



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

PRESS RELEASE

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EU consumer law overhaul – Tough compromise, positive on balance

European Parliament MEPs are today set to vote into law a major reworking of everyday EU consumer rights in shops and online.

Good news for consumers across the EU includes:

- When ordering goods and services in shops, traders must supply clear information on final price and complaint procedure before purchase
- 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.

Downsides include:

- Certain national protections 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

Commenting, Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumers' Organisation said:

"When first presented, this law was entirely geared to reducing obstacles for businesses and would have deprived European consumers from many precious national rights. Fortunately, the European Parliament and Council have listened to consumer organisations and any significant reduction of consumer rights will now be avoided. This law is a tough compromise and we regret that some national rules will be overruled, but on the whole there will be progress for consumers.

"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."

ENDS

For further info, examples and comment, contact BEUC via details above.

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