

MIDDAY EXPRESS

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2011 Report reveals European Consumer Centres helped over 70,000 consumers get a better grip on their rights

Cases handled by the European Consumer Centres' Network (ECC-Net) in 2011 remained consistently high: more than 70,000 consumers received free help and advice. The ECC-Net has helped consumers in about 416.000 cases since its creation in 2005. Year on year, the pattern of complaints remained basically the same. The transport sector triggered the majority of complaints (32% of which 20% related to air transport services). Online purchasing was the selling method which caused most problems for consumers (56.6% of complaints). Consumers in Austria, Ireland and Slovakia however, complained mostly about the recreation and culture sector, in Norway and the United Kingdom they complained most about restaurants, hotels and accommodation services and in Luxembourg about miscellaneous goods and services. In 2011, more than half of the complaints were resolved amicably or passed on to other organisations: 41% of the complaints were successfully closed after the ECCs reached an amicable settlement with the trader and 13% were passed on to other organisations (e.g. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) entities (to help solve problems out of court), national enforcement bodies or courts). Compared to previous years, ECCs increasingly promoted ADR entities: 62.5% of the complaints transferred to other organisations or agencies were passed on to ADR entities (compared to 50% in 2009 and 58.5% in 2010). The ECC-Net covers the 27 EU countries, plus Norway and Iceland. It provides information to consumers on their rights when shopping cross-border in another EU country and helps them find a solution if something goes wrong. The annual report offers a wealth of information on its operations and success stories per EU country. For more information including the full ECC-Net Annual Report 2011: <http://ec.europa.eu/ecc-net>