



The European Consumers' Organisation

Consumer Rights Directive adopted

Today (Monday October 10) the Council of the European Union formally adopted the landmark 'Consumer Rights Directive' which revises consumer and shopping laws throughout the EU's 27 Member States.

Consequences of this law include:

Positively:

- When buying onsite in shops, before any purchase traders must supply clear information on the final price and the complaint procedure
- New obligations on traders of digital goods to reveal usage restrictions on software/music/video files
- End to excessive charges for payment means, such as when paying for flights by credit card online
- End to expensive customer helplines: Traders barred from using 'premium cost' phone lines for customer service
- More transparency: an end to 'cost traps' on the internet, where consumers are misled about apparently 'free' offers.

Negatively:

- Certain protections in some countries will have to be abolished, for example, where the cost of returning goods is on the trader in case of consumer withdrawal
- More goods bought by 'doorstep selling' will be excluded from these new EU protection standards
- The prohibition on Member States from further improving the new EU protection levels in future

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

"This has been a major review of Europe's consumer legislation and the result is a tough compromise. Fortunately, EU legislators have managed on the whole to make this law another positive step in the history of EU consumer protection. Any significant reduction of consumer rights will be avoided and it will give added value."



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"Consumers will benefit from more information and transparency, in particular when buying online. Moreover, this law will put an end to growing unfair business practices like when buying flights, they will not be charged unjustified fees just to use their credit card.

"In two years' time, when this directive is implemented in all Member States the most important aspects of online b2c purchases will be covered by EU harmonisation measures; there is no need and no good reason for the Commission to now switch to so-called "optional" tools for business, as Commissioner Reding intends to do with the European sales law, unveiled this week."