

A CHOPPY ONLINE JOURNEY

European consumers need better protection when choosing, buying and receiving an online product.

THE SITUATION

In the global online market, EU consumers lack essential pre-purchase information, may encounter negative surprises once the purchase has been made and face difficulties to act when something goes wrong.

WHY WOULD A EUROPEAN CONSUMER SHOP WORLDWIDE?

Consumers shopping outside the EU do so for reasons of price, availability and specific needs (language, diet). Research shows that global shopping also happens unwittingly, for example through intermediary websites or unclear information about a trader's location.

4 steps, many hurdles

Maïa will think twice about ordering a laptop online with a trader from outside the EU. This is because she lacks information and support throughout her global shopping journey.



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WE RECOMMEND...

- To **make more information available to consumers when they shop online outside the EU**. This can take the form of a contact point where consumers may turn for information and advice.
- Effective **systems of market surveillance, enforcement and redress** should be developed. This is so that consumers can act if something goes wrong with a purchase on the global online marketplace. It can take the form of better international coordination between consumer protection authorities, or the extension of EU dispute resolution systems to companies from third countries. The possibility for consumer organisations in third countries to act on behalf of EU consumers in court claims should also be looked at.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) acts as the umbrella group in Brussels for 43 independent national consumer organisations. Its main task is to represent them at the European level and defend the interests of all Europe's consumers.

Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (vzbv) acts as the umbrella group for 40 German consumer associations and is a founding member of BEUC. It represents the interests of German consumers vis-à-vis politicians and policy-makers, the private sector and in public.