



Press Release

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New EU-wide ODR platform to help resolve online disputes easier, faster, and cheaper

- **ECC Ireland to host national ODR contact point with dedicated advisors**

A new EU-wide Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform has been launched by the European Commission making it easier, faster, and less expensive for consumers and traders to resolve online disputes. ECC Ireland will host the national ODR contact point with two dedicated advisors on hand to give assistance to platform users.

On Saturday, January 9 2016, the European Commission opened the online ODR platform to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) bodies to enable them to sign up and familiarise themselves with the platform before it is fully opened for use by consumers and traders from February 15 next.

The [ODR regulation](#) has paved the way for the creation of this online platform which will allow consumers and traders to submit an electronic complaint form free of charge. The form will also be available in all the official EU languages.

[Online Dispute Resolution is an Alternative Dispute Resolution procedure that is conducted entirely online, from the moment a complaint is submitted to the moment an outcome is reached.](#) The term ADR covers a wide variety of techniques such as mediation and arbitration which aim to solve disputes out-of-court. The process involves the use of an independent third party to help disputing parties reach a resolution on their issue.

According to Martina Nee, press and communications officer with ECC Ireland: “We now have advisors on hand to help anyone who requires support using the ODR platform. It is hoped that the new platform will help to make it easier, faster, and cheaper to resolve online disputes. The platform will allow consumers to fill out an electronic form free of charge and this is sent to the trader. Once they both agree on an ADR entity then the platform will automatically transfer the complaint to that independent third party who will work on reaching an outcome within 90 days.”

Giving consumers and traders more confidence in an age of increased online spending

The increased availability of ADR/ODR [gives consumers and traders more confidence when buying and trading online and across borders](#). By providing more options, EU consumers will be more likely to seek redress for low-value purchases and enforce their rights. There are benefits for EU traders too, as this will help them save on costly court proceedings as well as helping them to maintain business reputation and good customer relations.

The number of Irish consumers confident enough to buy online is increasing, however there is still hesitation when it comes to cross-border transactions where the trader is based in another EU country. According to an [ADR/ODR impact assessment](#): ‘Uncertainty about securing redress has affected consumers’ confidence in shopping across borders and dissuades them from taking advantage of the Single Market’.

There is also a reluctance on the part of traders to sell online to other EU countries. According to the [2015 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard](#) only 37 per cent of Irish traders are confident enough to sell to

consumers in both Ireland and other EU countries. To tackle this, ODR was identified by the EU Commission as essential for removing dispute resolution barriers such as the distances involved in transborder cases and disproportionate costs.

According to the [2015 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard](#), about 45 per cent of EU consumers think it is easy to resolve disputes through ADR and about 70 per cent were satisfied with how their complaint was handled by an ADR. Approximately 40 per cent of EU traders do not know about ADR but around 30 per cent are aware and willing to use it. Consumers in Ireland have the second highest level of trust in redress mechanisms in the EU, with the second highest in the courts (50 per cent) and the third highest trust in ADR at almost 58 per cent.

Background:

In 2011, the European Commission published a package of proposals aimed at increasing consumer protection by ensuring that ADR bodies are available for all sectors of consumer complaints, regardless of whether the complaint is a domestic matter (i.e. both the consumer and the trader are in Ireland) or whether there is an EU cross-border element involved.

EU legislation on ADR and ODR was adopted on May 21, 2013. The legislation entered into force in July 2013. Member States were required to transpose the ADR Directive by July 2015 and notify their national ADR entities. In Ireland, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission is currently accepting applications from ADR entities who are seeking to be notified pursuant to the ADR Directive, as transposed by the [European Union \(Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes\) Regulations \(S.I.343 of 2015\)](#).

ECC Ireland point of contact for ODR platform queries

Pursuant to the [European Union \(Online Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes\) Regulations 2015 \(S.I. No. 500/2015\)](#), ECC Ireland will host the national ODR contact point, where two advisors will assist consumers who may require support when using the ODR platform.

The public can forward their ODR queries to info@odr.ie.

Further information on ADR/ODR:

The online platform will be available from February 15 through this link: <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr/>

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/solving_consumer_disputes/non-judicial_redress/adr-odr/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/solving_consumer_disputes/docs/adr-odr.factsheet_web.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/consumer-marketing/news/160108_en.htm

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For more information/media queries, please contact Martina Nee, ECC Ireland press and communications officer, on (01) 8797 643 or email mnee@eccireland.ie. ECC Ireland can also be found on Twitter [@eccireland](https://twitter.com/eccireland).

Notes to Editor:

ECC Ireland is part of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net), which covers 30 countries (all EU countries plus Norway and Iceland), and offers a free and confidential information and advice service to the public on their rights as consumers, assisting consumers with cross-border disputes. ECC Ireland is co-financed by the European Commission and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.