



Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

Energy efficiency and consumers

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- Consumer Affairs – an introduction
- Treaty Article 153
- The Consumer Policy Strategy: not just *'protection'* but also *'empowerment'*
- Consumer legislation
- Facilitating consumer choice and energy efficiency
- Energy & consumers, current developments



Introduction: areas of work

Directorate B – Consumer Affairs

B1 Consumer Markets

B2 Consumer Contract and Marketing Law

B3 Product and Service Safety

B4 Financial Services and Redress

B5 Enforcement and European Consumer Centres

B6 Consumer Strategy, Representation and Internt. Relations



Introduction

■ Who are we?

- Total staff: 93

■ What is our Mission?

- Contribute to improve quality of life of EU citizens in the Single Market;
- Integration of consumer concerns into all policies;
- High levels of consumer protection and safety throughout the Union.



Consumer Policy Strategy (CPS) 2007 – 2013

- Clear sense of political direction
- Three key objectives with adaptable „Rolling plan of actions“:
 - To empower EU consumers, with real choices, accurate information, market transparency, effective protection and solid rights;
 - To enhance EU consumers' welfare, in terms of price, choice, quality, diversity, affordability and safety;
 - To protect consumers effectively, by ensuring protection against risks and threats that cannot be left to individuals.



Better monitoring of consumer markets & national consumer environment

- Consumer Markets Scoreboard/Marketwatch
 - Screening consumer markets
 - Based on 5 top-level indicators → complaints, prices, satisfaction, switching, safety
 - Tracking progress in retail market integration
 - Benchmarking national consumer environment e.g. enforcement, redress, empowerment, consumer organisations
 - Follow-up in-depth analysis of markets with high risk of malfunctioning – e.g. e-commerce, **network industries** etc.
- Consumer Behaviour
 - Developing a model of consumer behaviour incorporating evidence from behavioural economics
 - Empirical research on consumer behaviour
- Consumer integration – data and analysis to support policy integration



Better consumer protection regulation

■ **Proposal for a Directive on consumer contractual rights**

- A single coherent legal framework for business-to consumer sales, in particular cross-border online sales
- The proposal merges 4 existing Directives (Distance Selling, Doorstep Selling, Unfair Contract Terms and Consumer Sales and Guarantees) into one instrument
- Full harmonisation will remove barriers for businesses wishing to sell cross-border and increase consumers' confidence in the internal market

■ **Unfair Commercial Practices**

- The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC) fully harmonises unfair B2C marketing practices EU-wide by one set of rules:
 - The General Clause, which is future proof
 - Bans on misleading and aggressive practices
 - Black List of practices that are banned up-front in all Member States
- The Commission works closely with the MS to ensure good quality transposition and uniform application.

■ **The Timeshare Directive**

- The Timeshare Directive is being revised in order to improve consumer protection in particular in relation to new holiday products that have emerged on the market, e.g. so-called discount holiday clubs.

■ **The Package Travel Directive**

- The Directive provides basic protection for consumers going on a package tour.
- Ongoing revision work in order to adapt the Directive to recent market developments, such as increased internet bookings, consumers putting together their own packages (dynamic packaging), the entry onto the market of low cost carriers and frequent price fluctuations.



Putting consumers at the heart of other EU policies and regulation

- Consumer dimension of all EU policies should be recognized
- Overall integration policy and priority setting
- Group of Commissioners for Competitiveness expanded to address the consumer dimension
- Internal Market Policy: Single Market Review acknowledges consumer policy as a key contributor to better functioning markets and competitiveness
- Retail Financial Services
- Services of general interest: importance of consumer rights (energy, telecoms, transport, postal services)
- Sustainable Consumption



Facilitating consumer choice in energy: education, information, policy

- School Diary <http://www.generation-europe.org>
- Interactive web-based education tools (DOLCETA) www.dolceta.eu
- Focused integration work on policy areas with 'added value' for consumers: energy, telecommunications/digital, transport



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Facilitating consumer choice: Sustainable consumption → energy efficiency - housing

- Energy efficiency, a prime tool for reduced energy bills:
for consumers housing is the main area to act for green, energy and cost savings (ca. €1000 per year per household) → Information and education → consumer empowerment
EPBD label “simple, easily identifiable”, but also “visible” as an indicator and ‘promoter’ of added value for energy and cost savings
- Sustainable consumption: making sure about the ‘green’ value
Misleading advertising practices, incl. false green claims, are banned under the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. Provision of false or misleading information on the environmental performance of a product (at the marketing stage or in a label) may constitute an unfair commercial practice.
- Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption & Production
Quality products enhance consumer welfare: eco-design Directive covers energy-related products too
PM: SANCO fully supports green public procurement



Facilitating consumer choice: Making things easier

■ Coordinated action needed

EU: Europe *can* improve the lives of its citizens

- Community legislation
- EU-wide awareness campaigns

Member States: measures to help citizens go for energy efficiency choices

- energy advisors (local/regional)
- energy market watchdogs
- advice by industry ("how to get more out of your energy bill")

■ Key concepts: simple language, user-friendly and easily accessible information



Energy and consumers latest: the Citizens' Energy Forum

- A forum to deal with energy issues as they affect everybody (markets, (vulnerable) consumers, efficient use of energy, ...)
- SANCO est. energy consumer experts group
Consumers want: effective competition → **real choices**, transparency, comparability, advice (esp. for newcomers), simplicity in switching suppliers, simple procedures for funding energy efficiency applications & gov. assistance
- 1st meeting 27-28 October in London, energy efficiency and housing

Conclusions:

→ energy efficiency measures could reduce energy poverty
→ energy efficiency in social housing: need for adequate impartial advice and improvements in energy efficiency

- Next Forum to have greater energy efficiency focus



- DG SANCO will work together with consumers and stakeholders. It is a common effort and we are happy to talk and receive your feedback.

Thank you for your attention!

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