



This month's eBulletin deals with the European Consumer Summit and European Consumer Policy. Our Consumer Query of the Month discusses problems arising out of the sale of a second-hand mobile phone, while our Success Story of the Month concerns the impact of currency fluctuations.

If you have had a problem with a purchase from another European country, please contact us on 01 8797620 or click [here](#). For information on your consumer rights in Europe, see [www.eccireland.ie](http://www.eccireland.ie)

#### **Ann Neville Manager**

Consumer policy is not a minor matter. Consumers are the largest single economic group, with consumer spending representing 58% of EU GDP. Confident consumers can drive economic recovery and growth and with this in mind the European Commission is opening this week its third annual European Consumer Summit in Brussels.

This year's Summit will focus on the way ahead in EU Consumer Policy. The event represents an excellent opportunity to discuss the current state of play and to define future EU strategy in the field of consumer protection. Representatives from a number of consumer organisations will share their views, experiences, initiatives and best practice in the following workshops:

- Consumers and markets: what data and analysis do policy makers and stakeholders need?
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- Capacity Building in the consumer movement: how can we strengthen the "consumer voice"?
- Consumer information
- Consumer education

For more information see: [www.european-consumer-summit.eu](http://www.european-consumer-summit.eu)

#### **Consumer Query of the Month**

**I decided to sell my mobile phone to a phone recycling website based in the UK. Online, I was quoted €47.50 so I agreed to send it to the trader in the bag provided. I heard nothing from them for two weeks, despite being advised that I would receive the money within 5 days. After two weeks I received an email stating that due to the delay in receiving the package and resultant "market fluctuations" they were now only prepared to offer me €20. When I rang them to arrange to get my phone back they said that they could not do this as "payment was pending". Are they allowed to do this?**

No they are not. You agreed to sell your phone to the trader at the offered price of €47.50 and if the trader is no longer prepared to honour this valuation, they must return your phone to you free of charge. In fact the trader's terms and conditions expressly state that should you be offered an adjusted (lower) price, you can reject this offer within 7 days in writing and your phone will be returned to you free of charge. In failing to either pay you the agreed rate or to return your phone the trader is in breach of their own terms.

We would recommend that you contact the trader in writing immediately to reject their adjusted offer and demand the return of your phone, quoting the relevant section of their terms and conditions. If you encounter further difficulties you can contact ECC Ireland for assistance.

### **Success Story of the Month**

An Irish consumer booked flights to Thailand with a Spanish online travel agent. The flights were priced in sterling and the trader would only accept payment by bank transfer. The consumer organised a transfer of £3,516GBP (€4,328.94) straight away. 5 days later the consumer received an email from the agent stating that the price of the flights had gone up. The consumer no longer wanted to go ahead so she cancelled and the trader agreed to refund her.

When the consumer eventually received her refund she received only €4,028.46, €300 less than she paid, although she had been refunded the correct GBP amount. The consumer contacted ECC Ireland and we referred the matter to our Spanish sister office. They contacted the trader and argued that during the 2.5 months that the consumer was awaiting her refund, the GBP/EUR exchange rate changed significantly. If the trader had refunded her promptly she would not have incurred these costs. The trader agreed to refund the consumer an additional €200 and offered a gift voucher of €25 which the consumer accepted.

### **For your diary...**

ECC Ireland will celebrate **Europe Day & The Bealtaine Festival** with a number of talks around the country on consumer rights with emphasis on the older consumer. The first of these will be given on Monday May 9th by Dispute Resolution Adviser, Sean Gleeson, in Letterkenny at an event organised by Letterkenny Europe Direct Information Centre. If you want to learn more about the event or attend please contact [ciara.cunnane@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:ciara.cunnane@donegalcoco.ie)

A second presentation will be given by ECC Ireland Marketing and PR Manager, Caroline Curneen, on Wednesday May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Europe Direct Information Centre in The Source, Thurles. For more information contact [eudirect@tipperarylibraries.ie](mailto:eudirect@tipperarylibraries.ie)

**If you want more information about this or any other cross-border consumer issue you can contact us on 01 8797620 or at [www.eccireland.ie](http://www.eccireland.ie).**

The European Consumer Centre is funded by the European Commission and the National Consumer Agency.

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