



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE  
PRESS RELEASE

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## **Major vote in European Parliament threatens to reduce national consumer rights**

Despite new European Commission statistics out this week demonstrating 79% of European traders insist full harmonisation of consumer laws will have "little or no effect on their cross border sales"<sup>1</sup> (up from 74% in 2008), there is a distinct possibility that the European Parliament will apply full harmonisation to a wide range of core consumer protections as it votes Thursday, March 24 on the Consumer Rights Directive.

Of greater concern, full harmonisation threatens existing and future consumer rights, while would do nothing but harm consumer confidence in the EU Internal Market. It would oblige Member States with more advanced consumer protections to reduce them and secondly prevent all from moving forward in future.

As deals in the Parliament continue to be made until the last minute, areas under threat of reduction include longstanding lists of unfair contract terms, rules on delivery and protections against hidden defects in products.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumers' Organisation, BEUC, commented:

"It is troubling that the European Institutions have recently followed a very dogmatic approach to fully harmonise many consumer rights with this Directive and their plans for a European Contract Law. This flies in the face of all the evidence which unambiguously shows traders will not increase their cross border business just because of full harmonisation.

"This long process has come to crunch time and it needs to be solved correctly for the much longer future of EU consumer rights. But Thursday represents the best chance to salvage the situation for the long term. It would be a dark day for EU lawmakers if they were seen to dilute national consumer law. As MEPs vote, we urge them to make the Consumer Rights Directive earn its name."

ENDS

**Please see attached Press Pack for further details**

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<sup>1</sup> Flash Eurobarometer, 2011, Table 19a