

**Contact: Sébastien Pant: +32 (0)2 789 24 01**  
**Date: 22/06/2017**

### **EU deal on how national public authorities should cooperate to protect consumers**

Yesterday evening the EU institutions have provisionally sealed a deal which sets out how public authorities should increasingly work together to protect consumers from rogue traders, particularly in online cross-border situations [1].

For example, public authorities will be given more investigative powers to tackle instances where a trader may have broken the law, even if the consumers affected are from another country. The new powers include being able to trace an entity's financial flows [2].

When the same trader malpractice affects several countries, national authorities will decide to work together by adopting a 'common position' and take the same action, ensuring consumers are protected to the same level in all the relevant countries.

Under the new rules, consumer organisations will also be able to alert national authorities about possible illegal activity. This is likely to improve the quality and speed with which both national authorities and consumer organisations solve situations that negatively affect consumers.

The European Consumer Organisation's Director General Monique Goyens said:

"In an online environment, borders don't exist and problems are harder to tackle. Too often national authorities were limited by procedures and their national borders to solve situations affecting consumers across several countries. But in a Single Market, this approach was out of date and the new law could go a long way to improving the situation.

"It is a shame that national governments watered down the original proposal by the Commission, particularly the ability to impose stronger sanctions."

The agreement now needs to be rubber stamped by the European Parliament and EU ministers before it can turn into EU law. It is expected to be applicable in 2 years time.

ENDS

[1] The regulation in question is the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation which was under review since May 2016. You can find BEUC's position paper on the regulation review [here](#).

[2] Now, if a web-shop does not deliver the purchased good to many consumers from several countries, the public authorities based in the consumers' countries will now be able to take action against the website. National authorities will also be able to trace the location of a trader based on their web domain name, even if that trader is based in another country.

ENDS