



#DSM

Digital Single Market

Making the most of the digital opportunities in Europe

E-COMMERCE IN THE EU: How you can make the most out of it as a consumer

The internet has transformed the way we shop. However, persistent online barriers prevent us from enjoying the full access to the goods and services being offered by businesses in the EU. Since the launch of the Digital Single Market Strategy in May 2015, the European Union has been working to break down these barriers.



THE PROBLEM OF GEOBLOCKING FOR CONSUMERS:

Geoblocking prevents us from using the internet in one EU Member State and buying from a website based in another, and it is a big problem in the EU:

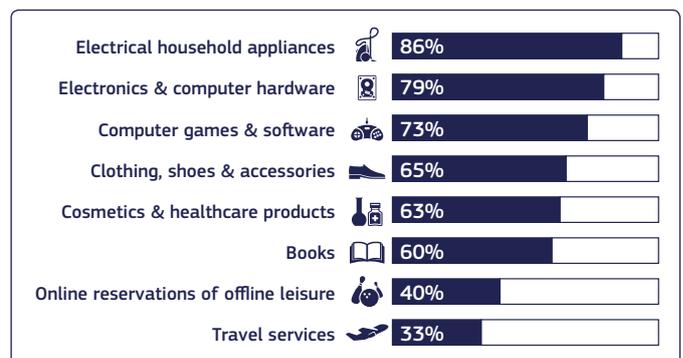
MAIN PROBLEMS REGARDING GEOBLOCKING IN 2015



EU28 ONLINE RETAILERS OVERALL (2015)



GEOBLOCKING BY SECTOR (2015)



This results in **less revenue for companies** and **less choice for consumers**.

GEOBLOCKING: WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION DOING ABOUT IT?



New rules will enter into force on 3 December 2018, across the European Union



They will ensure that we no longer face unjustified barriers such as being re-routed back to a country-specific website, or having to pay with a debit or credit card from a certain country.



They will end online discrimination on the basis of nationality or place of residence.



Wherever we choose to shop from, online sellers must treat all EU consumers equally.

WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THE NEW GEOBLOCKING RULES?

Transport services

Retail financial services

Audiovisual services

This is because there are already sector-specific rules taking into account the specificities of these services.

Transport services:



discrimination based on nationality and place of residence is already prohibited for flight tickets, bus and coach transport, waterborne transport in the EU's transport regulation.

Retail financial services:



There are rules in place concerning: mortgages, opening a bank account, or buying cross-border insurance.

SPECIFIC RULES AIMED AT FACILITATING ACCESS TO AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES:

Audiovisual services:



facilitating the access to audiovisual services across borders is part of other initiatives under the Digital Single Market strategy.

Cross-border portability of online content: since April 2018, Europeans are able to use their online subscriptions to films, sports events, e-books, video games or music when travelling in the EU.

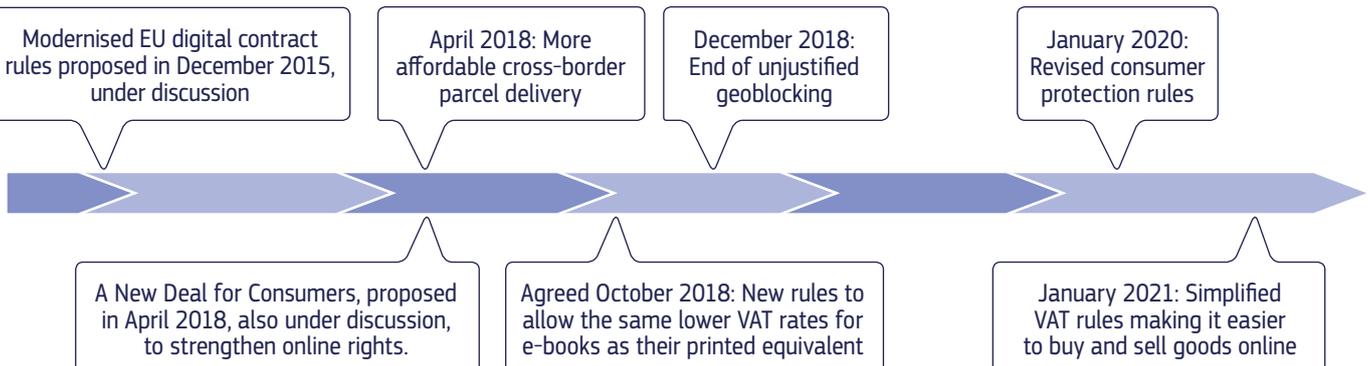
Copyright and related rights applicable to certain online transmissions: easier licencing for online transmissions and cross-border access.

Audiovisual Media Services Directive: EU rules for audiovisual media promoting European works and preserving cultural diversity.

The Commission will review (within two years from the entry into force of the Regulation) its scope, including potential inclusion of the non-audiovisual services (software, games, e-books, music) under the non-discrimination clause.

The Commission will also analyse whether in other sectors, such as services in the field of transport and audio-visual services, any remaining unjustified restrictions based on nationality, place of residence or place of establishment should be eliminated.

WHAT THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS PROPOSED TO IMPROVE E-COMMERCE FOR CONSUMERS: A TIMELINE



MAKING CROSS-BORDER PARCEL DELIVERIES CHEAPER

New rules on online cross-border parcel delivery services have been in place since May 2018, making it easier for you send a parcel from one Member State to another.

DID YOU KNOW



Cross-border parcel delivery prices are on average 3 to 5 times higher than domestic delivery prices, without clear reasons for the difference.



62% of companies that wish to sell online identify high delivery costs as a problem

HOW IS THE EUROPEAN UNION PROTECTING YOU AS AN ONLINE CONSUMER?

As of January 2020, new rules will enter into force, which will make it easier for national authorities to protect consumers online:



Sites or social media accounts where scams have been identified, will be removed



Authorities will be able to request information from internet service providers or banks, in order to trace the identity of rogue online traders



European Consumer Centres and consumer organisations will be able to post alerts about bad practices

In April 2018, the Commission proposed a 'New Deal for Consumers' which will strengthen Consumer rights online:



Online market places will have to inform you whether you are buying from a trader or a private individual, so you know what rights you have if something goes wrong.



When you search online, you will be clearly informed when a search result is being paid for by a trader.



Online marketplaces will have to inform you about the main parameters determining the ranking of the results.



When you pay for a digital service, you benefit from certain information rights with 14 days to cancel your contract. The New Deal for Consumers extend this right to 'free' digital services and will apply to how long the provider can use your data for (e.g. cloud storage services, social media or email accounts).

DID YOU KNOW



Following a coordinated screening of price comparison and travel booking websites across the EU in October 2016, two-thirds of sites screened (235 out of 352) were misleading on prices.



According to the Economic Study on Consumer Digital Content Products, one in three online users – 70 million EU citizens – have experienced problems related to contract law when accessing online content. Moreover, only 10% received a remedy.

HOW ARE YOUR CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS BEING IMPROVED?

The Commission has proposed new rules for digital contracts, which are currently being discussed by the Parliament and the Council. The Commission has proposed:

Clear rights for consumers when accessing digital content and digital services. If what you receive is not as agreed or as you reasonably expected, you will have specific contractual rights. Your rights will also apply when you have provided personal data to the trader without paying a price.

Adequate consumer protection when buying "smart goods" such as connected toys.

