



## **ECC Dublin Consumer Monthly**

**August 2006**

How many consumers purchase digital cameras while on holidays in the Canaries? We suspect many do as the number of complaints to both ECC Dublin and the UK ECC has increased over the years. It is therefore timely to offer some advice to prospective shoppers.

A consumer asks the question if he can be fined for buying fake goods in Italy. We answer in this month's e-bulletin.

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Editor

- 1. What's bothering you? – Buying cameras in Spain**
- 2. Consumer query of the month – Can I be fined for buying fake goods in Italy?**

[www.eccdublin.ie](http://www.eccdublin.ie): European consumer rights online

### **1. What's bothering you? – Buying cameras in Spain**

Over the past few years both ECC Dublin and the UK ECC have received an increasing number of complaints from consumers who have bought cameras in Spain especially in the Canary Islands.

Evidence shows that many people have bought cameras under the impression that they are well known makes, only to find out that they have a similar name but are not the same brand. Some of these 'look alike' brand names can be sold legitimately and therefore are not deemed to be counterfeit. But because of the similarity in brand name and the verbal reassurance of quality, consumers believe that they are buying top quality well-known brands at a bargain price. People who have been subjected to this type of hard sell, often only realise later that they have bought goods that don't match the description, but by then it's difficult to prove what the sales staff said.

One example of such a complaint was from a consumer who purchased a digital camera in the Canaries. He believed he was buying a JVC digital camera with 6 mega pixels. It was only when he returned to Ireland did he spot that the camera was in fact an MXJVC and had only 3 mega pixels. He also noticed that the warranty wasn't stamped with the shop's contact details. We sought intervention on behalf of our client via ECC Barcelona and secured a refund of approx €1,000.

In order to avoid, as much as possible, problems purchasing cameras abroad ECC Dublin offers the following tips;

- Be certain about what you are buying and get a receipt.

- Know what you can expect to pay for the same product in Ireland and compare the difference.
- Be wary of the price. If it is very cheap question why.
- Check the packaging and make sure the instruction manual is included.
- Make sure the warranty is stamped by the retailer with contact details in case something goes wrong at a later stage.
- Ask the retailer to pack the camera in front of you instead of going into a back room.

## **2. Consumer question of the month – Can I be fined for buying fake goods in Italy?**

Yes and the fines range from €3,000 to €10,000. In order to counter the negative impact counterfeit products have on business and consumers the Italian government has imposed severe fines on consumers who purchase counterfeit products. ECC Italy has issued a warning to holidaymakers traveling to Italy to refrain from purchasing counterfeit products.

Consumers can protect themselves against buying fake goods by considering the following;

- Always examine goods carefully; poor packaging and badly stitched labels indicate the product could be a fake.
- Buy from recognised retailers.
- Everyone loves a bargain, but a good that costs less than half of its normal price could be a fake
- Be wary of goods sold in open air markets, on the beach or at public events such as concerts etc.

If you wish to email your consumer queries to us please do so to [info@eccdublin.ie](mailto:info@eccdublin.ie)

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