



Consumers



EU consumer policy safeguards consumers' rights, ensures products are safe, helps people make informed choices when they buy goods and services, and offers tools to solve problems if something goes wrong.

The EU's single market offers consumers access to greater choice, flexibility, quality and value for money. But it can also pose challenges to consumers, especially in fast-developing areas like digital, energy and financial services. The EU's consumer policy ensures that people's rights will be upheld if they encounter any problems when buying goods or services from other EU countries, including online. This helps to build consumer trust across the EU, which is also good for businesses trading across borders in the EU's single market.

What the EU does

The EU offers consumers a set of practical rights to be used when something goes wrong.

- Minimum standards for passenger rights have been set across all modes of transport, including information, assistance and compensation if cancellation or long delays occur.
- When shopping online consumers have 14 days to reconsider their purchase and withdraw. They may always return a product within 2 weeks and get their money back.
- Since June 2017 **roaming fees have been abolished**. Europeans travelling within the EU pay domestic prices for roaming calls, SMS and data.
- If an item bought in the EU (whether online or in a shop)

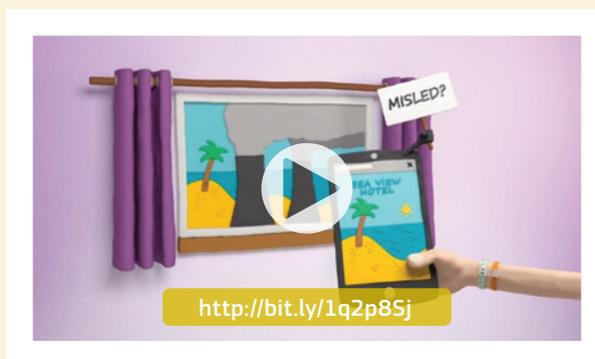
is different from how it is advertised or does not work properly, the consumer has the right to at least a free repair or replacement.

- Since 2016 new EU rules on mortgage credits have ensured clear information in advertisements and timely information to consumers before signing a contract.

The EU also provides help to resolve disputes with traders quickly and efficiently. These low-cost, fast procedures can be

used for both domestic and cross-border disputes. The **online dispute resolution** platform allows consumers and traders to resolve disputes over online purchases entirely online. The **European Consumer Centres Network** provides free help and advice to consumers on their cross-border purchases.

Stringent safety standards apply to toys, electrical appliances, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, and strict rules ensure that unsafe products are recalled from the market. Over 200 different **unsafe products** are notified via the EU's **Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products** each year.



Find out more: https://ec.europa.eu/info/topics/consumers_en



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This factsheet is part of the publication **'The European Union: What it is and what it does'**. An interactive version, containing links to online content, is available in PDF and HTML format at: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-what-it-is/en/>

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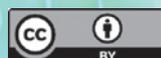
Trade

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