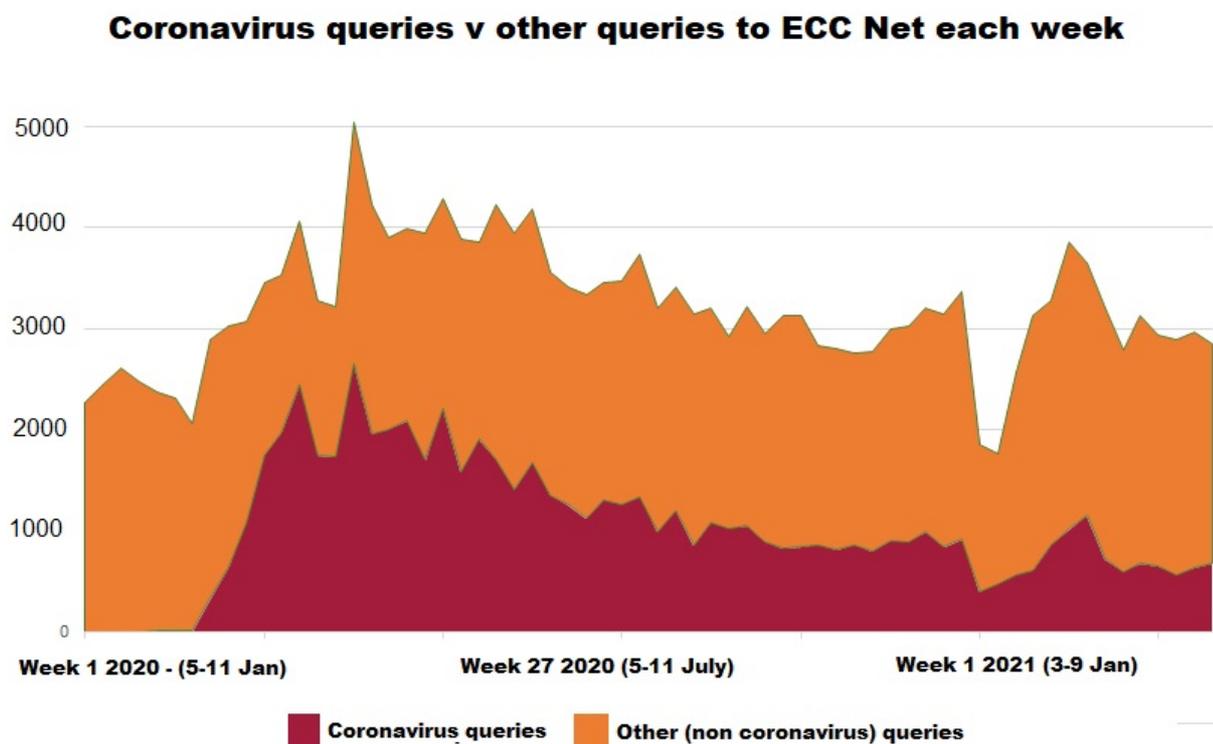


## ECC Net and COVID-19

Between April 2020 and April 2021, the European Consumer Centre Network (ECC-Net) recovered over €4 million in compensation for consumers whose rights were breached due to COVID 19.

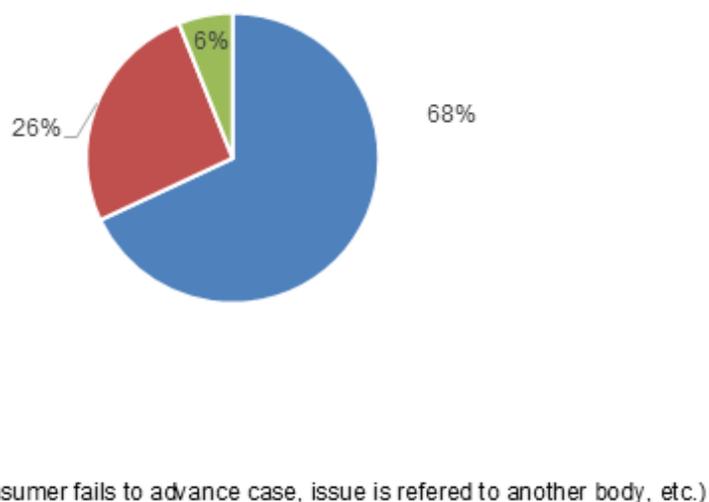
The European Consumer Centre Network (ECC Net), financed by the EU and its Member States, has been an important port of call for consumers with cross-border problems during the pandemic. From March 2020 to March 2021, the ECC-Net answered 170 000 requests for information, an increase of 44% compared to the same previous 12 month period.



70,000 queries were directly related to the consequences of the COVID-19 on purchases made from a trader located in another EU country, Norway or Iceland. Among the 70 000 requests, 93% concerned tourism (45% concerned air passenger rights, overwhelmingly flight cancellations but also a small number of consumers who were unable or unwilling to travel; 21% cancelled accommodation services and 17% package holidays).

ECC Net assisted the majority of consumers with advice on their rights. It went on to intervene with the trader in 8000 coronavirus-related cases where it assessed that traders had not responded to legitimate consumer requests for redress. 68% of these cases were resolved successfully with a total of more than €4,000,000 recovered.

## Outcomes of interventions with trader in cases arising from COVID-19



Total interventions with traders in cases arising from COVID-19: 8026

“Because of the pandemic, many consumers were faced with cancellation of travel services booked in advance and had difficulties getting reimbursed. This is all the more stressful when the trader is located in another country. I am glad European Consumer Centres could provide free of charge assistance in such instances and courageously dealt with an unprecedented surge in their workload.” emphasised Didier Reynders, Commissioner for Justice and Consumers.

During the pandemic period, European Consumer Centres have also greatly amplified their information activities. They provided EU level multilingual advice and tips on travel related issues and on safer online shopping[1]. They also provided examples of wrongdoing to the Commission and national consumer enforcement authorities which helped to identify most common unfair online practices and to obtain cooperation from major internet platforms[2].

Individual ECCs embarked on actions at national level, including corona hotlines, information campaigns on social media, templates to be used by consumers to submit standard complaints (e.g. to request flight refund), webinars, conferences to assist and educate consumers about their rights; and consultations to share the intelligence at hand with the enforcement authorities and other bodies active in the consumer protection sphere.

## Looking ahead

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ECC-Net is key to implement the new [Consumer Agenda](#) adopted by the Commission in November 2020. Not only will it continue to support consumers with their issues in cross-border purchases, but it is committed to contribute to the economic recovery by assisting tourists from third countries to regain trust in the EU. It will

contribute to the digital and green transitions by educating consumers through raising awareness of their digital rights when shopping online and empowering them to make informed sustainable choices. The ECC-Net is also gearing up to assist enforcement authorities in rapidly detecting wrongdoings by traders.

## More information

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ECC-Net was established in 2005 and is co-funded by the European Commission and the Member States through the Single Market Programme. It employs approximately 150 legal experts in 29 European countries to educate consumers about their rights in their native language, and help them settle a dispute with a seller based in another EU country, Iceland or Norway including, when necessary, intermediating with a trader. In cases where their intermediation with a trader is not successful, ECCs advise consumers regarding alternative dispute resolution or consumer organisations that may be able to provide further help.

Last year, the ECC-Net published its 15th anniversary report that is available on the ECC-Net [website](#).

More information on the successful work carried by the ECC-Net during the COVID-19 is found [here](#).

[1] [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/consumers/resolve-your-consumer-complaint/european-consumer-centres-network-ecc-net/ecc-net-and-covid-19\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/consumers/resolve-your-consumer-complaint/european-consumer-centres-network-ecc-net/ecc-net-and-covid-19_en)

[2] More information about the follow-up actions of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC) on rogue traders during the COVID-19 outbreak is available [here](#).

For more information about how the ECC Net works, its achievements and the link to the website of national ECC Net offices, click [here](#).