

Information release

Spain modernises the Arbitration System to resolve consumer disputes out of court in a more agile and accessible way

From now on, the Consumer Arbitration System will be able to resolve disputes between consumers and businesses digitally.

Madrid, 27 July 2024. The Spanish Government has approved a Royal Decree with the aim of modernising the Consumer Arbitration System, allowing the process to be resolved entirely digitally and guaranteeing the security of the system at all times. In this way, consumers and users will be able to resolve their consumer disputes out of court in a more flexible and accessible way.

The initiative - presented by Pablo Bustinduy, Minister for Social Rights, Consumer Affairs and Agenda 2030, in the Council of Ministers - will 'save time and resources for both the parties involved and the Administration itself, as digital tools are introduced to make procedures faster and more efficient'. Both applications and notifications will be performed online, and hearings can also be held remotely via videoconferencing.

According to Pablo Bustinduy, the aim is for citizens to be able to access their consumer rights easily and simply without depending on the purchasing power or social position of the person who wants to make a claim. With this renewal of the Arbitration System, 'everyone will be able to defend their interests in a safe and universal way', the minister emphasised.

About the Consumer Arbitration System

It is a public service that allows consumers and users to resolve consumer disputes with companies without having to go to court. Its resolutions are binding and enforceable for both parties, so that the decision taken by the arbitration body is binding. Therefore, this decision has the same effectiveness as a court ruling. To this end, the parties must voluntarily entrust themselves to an arbitration body that acts impartially, independently and confidentially. This system makes it possible to settle all consumer and user complaints, except for some exceptional cases that do require recourse to the Courts of Justice. For example, when the conflict is due to a case of intoxication, injury or death, or if there are reasonable indications of a crime.

About the ECC-Spain

The European Consumer Centre in Spain is a public service co-funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs and Agenda 2030. It is part of the ECC-Net (European Consumer Centre-Network) made up of each of the European Consumer Centres in the Member States, plus Norway and Iceland. Created in 2005, it provides information, assistance and personalised advice to consumers living in Spain who have problems with transactions performed in companies based in another ECC-Net country, as well as in the UK. Its aim is to help citizens know their rights as consumers and enjoy all the benefits of the Single Market. To this end, ECC-Spain provides legal, technical and linguistic assistance in order to resolve complaints amicably without the need to go to court.

Source of information: Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs and Agenda 2030.