

"There is a strong feeling of togetherness in the ECC-Net and great enthusiasm and willingness to help colleagues and European consumers, as well as enforcement authorities. By exchanging information and with joint communication campaigns, we can increase consumer awareness of cross-border issues such as safer online shopping and strong passenger rights."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **FRANCE**

CONTACT

ECC France
Bahnhofsplatz 3
77694 Kehl | Germany

info@cec-zev.eu
www.europe-consommateurs.eu

STAFF

1 Director

5 Case handlers

2 Communication officers

HOBBIES

HOST

Centre Européen de la Consommation
Zentrum für Europäischen Verbraucherschutz e.V.

ABOUT US

ECC France is surprisingly located not in France but close to Strasbourg, on the other side of the Rhine: in Kehl, Germany, where we share offices and work in close cooperation with the ECC Germany. This makes us the only binational centre of the ECC-Net.

Our trilingual and multicultural team is honoured to inform, advise and help more than 8,000 consumers every year and this contributes to bringing Europe closer to citizens.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



44%
Transport



13%
Recreation & Culture



11%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



11%
Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

Bianca Schulz
Director

"The ECC-Net is a unique proposition for consumers and a good example of a concrete and positive European achievement. Europe creates rights for consumers, we are here to help consumers exercise them."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **GERMANY**

CONTACT

ECC Germany
Bahnhofsplatz 3
77694 Kehl

info@cec-zev.eu
www.evz.de

STAFF

2 Directors

17 Case handlers

6 Communication officers

4 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

Centre Européen de la Consommation
Zentrum für Europäischen Verbraucherschutz e.V.

ABOUT US

Germany is the European country with the highest number of inhabitants. We are enthusiastic travellers, and enjoy shopping for goods and services in other countries. Therefore, cross-border consumer protection is a big topic here.

As our location is next to the French-German border, ECC Germany experiences daily what cross-border consumer protection means and where the internal market can be a challenge. Another special feature: we share offices with our colleagues from ECC France which makes us the only binational centre in the ECC-Net.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

43% Transport

16% Recreation & Culture

11% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

8% Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

Petra Kirstein & Karolina Wojtal
Directors

"Our free-of-charge service can be a real ace up the consumer's sleeve: even in legally unclear cases, we can often find satisfactory solutions for the benefit of the consumer. Our work is also appreciated by companies as they want to keep their clients happy and are grateful for the out-of-court dispute resolution."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **GREECE**

CONTACT

ECC Greece
144 Alexandras Av.
114 71, Athens

info@eccgreece.gr
www.eccgreece.gr

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

HELLENIC CONSUMER OMBUDSMAN
Independent Authority

ABOUT US

We are a small, passionate ECC, driven by the ideals of consumer protection in a prosperous and harmonious EU Single Market.

We are a dedicated team with a multi-disciplinary background, and a long and solid experience in ADR, which we largely owe to our host organisation, the Greek Consumer Ombudsman. At the heart of our values lies the tradition of deep cooperation within the ECC-Net and the everyday comradery with our fellow ECCs, thanks to which we are able to offer consumers effective, high quality services.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



44%
Transport



13%
Communication



11%
Recreation & Culture



8%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Aristotelis Stamoulas
Director

"Our international outlook makes us believe strongly in the importance of cross-border ADR for the effective protection of consumers and the robust development of the Single Market. ECC Greece is and will continue to be committed to supporting these with all its expertise, experience and energy."

„I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ECC FOR THEIR HELP, GUIDANCE AND OUT-STANDING SERVICE. DUE TO THEIR HELP I GOT A FULL REFUND FOR MY PHONE WHICH I BOUGHT ABROAD.“





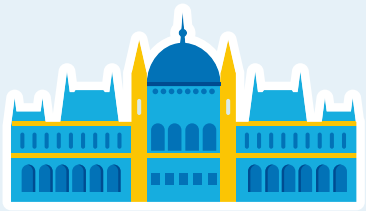
„WHEN ALL DOORS WERE CLOSED FOR ME AND THE PROVIDER IGNORED MY REQUESTS, THE ECC ACHIEVED A SOLUTION. A GREAT INSTITUTION HELPING CUSTOMERS TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS.“

consumer feedback

"I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE ECC FOR RAISING AWARENESS REGARDING CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW AND FOR OFFERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO CONSUMERS."



"I WANT TO GIVE MY GRATITUDE TO THE ECC. THEY HELPED ME TO GET MY MONEY BACK FROM AN ONLINE TRADER. I HAD PAID FOR A PRODUCT, WHICH I RETURNED DUE TO DISCREPANCIES WITH MY ORDER."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **HUNGARY**

CONTACT

ECC Hungary
Csalogány utca 9-11
Budapest H-1027

info@magyarefk.hu
www.magyarefk.hu

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

MINISTRY FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

ABOUT US

ECC Hungary is part of the consumer protection division of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology. We focus on effective handling of cross-border complaints, providing consumers with redress options, signposting of cross-border infringements to the national authorities and cooperating with business organisations and ADR bodies.

We also aim to raise awareness on consumer rights with both consumers and traders. The centre is the designated ODR contact in Hungary as well.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

45% Transport

14% Recreation & Culture

11% Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

11% Clothing & Footwear

Dr Attila Kriesch
Director

"We are very proud to be a member of the ECC-Net family of 30 countries that helps thousands of European consumers every year in cross-border and domestic issues. Even though there are cultural and legal differences, all offices of this unique European network have dedicated professionals working to help consumers and find the best solutions for them. The cooperation and teamwork between the centres on a daily basis contribute to our achievements showing the values and importance of the ECC-Net."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **ICELAND**

CONTACT

ECC Iceland
Hverfisgötu 105
101 Reykjavik

ecc@ecciceland.is
www.ecciceland.is

STAFF

1 Director

1 Case handler

1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

Neytendasamtökin

ABOUT US

We are hosted by The Consumers' Association of Iceland and work in close cooperation together. Therefore, we have a valuable opportunity to fight for consumer rights.

We are experienced in consumer-related issues and make up for our small size with passionate, productive and dedicated staff. We are located in the heart of the city centre, so it is very easy for consumers to visit us. We are committed to assisting consumers and do everything in our power to fight for their rights in Europe.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



81%
Transport



5%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



4%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares



3%
Recreation & Culture

Ivar Halldorsson
Director

"ECC Iceland is a small but efficient centre. We, however, feel much bigger as being a part of the ECC-Net family. The strong network has 30 centres in 30 countries, combining so many talented people with the one goal of assisting and empowering consumers in cross-border purchases. This is unique and invaluable."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **IRELAND**

CONTACT

ECC Ireland
MACRO Centre,
1 Green Street
Dublin D07 X6NR

info@eccireland.ie
www.eccireland.ie

STAFF

1 Director

6 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

CCPC

Coimisiún um Iomaíocht agus Cosaint Tomhaltóirí | Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

ABOUT US

We are a young, multicultural office of highly-skilled legal, financial, communications and management professionals. Our team came together in its current format at the time of Brexit and the Coronavirus crisis, and we are delighted to find that we are a united, energetic team that gets on formidably well and provides excellent service to consumers.

We are at the beginning of an exciting journey together and within the wider ECC-Net.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



36%
Transport



13%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



12%
Recreation & Culture



7%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Dr Cyril Sullivan
Director

"I joined ECC Ireland in January 2020 and found an office that was highly skilled, professional and dedicated to seeking solutions for consumers. I also quickly learned that the excellence in ECC Ireland is replicated across all of the 30 offices of the ECC-Net. Boasting a multitude of languages and cultures, the network operates as one, with the highest standards of mutual support and professionalism, focused on the seamless operation of our service for all consumers."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **ITALY**

CONTACT

ECC Italy
Largo Alessandro Vessella, 31
00199 Rome

info@ecc-netitalia.it
www.ecc-netitalia.it

Via Brennero
39100 Bolzano

info@euroconsumatori.org
www.euroconsumatori.org

STAFF

1 Director

8 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

3 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

ADICONSUM
Associazione Difesa Consumatori e Ambiente promossa dalla CISL

Verbraucherzentrale Südtirol
Centro Tutela Consumatori Utenti

ABOUT US

We are an experienced team with a consistent track record in providing consumers with expertise, advice and support on a wide range of cross-border issues. A solid legal background and a "can-do" approach are our trademark and the consumer protection in all its forms is the North Star of our daily work.

Close cooperation with enforcement bodies, traders and other stakeholders adds further value to our activities and contribution to a fair and competitive Single Market.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



39%
Transport



17%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



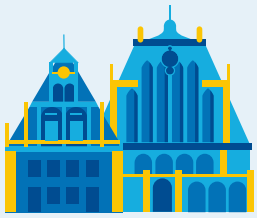
13%
Recreation & Culture



7%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Maria Pisanò
Director

"30 offices across Europe working together to achieve the same goal: empowering consumers and protecting their rights and interests in the EU. My staff and I are very proud to serve the public interest and to contribute with our passion and work to the 'European Project' in which we strongly believe."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **LATVIA**

CONTACT

ECC Latvia
Brivibas Street 55 - 207
1010 Riga

info@ecclatvia.lv
www.ecclatvia.lv

STAFF

- 1 Director
- 3 Case handlers
- 1 Communication officer
- 3 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

Consumer Rights Protection Centre of the Republic of Latvia

ABOUT US

Helping consumers Europe-wide is not only our job but a great passion! European consumers are eager to travel, purchase goods and services in our fast-changing markets, in constantly evolving digital and online environments, and our enthusiastic team is eager to help them if something goes wrong!

It is a pleasure to be a part of the ECC-Net family alongside so many friendly and helpful colleagues in every EU country, Norway, Iceland and UK.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



58 % Miscellaneous Goods & Services



33% Transport



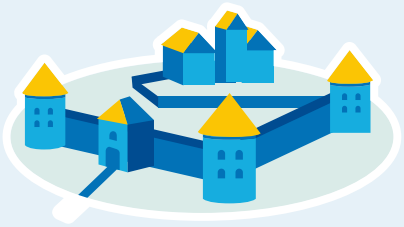
5% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares



4% Recreation & Culture

Aija Gulbe
Director

"Just 30 years ago, when Latvia regained its independence, we could only dream of the great benefits of the European Union. And now we are happy to help Latvian people to enjoy all benefits provided by the Single Market. The ECC-Net is a unique family of professionals, experts, colleagues and friends. Working hand in hand with the Consumer Rights Protection Centre of Latvia ensures that consumers are well informed and protected!"



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **LITHUANIA**

CONTACT

ECC Lithuania
Algirdo str. 31,
LT-03219, Vilnius

info@ecc.lt
www.ecc.lt

STAFF

1 Director

2 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

ABOUT US

Located in the geographical centre of Europe, Lithuania mixes and matches the best of what different European cultures can offer. That's why ECC Lithuania excels at helping European consumers in a way that's both efficient and compassionate. With four experienced consumer rights professionals, we work tirelessly to help make the European market a safe space to shop.

The decisions of our host organisation, the State Consumer Rights Protection Authority, are binding. This gives us even more power in protecting consumer rights. However, our success wouldn't be possible without the fantastic assistance we receive every day from the other ECCs.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

29% Transport

14% Clothing & Footwear

4% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

3% Recreation & Culture

Raimonda Balnienė
Director

"ECC Lithuania strongly believes in European values, and we take great pride in protecting those values through our daily activities. Solving conflicts between consumers and companies is hard legal work but it also has a much larger cultural meaning. The ECC-Net brings Europeans closer together."

consumer feedback

„THANKS TO YOUR WORK I HAVE NOT LOST TRUST IN LAW AND JUSTICE IN THE EU. WITHOUT YOUR HELP I WOULD NOT HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO. I HOPE THAT THE NEW PRODUCT I RECEIVED WORKS BETTER.“



"I AM VERY PLEASED WITH THE POSITIVE RESULT. IF NOT WITH YOU, I WOULD HAVE HAD NO IDEA HOW I WOULD HAVE SOLVED THE PROBLEM WITH THE FOREIGN TRADER. THIS SHOWS WHAT THE EU OFFERS ITS CITIZENS."

„THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR INPUT, CONSISTENCY, PROFESSIONALISM AND WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT US IN THE COMMUNICATION WITH SOMETIMES NOT VERY HONEST SERVICE PROVIDERS.“





„WE HAVE OBTAINED THE REFUND. IT’S GOOD TO SEE HOW THE EU CAN BE BENEFICIAL EVEN FOR THESE PRACTICAL MINOR ISSUES. I REALLY WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PROFESSIONALISM.“

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **LUXEMBOURG**

CONTACT

ECC Luxembourg
271, route d'Arlon
L-1150 Luxembourg

info@cecluxembourg.lu
www.cecluxembourg.lu

STAFF

1 Director

7 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

ECC Luxembourg is an independent organisation in the form of an GIE-Groupement d'Intérêt Economique

ABOUT US

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is characterised by a great diversity of cultures and languages. It is the seat of many international companies and the host of many consumers who shop across-borders on a daily basis.

All this flows into the work of the ECC Luxembourg and its international team of lawyers. Living Europe, day after day.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



42%
Transport



35%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



18%
Recreation & Culture



5%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Karin Basenach
Director

"Motivation, commitment, strong team spirit, excellent expertise based on the long experience of the lawyers, are the strengths of ECC Luxembourg. Being part of it and being part of the ECC-Net can only considered to be an enrichment."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **MALTA**

CONTACT

ECC Malta
47A, South Street
Valletta, Malta
VLT 1101

ecc.malta@mccaa.org.mt
www.eccnetmalta.gov.mt

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

MCCAA
MALTA COMPETITION AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY

ABOUT US

We aim to provide the consumers with information on their rights related to cross-border purchases. The objective is to increase the confidence of consumers shopping within the EU Single Market.

In case of a complaint, the consumers can seek our assistance and our experienced advisors will strive to reach an amicable solution. However, if this is not possible, our team will guide the consumers through the appropriate procedures to find an out-of-court settlement to their complaint.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



29%
Transport



19%
Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance



11%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares



10%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services

Roderick Aquilina
Director

"Being the smallest country, ECC Malta has a very positive experience of this network. It is a clear example of a teamwork environment. Although we might have different cultural perspectives on consumer redress, which might sometimes create conflicts between centres, we always manage to achieve the network's goal: increasing the consumer confidence in the EU Single Market. ECC Malta is proud to be part of this great team!"

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **NETHERLANDS**

CONTACT

ECC Netherlands
Moreelsepark 1 – 3rd floor
3511 EP Utrecht
Postbus 487 – 3500 AL Utrecht

info@eccnederland.nl
www.eccnederland.nl

STAFF

1 Director

5 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

Het Juridisch Loket

ABOUT US

The Dutch ECC has experienced significant growth in recent years. We look back on 15 years in which our visibility and brand awareness has increased tremendously and we established strong and effective relationships with stakeholders and the media.

Consumers find in us a reliable expert that can guide and assist them when they encounter a problem while shopping or travelling abroad. In this regard, the cooperation with the colleagues of the ECC-Net is indispensable. We could not have helped so many consumers without the partnership, know-how and motivation of this network.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



37%
Transport



19 %
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



13%
Clothing & Footwear



12%
Recreation & Culture

Eva Calvelo Muiño
Director

"I'm honoured to be part of an organisation that helps thousands of European citizens every year. This gratifying work is performed by committed, highly-motivated professionals. Over the years, our organisation has increasingly shown its value and grown into an indispensable tool. Our network is an excellent example of what the EU has to offer to its citizens and we are pleased to contribute to improving consumer confidence in the EU. So everyone can benefit concretely from their rights."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **NORWAY**

CONTACT

ECC Norway
Postboks 463 Sentrum
0105 Oslo

post@forbrukereuropa.no
www.forbrukereuropa.no

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

FORBRUKERRÅDET

ABOUT US

The Norwegian ECC office is located in the heart of Oslo. From January 2021 we will be relocated to the district of Grenland, approximately 2 hours from Oslo.

We are a small group of five people, and dependent on the work and effort from each other. This makes us a strong team.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



29%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services



14%
Transport



4%
Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares



2%
Clothing & Footwear

Ragnar Wiik
Director

"We provide services to consumers in Norway and the EU together with colleagues in the ECC-Net. Consumers engage more and more into cross-border online transactions, and we support them before, during and after an agreement with a trader."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **POLAND**

CONTACT

ECC Poland
Powstańców Warszawy Sq 1
00-950 Warsaw

info@konsument.gov.pl
www.konsument.gov.pl

STAFF

- 1 Director
- 4 Case handlers
- 2 Communication officers
- 2 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

Office of Competition and Consumer Protection

ABOUT US

ECC Poland is a group of well-educated graduates of Law, European Studies, Public Relations, Slavic Philology, Arts & History whose average age is approximately 30.

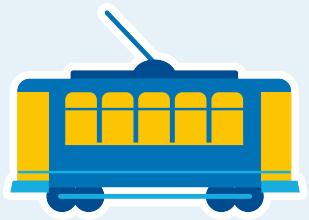
Thanks to our multi-disciplinary expertise and the commitment of all employees to the ECC-Net mission, our team thoroughly analyzes the problems of consumers in a cross-border context and does its best to provide help tailored to their cases. We are part of the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection structure, which, as our host, supports us in our activities.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

- 38% Transport
- 19% Miscellaneous Goods & Services
- 12% Clothing & Footwear
- 10% Recreation & Culture

Karol Muż
Director

"I could say that we are a bunch of friends who enjoy being friends with other ECC-Net members. That is why we successfully cooperate with one another and the majority of consumers we help are happy with our service. We are truly happy with the work we do."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **PORTUGAL**

CONTACT

ECC Portugal
Praça Duque de Saldanha, 31 - 1
1069-013 Lisbon

euroconsumo@dg.consumidor.pt
cec.consumidor.pt

STAFF

1 Director

4 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

DGC | DIREÇÃO-GERAL DO CONSUMIDOR

ABOUT US

ECC Portugal's main goal is to inform and help consumers to solve their disputes in accordance with their rights and to reinforce their trust in the EU Single Market.

Located in Lisbon, at the Direção-Geral do Consumidor, we have a small but very qualified and specialized team, with a long experience in providing information and assistance to consumers in cross-border issues. With our host and the strong and effective cooperation with our ECC-Network colleagues, we have contributed to empower consumers for 15 years.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



42%
Transport



11%
Recreation & Culture



7%
Communication



4%
Clothing & Footwear

Carla Farto
Director

"ECC Portugal comes from a long tradition of EU projects in Portugal, such as the Euroguichets or Clearing Houses, with the purpose to inform and assist consumers in cross-border issues. We are part of a big family of 30 very different ECCs working together to assist consumers in a very professional but enjoyable atmosphere. We are also the national contact point for the Online Dispute Resolution platform, for the Service Directive as well as for the geoblocking regulation."

„WITHOUT YOU I WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO MAKE USE OF THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL, I WAS TOO ASHAMED TO HAVE FALLEN FOR SUCH A ‚CONTRACT'."





„I HAVE LEARNT A LOT IN THIS CASE. AND EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, AS A BIG PLUS, I WAS IN CONTACT WITH THE ECC IN NORWAY. I AM IMPRESSED BY YOUR COMPETENT ASSISTANCE."

consumer feedback

„EXCELLENT TAKING CARE OF BY YOUR SERVICES. AFTER THREE WEEKS, I RECEIVED THE REIMBURSEMENT OF 250 € FOR UNJUSTIFIED DAMAGES BY COMPANY X. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!“



„THANK YOU FOR THE WORK AND EFFORTS WHEN SOLVING MY PROBLEM ARISEN WHILE PURCHASING A CAR. YOU AND YOUR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES ENCOURAGED ME NOT TO GIVE UP! I HAVE RECEIVED THE COMPENSATION.“



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **ROMANIA**

CONTACT

ECC Romania
Bd. Aviatorilor 72, Sector 1,
01186 Bucharest

office@eccromania.ro
www.eccromania.ro

STAFF

1 Director

3 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

1 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

ANPC
AUTORITATEA NAȚIONALĂ PENTRU PROTECȚIA CONSUMATORILOR

ABOUT US

ECC Romania joined the ECC-Net in January 2008. We grew slowly, while trying to fully understand, alongside our colleagues, how to be better and how to help consumers in the best way.

More than ever, ECC Romania is helping consumers, with good results, meaning we managed to keep to the path, working to provide an excellent service to consumers.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

33% Transport

13% Clothing & Footwear

8% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

8% Recreation & Culture

Irina Chiritoiu
Director

"ECC-Net is one of the places where you can clearly see the European Union is alive and functioning well, not only based on its activity as a whole, but also because consumers live, work, travel and buy goods and services in an all ever-evolving environment designed by the European institutions. We are proud to be a small part of this and to contribute daily assistance and advice to consumers."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **SLOVAKIA**

CONTACT

ECC Slovakia
Mlynské nivy 44/a
827 15 Bratislava

ECCNET-SK@ec.europa.eu
www.europskyspotrebitel.sk

STAFF

1 Director

2 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

ABOUT US

We are part of the ECC-Net since 2006. Our team currently consists of three enthusiastic lawyers, dedicated to help consumers. We have solid experience with provision of training activities.

During the last five years, more than 6,500 participants took part in hundreds of lectures delivered by our team. The current COVID-19 crisis has changed our perception of consumer protection; nonetheless, we are ready to take on the upcoming challenges.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019



26%
Clothing & Footwear



21%
Transport



16%
Recreation & Culture



13%
Miscellaneous Goods & Services

Katarina Zalaiova
Director

"In the recent years, besides solving cases, we have invested extra effort in raising consumer awareness by organising lectures on consumer rights for students, teachers, elderly people and also for traders. Our lectures inform consumers about certain commercial practices, which are usually one step ahead of applicable consumer legislation. We try to bring these topics to consumers on our website and social media. In the aforementioned activities, I see a great future for our work. Together with my team we will do our best to fulfill consumers' needs."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **SLOVENIA**

CONTACT

ECC Slovenia
Kotnikova 5
1000 Ljubljana

epc.mgrt@gov.si
www.epc.si

STAFF

1 Director

2 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

ABOUT US

We are just a link in the chain. Our success is built on cooperation within the network, which was established 15 years ago. Today we are bigger, stronger and more relevant than ever. The model works!

Our host, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, provides the framework for consumer rights and the ECC's experts bring these rights to life for the consumer. Our services benefit consumers and traders alike. We encourage and enable them to settle disputes amicably, with the aim of establishing cooperation and mutual respect between all parties.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

44% Transport

18% Recreation & Culture

10% Furnishing, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

7% Clothing & Footwear

Romana Javornik
Director

"We are an informal but well-known network, which exercises soft but persistent power. We are not only enthusiastic people, but also legal experts, who genuinely care about each consumer and their rights. We learn from our colleagues as well as from our consumers. By helping each other, we grow, which gives us inspiration at work. That is why we are proud to be a part of such an unique team."

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **SPAIN**

CONTACT

ECC Spain
C/ Príncipe de Vergara, 54
28006 Madrid

cec@mscbs.es
cec.consumo.gob.es

STAFF

1 Director

4 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

3 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE CONSUMO
SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE CONSUMO Y JUEGO
DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE CONSUMO

ABOUT US

ECC Spain is a project co-funded by the European Union and the Spanish Ministry of Consumer Affairs. From its headquarters in Madrid, ECC Spain offers information, assistance and advice to national consumers who have experienced problems when buying from companies based in other country of the European Union (including United Kingdom during the transition period), as well as Iceland and Norway.

The objective is to help citizens understand their rights as consumers and to offer them all the benefits of belonging to the Single Market.

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

19% Transport

18% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

4% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

3% Communication

Pilar Biesa
Director

"Spain has the second-highest number of tourists. Our team not only helps Europeans having disputes with Spanish companies, we also defend the rights of consumers living in Spain and buying from companies in other EU Member States. We do it without sparing efforts, proud to be a part of this European family and with the desire to contribute to this unstoppable empowerment of consumers."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **SWEDEN**

CONTACT

ECC Sweden
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651 02 Karlstad

info@hallakonsument.se
www.eccsverige.se

STAFF

1 Director

6 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

HOBBIES

HOST

Konsument verket • KO

Swedish Consumer Agency
Consumer Ombudsman

ABOUT US

We are a group of lawyers who have the commitment to do good for consumers and provide good service.

The work in the ECC-Net gives us a variety of tools to strengthen consumer rights. At our host, the Swedish Consumer Agency and Consumer Ombudsman, we work closely with the consumer information service "Hallå Konsument" and units working with market supervision. The workday offers good exchange and many interesting discussions occur in corridors and at "fika".

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

60% Transport

10% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

8% Recreation & Culture

6% Clothing & Footwear

Anna Ekegren
Director

"ECC Sweden is a team of motivated experts that is more than willing to help consumers to the best solutions. We all have a great interest in other countries and cultures and the ECC-Net enriches our everyday life in this sense."



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE **UNITED KINGDOM**

CONTACT

ECC United Kingdom
1 Sylvan Court, Sylvan Way
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Basildon Essex SS15 6TH

ecc@tsi.org.uk
www.ukecc.net

STAFF

1 Director

7 Case handlers

1 Communication officer

2 Operations

HOBBIES

HOST

ctsi Chartered Trading Standards Institute

ABOUT US

We are part of an exciting network of 30 centres based all across the EU, plus Iceland and Norway. The 30 centres work together to provide advice to consumers all over Europe to empower them to enforce their consumer rights. We are not an enforcement body, so do not take action against companies, but our advice leads to a resolution in the majority of cases that we handle.

Our service is unique in that we advise only on cross-border consumer matters (where the company you have a complaint against is based in a different European country). And the best thing about our service is that it's free!

MAIN TYPES OF QUERIES IN 2019

29% Transport

21% Miscellaneous Goods & Services

10% Recreation & Culture

9% Restaurants, Hotels & Timeshares

Andy Allen
Director

"The UK ECC is proud to be part of such a unique and exciting initiative that is providing free advice to consumers. We handle around 12,000 enquiries a year and with our expanse of knowledge on consumer law, and ability to communicate with traders, we're able to resolve the majority of cases that we receive."


12
topics
campaign

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS:

A DIFFERENT CONSUMER INFORMATION CAMPAIGN EVERY MONTH.

Over 2020, the 30 ECCs have chosen the 12 most important topics in consumer rights. The 12 consumer rights topics we have chosen to promote will shed light on our work and give an overview on the most pressing common issues encountered by the consumers we have helped over the last 15 years. We have prepared a wealth of information to help consumers to exercise their rights and traders to understand their obligations. Visit our website and social media and access our lovingly-prepared reports, explainer videos, consumer surveys, press releases and interesting infographics.

Find us at: www.eccnet.eu



1 | SUSTAINABILITY

In January the ECC-Net joined forces to raise awareness on sustainable consumption.
ECC Italy & ECC Netherlands



2 | UNFAIR DEALS

A network-wide press release on how to avoid unfair deals advertised on social media. Consumers from all over the EU participated in a lottery game on social media. ECC Bulgaria & ECC Denmark



3 | GUARANTEE & WITHDRAWAL

What to do when you change your mind and want to return goods? Campaign on guarantees and withdrawal rights.
ECC Luxembourg



6 | SAFER STREAMING

How to avoid subscription traps and how to stream legally and safely.
ECC Austria in cooperation with FAMA



4 & 5 | CONSUMER ASSISTANCE

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 12-topic-campaign was postponed. Over several months the ECC-Net used their social media presence on providing assistance to consumers.



7 | AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

What to do when the flight was cancelled or the baggage got lost? The ECC-Net provided information on social media and through an Europe-wide press release. ECC Cyprus



8 | COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS

Online or on-holiday traps are proliferating. We explained how consumers recognise counterfeit goods. ECC Sweden





10 | GUIDE TO REDRESS

A PDF guide and tips on social media: 'How to claim your consumer rights' ECC Belgium

9 | PACKAGE TRAVEL

A brochure in several European languages and a social media campaign on consumer rights for package tours. ECC Germany

11 | GEOBLOCKING & E-COMMERCE

Several GIFs on the end of geoblocking in e-commerce. ECC France, ECC Poland, ECC Latvia, ECC Lithuania



12 | CHRISTMAS CALENDAR & CHARGEBACK

One consumer tip every day until Christmas and everything you need to know about chargeback. ECC Finland, ECC Czech Republic

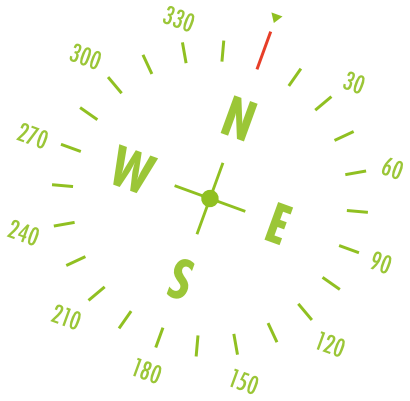




A LOOK TO THE

future

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Being proactive

Future is never easy to predict. The coronavirus pandemic put us all to the test, not only as individual citizens and consumers but also as a Europe-wide operating network. It proved that fast communication, **goal-oriented case handling and strong international cooperation** are needed to react to rapidly changing and unpredictable situations.

The impact of COVID-19 on the Gross Domestic Product of some Member States has already been severe, some more so than others. Unstable supply markets, changing travelling habits and consumption patterns of European consumers and bankruptcies of companies are among the likely medium-term outcomes of the pandemic. We have also seen scams and misleading practices increase during the corona pandemic, taking advantage of the vulnerability of thousands of consumers. We remain ready for these challenges and to adjust our information, service and activities quickly and flexibly.[9]

The core activity of the network is case handling and consumer advice. But based on direct and personalised assistance to consumers, the ECC-Net has key information and can share experiences and knowledge with Alternative Dispute Resolution and/or enforcement bodies, as well as other stakeholders such as consumer organisations and trade associations, always in the collective interest of consumers and fair markets for honest traders.

The revised Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation, applicable since January 2020, has given the European Consumer Centres the **power to send external alerts to the enforcement authorities and the European Commission.** This mechanism allows to quickly identify consumer threats and to tackle them. The ECC-Net is ready to use this possibility in the upcoming months and years for a better protection of European consumers.

[9] Coordinated actions National consumer authorities and the Commission work together within the framework of the Consumer Protection Cooperation network to protect the rights of EU consumers. https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/consumers/enforcement-consumer-protection/coordinated-actions_en#covid-19

Being digital

The ECC-Net was faced with a significant increase in consumer contacts, while at the same time having to switch to remote work overnight due to national confinement measures. Quickly and without disruption to the service, the ECCs adopted the necessary technical measures to continue serving its consumers. Over the last few years, the European Commission and the ECC-Net have developed a robust data management and case-handling IT infrastructure. A reliable online case-handling system and information sharing platform allowed a successful service in exceptional times. Online meetings allowed us to keep in permanent contact throughout the 30 countries. **Digitalisation of our services** must now be expanded further. ECC-Net will strive to improve its technical environment and adopt modern online self-service tools for consumers.

More automation in case handling via, for example, intelligent complaint forms for consumers and AI-enhanced information provision are being looked at. The pandemic has also shown that now, more than ever, both consumers and other stakeholders need a one-stop-shop to get in touch with the ECC-Net as a whole. Therefore, the network is launching a website to facilitate outreach.

Digital technology advancements and smart contracting processes within the EU Single Market will allow us to focus on creating further digital solutions for our own case handling. Special attention will be given to online marketplaces and web stores, new digital selling methods, mediation services, digital content and products, and cooperation with third countries. The ECC-Net is always *au fait* with the latest developments. In this changing environment consumers must be given access to increased transparency (trader identity, information requirements, commercial communications and consumer profiling) and fair contractual conditions. Enforcement authorities must be equipped with the necessary tools and effective penalties to sanction abusive market players.

The Digital Services Act shall ensure a level-playing field for businesses so they can enjoy the potential of the Single Market and help them be more competitive and earn consumer trust. The ECC-Net will advise consumers on how to best interact with automated decision-making systems and other innovative digital services and applications. For example, it will advise on how to request checks and corrections of errors resulting from automated decisions or how to obtain redress for any damage related to the use of these automated systems.

The objective of the legislation is to preserve the principle of "what is illegal offline is also illegal online" and support the interplay between EU consumer protection legislation and data protection.



Being environmentally conscious

The pandemic encouraged many consumers to adopt **more environmentally-aware behaviours:** less flights and travel for some, buy more local products and support local traders for others. Staying at home also means less commute-related carbon emissions. At the same time, e-commerce has enjoyed dramatic increase.

In the coming years, the ECC-Net would like to encourage consumers, especially in cross-border contexts, to become more responsible and make informed choices with regard to their consumer behaviour. Sustainability should be an important factor to consumers' purchase decisions. However, there is also a risk of consumers receiving only partial or even deceptive information.

Therefore the ECC-Net will support the EU Commission and the flagship 'Green Deal' by proposing awareness-raising on "planned or premature obsolescence"and/or "greenwashing practices" disguising misleading environmental claims. As a follow-up of a previous joint project, the ECC-Net will inform consumers on legislation concerning spare parts and repairs, in line with the current efforts by the national and EU legislator towards a circular and sharing economy.

Sustainability is the overarching objective that guides our Network's operational processes and the nature of the advice we supply to EU consumers on more environmentally-friendly consumption. We do this by raising awareness on durable, less polluting products that have a longer lifespan and higher repair potential.

The ECC-Net looks forward to engaging further with stakeholders regarding potential substantive rights and responsibilities emerging in this sector.



Being a service-oriented Network

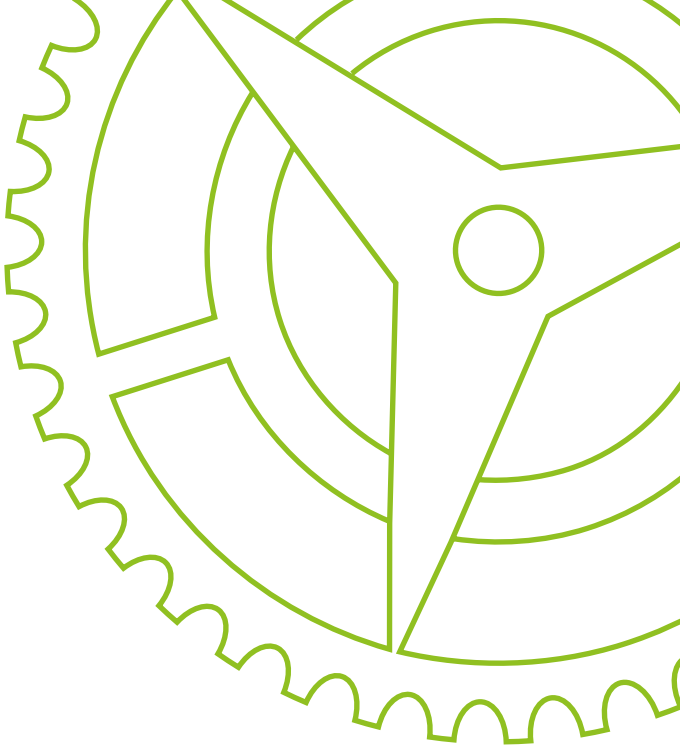
The ECC-Net has proven its strength over the last years and the recent Corona crisis highlighted its added value and operational effectiveness. **Today we are united in the face of continuous challenges and ever-increasing demand for our services.**

We recognise the challenges ahead, such as our own limited resources, changing consumer behaviour and technological developments. With the support and input of the European Commission, we will continue to invest in further employee engagement and targeted training that will enable us to optimise our individual centres' services and allow us to sync and strengthen our operations across the Network.

The ECC-Net aims to provide the highest quality of service through expertly trained staff operating in close and productive collaboration across all our member offices in the field of cross-border consumer rights.

Our pan-European case handling knowledge base and standardised processes and procedures are examples on how we managed to professionalise and streamline our information provision and consumer assistance prerogatives.

As the crisis has shown, a high level of preparedness when it comes to reviewing and implementing frequent to daily legislative updates in national and European law has served our offices and the work of the entire network well. We will continue to further improve and modernise our resources and processes in order to respond to high and changing consumer needs and to collaborate successfully with our partners and stakeholders, both national and European.



Being an active and reliable partner

Our unique continent-wide perspective on cross-border consumer rights and issues, the ECC-Net is a **valuable partner to all key stakeholders and collaborators** both at EU and national level.

We will be active in supporting the EU Commission's priorities such as sustainability and the digital transition, and will be ready to help shape consumer policy by providing first-hand information about the experiences of European consumers.

The media is an essential partner in helping to reach larger audiences and raise awareness on cross-border issues. One of our proudest moments in 2020 was a social media video campaign in conjunction with our partners in the European Commission on raising visibility of our Network's services and the importance of consumer rights in an unpredictable world.

Being there for European consumers

We will keep their interests in mind, when answering based on our experience on the ground to public consultations and by **cooperating with stakeholders**, in order to strengthen existing policies and advocating for new pro-consumer EU legislation.

The Network has contributed greatly in the European Commission's Consumer Agenda consultations. ECC-Net is regarded by our European partners as pivotal in the implementation of the upcoming consumer rights and will continue to receive European co-funding for this purpose from the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

We are honoured to help contribute to enhancing consumer law protections for each and all EU citizens.

We remain committed to consumer rights advancement and promotion in our day-to-day work as well as conveying the real needs consumers at the level of policy making, implementation and enforcement.

ECC-Net has offered advice and support to more than 1 million European consumers since 2005. What we do is more important than ever and we look forward to serving consumers over the next 15 years and beyond.

HELP AND ADVICE FOR CONSUMERS IN EUROPE

European Consumer Centres Network

www.eccnet.eu