EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE SLOVENIA

2016



Help and advice for consumers in Europe

ECC-Net

European Consumer Centre Slovenia

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE SLOVENIA IN 2016

With the increase in the number of consumers shopping in other Member States or travelling there, the number of those who need to be provided information, advice or expert support when exercising their rights with a foreign trader is growing as well. From year to year, ECC Slovenia registers an increase in consumer issues and complaints related to cross-border purchases of goods and services.

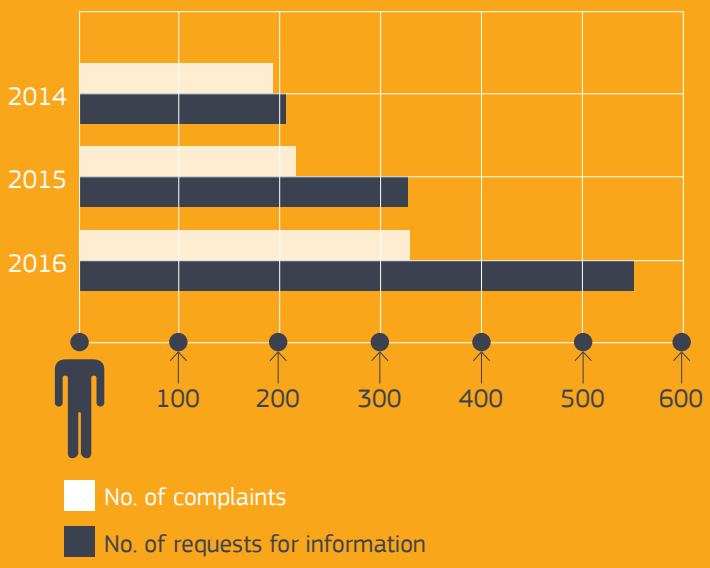
FREE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO CONSUMERS

883 consumers contacted the ECC Slovenia

548 consumers contacted it regarding information or advice

335 consumers the ECC helped in resolving a complaint against a foreign trader

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION IN PREVIOUS YEARS



PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING A COMPLAINT

The complaint examination procedure is initiated by filling out a complaint form on the epc.si website, while the complaint is addressed by the centre operating in the country of the trader, against whom a consumer complaint has been filed. In this way, the consumer can avoid technical and language barriers as well as costs (of legal proceedings) that are often associated with effective cross-border enforcement of rights.

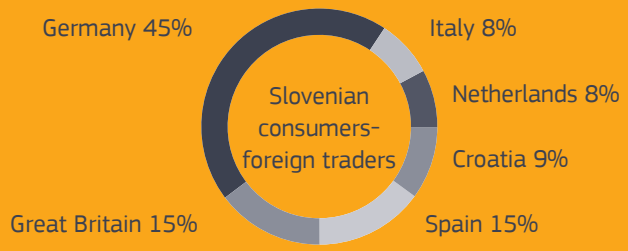
When an amicable resolution of the complaint with the trader is not possible, the ECC shall inform the consumer of other, judicial or extra-judicial procedures.

COMPLAINTS BY THE SELLING METHOD

In 79% of all complaint cases the consumers made an on-line purchase. In 2015, this percentage was 74%.



OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS BY COUNTRIES





OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS BY DIFFERENT CATEGORIES



56%
Transport



3%
Furniture, home furnishings



17%
Recreational and cultural activities



2%
Communi-cations



7%
Restaurants, hotels and accommodation services



2%
Health



5%
Clothing and footwear



8%
Other

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Resolving the complaint through the ECC-Net is voluntary for both, the consumer and the trader, because the procedure is based on an amicable resolution of disputes. The ECC does not have the power to take any measures against a trader who does not respect the consumer's rights. The effectiveness of complaint resolution therefore greatly depends on the trader's willingness to cooperate.



44 %
of successfully resolved complaints filed by foreign consumers against trades from Slovenia



60 %
of successfully resolve filed by Slovenian consumers against foreign traders

COOPERATION WITH OTHER CENTRES

Close cooperation between all the centres in the network, which is a prerequisite for a successful resolution of consumer complaints, is not limited solely to the resolution of complaints. In addition, the joint projects of the network which explore the situation in a particular consumer market, summarized in reports that can be an important source of information for decision-makers at national and European level (in policy-making), are very important as well. In 2016, joint projects were carried out in the field of invisible borders that restrict consumer access to services in the EU (Geo-blocking), online holiday bookings and the impact of counterfeiting on online consumer rights in Europe.

In cooperation with neighbouring ECCs, ECC Slovenia, ECC Austria and ECC Croatia, a brochure entitled "Travelling to Austria, Slovenia, Croatia" was prepared and published.

CONSUMER ISSUES

Consumer issues mostly concerned the rights they enjoy in the case of goods with a defect and the rights of passengers in air transport. Thus, for example:

The consumer who purchased a product on-line yet he failed to receive it even after more than a month needed advice on how to proceed so that the trader would send them goods or refund the purchase price;

The consumer who was unable to attend a trip due to the illness and was forced to cancel his flight was interested whether she was entitled to at least a partial refund of the purchase price, and the passenger whose baggage was lost by the airline asked for advice in exercising the claim for compensation with the carrier;

Consumers who contacted the ECC about the damage to used vehicles – these were most often purchased in Germany – were interested in how the trader's liability towards defects in second-hand goods in another Member State and the way of exercising rights were regulated.



COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

OPEN DOORS DAY – CAMPAIGN ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

In 2016, the ECC conducted a campaign on consumer rights in concluding consumer credit agreements, in which it distributed more than 25,000 information materials to banks and other stakeholders who participated in the campaign. The Open Doors Day of the ECC and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology which took place at the Congress Square in Ljubljana on 15 March (on a World Consumer Day), was also dedicated to this topic. The campaign continued in the autumn with the screening of urban and suburban buses.

INFORMATION MATERIALS

"Buying a Car Abroad?" is a brochure with tips and information that benefits the consumer before buying, during purchasing decisions and after buying a vehicle.

"Travelling to Austria, Slovenia, Croatia" is a brochure that is the result of cooperation between ECC Slovenia, ECC Austria and ECC Croatia, containing practical information for travellers travelling to or only crossing these countries.

FAIRS

In 2016, the ECC participated at two trade fairs in Ljubljana, the Natur Alpe-Adria and the Festival of the Third Age fairs, as well as at the Celje Trade Fair.

MEDIA

In press releases, the ECC informed consumers about their rights related to air travel, when buying a vehicle abroad, about the rights of passengers with reduced mobility, and about the legislative proposals of the European Commission in the field of on-line sales. The ECC also participated in a press conference on on-line fraud, 9 television and 10 radio shows, and recorded 63 publications in other media. The ECC newsletter, issued five times, was received by approximately 1000 readers.

ECC SERVICES USER SATISFACTION

According to a satisfaction survey conducted among consumers who contacted the ECC in 2016, 92% of consumers were satisfied with the provided ECC service.



92 %
satisfied consumers with the provided ECC service

THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE SLOVENIA (ECC)

is part of the European Consumer Centre Network operating in all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. The ECC-Net advises consumers and provides them with expert support in solving their complaints against foreign traders of goods and services from the EU, Iceland or Norway. All services are free of charge for consumers.

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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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