

Information release

New edition of the ECC-Spain´ Newsletter

The new Newsletter contains the ECC-Net network's recommendations for the European Parliament to improve consumer rights over the next 5 years.

Madrid, 20 June 2024. The 37th Newsletter published this June highlights the recommendations that the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) has addressed to the European Parliament to improve the rights of consumers when shopping in Europe. ECC-Net network has expressed its support for the eco-design standards that the EU is working on to ensure sustainable, durable and environmentally friendly products. However, ECC-Net also warns that it is necessary to further develop an industry with more ethical production practices, to provide more standardised and accessible consumer information on the possibility of repair, as well as to develop new measures against planned obsolescence.

The Newsletter also reports on ECC-Net's 2023 Activity Report, which explains that - last year- ECC-Net responded to more than 124,000 queries and complaints and helped consumers recover around €9 million in the form of refunds. In all cases, legal advisors -from 29 EU countries- did their utmost to try to reach an out-of-court settlement in favour of the consumer.

Another news item highlighted in the Newsletter refers to the notification that the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC Network) has sent to 20 airlines that are allegedly spreading misleading environmental claims (greenwashing). Potentially misleading claims include that CO2 emissions caused by a flight can be offset or reduced by climate projects or by the use of sustainable aviation fuels to which consumers can contribute by paying additional fees. Other misleading practices detected include using the terms "green", "sustainable" or "responsible" outright or the use of images or colours that may mislead consumers about the environmental impact of the highly polluting airline industry. Claims related to future performance, such as that the airline is moving towards zero greenhouse gas emissions, have also been found, which may not be associated with clear and verifiable commitments, measurable targets and an independent monitoring system.

The Spanish government's initiative to put an end to abusive practices towards air passengers also stands out. In this case, the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumption and Agenda 2030 has imposed a sanction on the airlines Ryanair, Easyjet, Vueling and Volotea for considering the following infringements to be abusive: charging an extra fee for reserving an adjacent seat to accompany minors or dependent persons; charging extra costs for carrying hand luggage in the cabin; offering non-transparent pre-contractual information on the final price of the service; prohibiting cash payment both at the airport and on board the aircraft; or establishing a 20 euro supplement for reprinting the boarding card at the airport, although in this case Ryanair was the only airline sanctioned for this practice.

About the ECC-Spain Newsletter

This is a bimonthly publication which contains the latest news on consumer rights, new EU consumer rules, as well as recommendations and practical advice on European cross-border shopping. Published in digital format, it is available on the European Centre's website and is sent electronically to around 1,500 subscribers, institutions, consumer bodies and various decision-makers in the sector. The aim is to make citizens more aware of their rights as consumers and to enable them to enjoy all the benefits and protection offered by the European Single Market. Those who wish to receive it can do so by e-mail by registering as a subscriber at cec@consumo.gob.es.

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