



EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE IRELAND



**GET THE SERVICES YOU
NEED WHEREVER YOU
ARE**

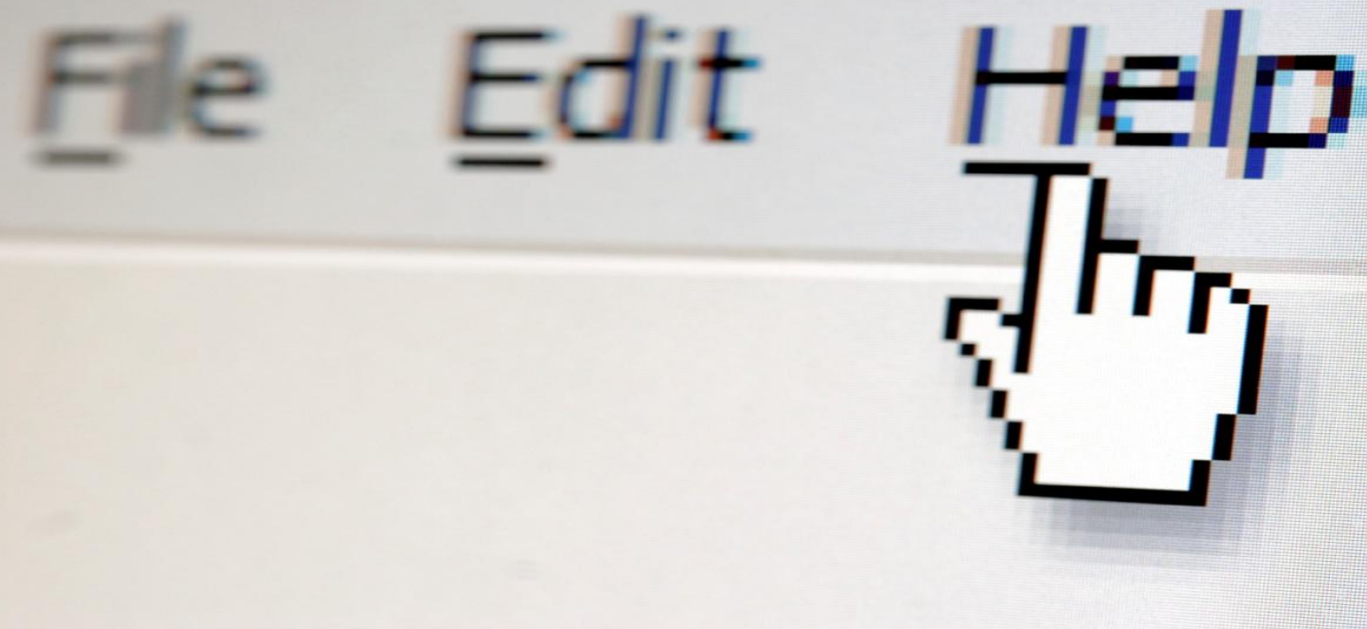


What is the Services Directive?

The Directive on Services in the Internal Market, or 'Services Directive' for short, was transposed into Irish law in November 2010. It aims to increase the confidence of consumers when availing of services offered by businesses across the EU.

It achieves this by ensuring that, regardless of where the consumer and business are located in the EU, consumers have access to a minimum level of information and access to a complaints procedure.

The Directive applies to a wide range of services, from construction and crafts to tourism, leisure, accommodation and food. It obliges Member States to cooperate with each other in the supervision of service providers. This helps to prevent unjustified obstacles for consumers seeking to avail of business services abroad.



Role of the European Consumer Centre in Ireland

The European Consumer Centre provides information on consumer legislation and your rights as a consumer when availing of services in another E.U. member state. In the case of a dispute, it can also provide consumers with the contact details of other organisations that may be able to offer practical assistance.

The European Consumer Centre aims to assist consumers in making informed choices when availing of services across Europe, so that they will find it easier to choose a new and unfamiliar service provider and thus be more confident in their dealings with the internal market.

We can offer you advice on the following:

- What to check before availing of services in another Member State
- Your legal rights if there is a problem
- Contact details of agencies that will offer you further assistance



Help!

How We Can Help

The European Consumer Centre in Ireland (ECC Ireland) offers free information about European consumer legislation and assistance in the resolution of cross-border disputes. It is part of a network of 29 centres across Europe, working together to resolve consumer disputes in an amicable manner. The centre is also involved in various pan-European projects.

Whether you are looking for an architect in Spain, a builder in Poland, or a wine-tasting course in Italy, ECC Ireland can help. The Services Directive aims to provide confidence when you shop cross-border. ECC Ireland will provide advice where possible and act as a referral service where necessary.

ECC Ireland can offer advice to consumers when buying services such as:

- Travel agents and tour operators
- Hotels
- Building and construction
- Plumbing
- Car repairs
- Childcare
- Private education
- Estate agencies
- Accountancy
- Consultancy

How Can You Benefit from the Services Directive?

Be a Confident Consumer

The Directive requires that Member States make information and assistance available to consumers seeking to use a service provider who is based in another Member State. Our office can provide you with this information, enabling you to make informed choices when buying cross-border services. This means you can be confident when choosing a service provider from another Member State.

We can provide information on consumer laws and your rights. We can also supply contact details of organisations throughout the E.U. that can provide practical assistance in the case of a dispute.

Further, we can contact our colleagues in the Member State in which the service provider is based to gather as much information as possible so that you can make a confident decision when employing a service provider.

For Example:

Tourists hiring a car over the internet in another E.U. country may be charged a higher rate because they are not resident in the country of hire. This practice is prohibited under the Services Directive and our office can assist you if you are overcharged in this manner.

Similarly, if you are considering hiring a service provider who is based in another E.U. country – e.g. an architect – you may like to know if this service provider has had to prove his/her qualifications, if (s)he is under an obligation to take out insurance, or, in the event of a dispute, whether you have recourse to alternative means of resolving the problem. ECC Ireland can provide you with the contact details of the authority competent to provide such information.



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ECC Ireland is part of the
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ECC Ireland is co-funded by the National Consumer
Agency and the European Commission

This is a guide and not a legal text



Directorate-General for Health & Consumers
European Commission