



Quality charter of the European Consumer Centres (ECC-Net)

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) comprises 30 centres across all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, working together to resolve the cross-border consumer disputes of their residents in an amicable manner. Each centre is co-funded by the European Commission and national governments.

The primary role of ECC-Net is to enhance consumer confidence when engaging in cross-border transactions by providing free and confidential information and advice to the public on their rights as consumers, as well as assistance in the resolution of cross-border consumer complaints.

By providing a full and centralised service, ECC-Net is committed to empowering consumers and enabling them to take full advantage of the opportunities the Single Market offers.

The Quality Charter describes services you can expect to receive and sets out the standard of service consumers are entitled to expect when contacting the ECC-Net.

In order to get in touch with us, please contact the ECC of Greece (www.eccgreece.gr).

1. Understanding your expectations

ECC-Net is committed to offering a professional and courteous service to all consumers who contact us and we will make every effort to ensure that the services you receive reflect your needs and expectations.

We will check the merits of your query by carrying out an adequate preliminary assessment to ensure that the matter is within ECC-Net's remit. All consumer queries will be dealt with by a competent member of the ECC-Net legal team and handled in a timely and accurate manner.

If your query relates to a matter that falls outside the remit of the ECC-Net, we will inform you accordingly and provide the contact details of any relevant body or organisation competent to deal with your query. Please check below the **appendix** detailing the matters covered and those excluded from the scope of the ECC-Net.

2. Answering as fast as we can

Whether you write, telephone or e-mail, we will acknowledge receipt and make every effort to consider the information/documentation that we have been provided with promptly and, at the latest, within 14 working days. As an exception, at times of particularly heavy demand, if we cannot meet this deadline, you will be informed accordingly.

3. Giving you valuable advice and guidance

Once the initial assessment process is concluded, you will be informed about your rights and entitlements under European consumer legislation as well as information on the available dispute resolution mechanisms. Consumers can rely on tailored legal advice and assistance.

4. Assist you through a cross-border out-of-court settlement procedure

When you encounter problems securing redress, the ECC-Net can assist in the resolution of your cross-border consumer complaint by actively pursuing your complaint on your behalf. Upon your request, your local ECC (Consumer ECC) may seek assistance from the ECC in the country of the trader's domicile (Trader ECC).

Before bringing the matter to the attention of the trader's ECC for its consideration, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

1. the consumer has attempted to contact the trader in writing in order to resolve the matter;
2. the consumer has a well-founded claim taking into consideration applicable European consumer legislation.

You may be required to provide relevant supporting documentation to enable us to progress your case.

Once the your case is accepted by the Trader ECC, the latter will endeavour to bring the matter to an amicable resolution by communicating with the trader on behalf of the consumer. The consumer will be updated on any developments by the Consumer ECC.

The ECC-Net has no enforcement powers to impose any sanction, penalty or fine where consumer legislation is contravened. We will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints amicably on your behalf; however in the event where the trader fails to cooperate or engage with us, you will be advised of alternative means of resolving your dispute, including out-of-court mechanisms, where available.

5. Entrusting an out-of-court dispute settlement body with your case

One of the overall ECC-Net objectives is to resolve consumer disputes without the need for parties to engage with the court process. When an agreement cannot be reached directly with the trader and the matter cannot be resolved with our intervention, we may suggest engaging the services of a competent ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) entity, which offers dispute resolution procedures, without prejudice to legal action. In some instances, we may be in a position to transfer your case directly on to the competent body, monitor progress and update you accordingly whilst the case is pending with the ADR body. In instances where the relevant settlement procedure can be instigated by the consumer directly, we may provide you with the contact details of the competent ADR entity and the information in respect of the settlement process.

6. Having a long term view/The added value of your case for all consumers

As part of our work is assisting consumers with their cross-border complaint, ECC-Net is in a unique position to document the problems consumers face when buying goods and services within the EU, Iceland and Norway. Based on your consumer experiences, the ECC-Net pools its knowledge and expertise, and works with enforcement authorities, national and European stakeholders in the collective interest of consumers; this includes providing input for new legislative proposals or sectors that, in our opinion, need further enforcement and protective measures for consumers.

7. Protecting your personal data and privacy

The ECC-Net takes the protection of consumers' personal data very seriously. Your data will exclusively be collected, saved and used to process your complaint within the network of the European Consumer Centres and to safeguard your interests. However, all submitted information will be handled according to the national law governing data protection. For this, we need your agreement. The «privacy statement» edited by the European Commission informs you about how we use your personal data as well as your rights regarding its use.

8. Being open to your feedback

Your feedback is important to us. Your compliments, suggestions or complaints allow us to improve our services and the way we communicate.

And even though we are committed to providing a service to the best of our abilities, we understand that issues may occur. So we are happy to address complaints from consumers who are dissatisfied with the quality of the service provided or its delivery. A complaint should be made, in the first instance, to the person you are dealing with in the centre. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive and wish to make a formal written complaint, you may contact centre's manager. The case will then be reviewed as regards its merits and the manner in which it has been handled.

ECC Belgium may also send you a consumer satisfaction survey giving you an opportunity to tell us about your experiences and provide suggestions for improvements where needed.

Quality Charter Appendix

Matters in and out of scope of the ECC-Net

The ECC-Net is competent:

- If the request comes from a consumer, meaning a “natural person who is acting for the purposes which are outside his trade, business and profession” and concerns a professional trader
- If there is a cross border context to the claim within the EU, Iceland and Norway.

The ECC is not competent:

- For complaints involving two private individuals (purchase of goods or holiday rentals between two private persons for example).
- For complaints involving two traders (for example claims linked to business directories).
- If the complaint concerns a trader outside the geographical scope of the network (Switzerland, USA, China, Russia...).
- If the trader has expressly refused to cooperate with the ECC-Net.
- If you have already started a legal procedure/court procedure.

If your query relates to a matter that falls outside the remit of ECC-Net, we will inform you accordingly and provide the contact details of any relevant body or organisation competent to deal with your query. This will be the case for example:

- If we cannot identify the trader (false addresses, hidden registrar of webdomain...).
- In case of fraud (counterfeiting, so called snowball systems, ...).
- For specific investment products such as forex and binary options.