

Information release

The European Consumer Centres of Austria and Spain meet in Madrid to improve the defence of consumer rights

The meeting provided an opportunity to share knowledge on claims management and work team organisation, and highlighted the need to integrate artificial intelligence into processes.

Madrid, 22 October 2025.- The directors of the European Consumer Centres in Austria and Spain, Reinhold Schranz and Lidia Algara, met in Madrid as part of a 'study visit' with the aim of exchanging experiences and optimising the organisation of workflows. During the meeting, held on 21 October and also attended by representatives from the ECC-Austria and ECC-Spain teams, information was shared on the management of cross-border consumer complaints in Europe and the role played by [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#) (ADR) mechanisms.

In this regard, the directors of both Centres reflected on the need to improve the dissemination of these types of mechanisms so that they become better known and used by both consumers and businesses, as they allow conflicts to be resolved quickly and economically without the need to resort to legal action.

However, the ECC-Spain team warned that, in our country, each Autonomous Community decides how to manage disputes, the authorities with powers to resolve complaints in each sector, as well as inspection and sanctioning measures. Likewise, the large number of options for filing complaints was highlighted, which often leaves citizens unsure of where or how to file a complaint. In this context, ECC-Spain's legal advisers highlighted three of the many [ADR](#) options that currently exist: mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to explain the particularities of the [European Small Claims Procedure](#). Regulated by [Regulation 861/2007](#), it is a relatively simple legal procedure that can be used by both individuals and companies, without the need for a lawyer, by means of standardised forms that consumers can submit in their own language to the courts in their municipality. The process simplifies, speeds up and reduces procedural costs in cross-border claims within the Union (except Denmark) for amounts up to €5,000. Furthermore, unlike most Member States, in Spain citizens are exempt from paying court fees for using this process.

With regard to communication initiatives, the important role played by the ECC-Net network in disseminating local information so that citizens are better informed about their rights and can enjoy all the advantages offered by the single market was highlighted. Similarly, consideration was given to the challenge of integrating artificial intelligence tools into the system used by the ECC-Net network, which would optimise the management and resolution of complaints.

About the European Consumer Centre in Spain (CEC-Spain)

The European Consumer Centre in Spain is a project co-financed by the European Union and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. The Centre is part of the [ECC-Net](#) (European Consumer Centre-Network), which comprises each of the European Consumer Centres in the Member States, as well as Norway and Iceland. Since its creation in 2005, each of these Centres has been offering free, personalised information, assistance and advice to national consumers who have problems with transactions carried out with companies based in another country in the ECC-Net network, as well as in the United Kingdom. The aim is to help citizens understand their rights as consumers and enjoy all the advantages offered by the single market.