



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

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More than just a numbers game: 5th European Consumer Scoreboard identifies goals for policy-makers

BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation welcomes the publication and many of the findings of the 5th EU Consumer Scoreboard presented today by Commissioner John Dalli at its premises. The biannual Scoreboard is the statistical 'evidence book' of how markets are delivering to consumers both at EU and at national level, on basis of various performance indicators. It often acts as a signpost for future EU policy options.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General said "Green shoots of rising consumer confidence are evident in the findings, but there are some alarming signs of how well informed European businesses are of their obligations to consumers and there is strong proof that countries with low consumer confidence levels often are a result of unambitious consumer policy, a lack of market supervision and weak enforcement of consumer rights".

Consumers slowly recovering from the crisis

The Scoreboard indicates slight progress in consumer indexes in most countries, which coincides with the recovery of markets from the crisis. Also, a strong majority of Europeans (69%) trust consumer organisations to protect their rights; this is even more than public authorities (63%) and is a call to consumer organisations to invest in continuously deserving this trust. For policy makers, this means that they should provide consumer organisations with the resources that will help them to respond to consumer expectations. It is therefore important to stress that the range of funding of consumer organisations stretches within the EU between €2 and €2.112/1000 inhabitants.

Alarming overconfidence of business as to their knowledge of consumer rights

82% of retailers claim to be well aware of consumer legislation, however when it comes to testing, their actual knowledge, e.g. as to legal requirements when a product turns out to be defective, a disappointing 26% provide an adequate response. This highlights an urgent need to educate companies on their obligations towards consumers.

Consumer access to redress a constant challenge

The Consumer Scoreboard reports that only a meagre 13% of consumers complain when encountering problems and that when they do, only 52% are satisfied with the outcome. This is a signal for policy makers to finally address properly the long overdue need for easy, cheap, efficient consumer redress. "We expect the EU to take on a leading role in making efficient consumer redress, in and out of court, individually or as a group, a reality" commented Goyens.

END

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