



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE  
PRESS RELEASE

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## **Consumer disputes: BEUC applauds as Commission fills in the gaps**

Ambitious plans for the future of out-of-court solutions to consumer disputes due to be announced tomorrow by the European Commission are applauded by BEUC.

The Commission will propose legislation for EU-wide processes of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), which will also facilitate online procedures (Online Dispute Resolution, ODR).

The proposed directive obliges member states to ensure all disputes over products and services can be submitted to an ADR procedure. This involves 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediators e.g. ombudsmen, complaints boards or conciliators and in countries where this does not yet exist, schemes must be established. The availability of internal complaint-handling services will be insufficient.

Monique Goyens, European Consumers' Organisation Director General, commented:

"We are pleased to see the EU giving a firm hand of support to European consumers by obliging businesses to inform them of the ADR schemes available. Let's see these systems put into place speedily so we can help empower consumers who are so often at a loss when trying to seek redress from business. ADR gives a means to an end throughout all market sectors.

"The major reasons people don't buy across borders within the EU are fears about fraud, what to do if problems arise and worries about delivery. ADR is valuable in helping consumers for when purchases and services go wrong, also in cross-border situations<sup>1</sup>.

"There has been a longstanding need for the EU to enhance consumer confidence in these difficult times of economic crisis. So we hope this reflects a growing realisation among EU policy makers."

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<sup>1</sup> Fears of fraud (62%), concerns about what to do if problems arose (59%) delivery concerns (49%) statistics from the [2010 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard](#), page 15