

Consultation document on developing a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints across the European Union

Meta Informations

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User name

null

Case Number

535613759160919608

Invitation Ref.

Status

N

Questionnaire

Do you collect consumer complaints?

Yes

Do you collect consumer enquiries?

Yes

Do you classify complaints and enquiries separately?

Yes

How do you define complaints?

The consumer is dissatisfied with a trader.

How do you define enquiries?

Questions which are not complaints.

Other definitions. Please specify here.

Who is eligible to send you a complaint?

Consumer

For which sectors do you collect data?

Please send a copy of the classification structure you use (e.g. a table indicating the different sectors) to SANCO-consumercomplaints@ec.europa.eu

All sectors. As we are part of the ECC-Net, DG Sanco decides the classification structure.

Which is your preferred policy option on the issue of harmonising consumer complaints classification systems?

Introduce an obligatory system

Please explain.

It will be difficult to get a European wide classification system to be used by consumer and other governmental/non-governmental organisations. However, it must be possible for bodies gathering consumer data to have a more detailed system than the obligatory system, provided the same basic classification is used.

Do you agree that only the classification of complaints addressed to third parties (e.g. public agencies, ministries, self-regulatory bodies, consumer NGOs, trade associations, ADR bodies, others) should be harmonised and not those made to sellers/retailers?

No

Please explain.

Please give your view on whether a new classification system should include data on the following variables.

Number of complaints

Yes

Number of enquiries

Yes

Sectors

Yes

Nature/type of complaint (e.g. faulty goods, late delivery, overcharging, incorrect labelling, etc.)

Yes

Mediums of transaction (e.g. face to face, internet, telephone sales, etc.)

No

Associated monetary value

Yes

Type of infringement and relevant legislation (e.g. horizontal legislation such as Unfair Commercial Practices or sector specific legislation such as Package Travel)

No

Should the system use COICOP?

No

Should the system use an alternative sectorial classification?	Yes
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Please specify

COICOP is inadequate to accurately categorize consumer complaints.

How often should participating parties report aggregate collected complaints to the Commission?	Yearly
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Would you be prepared to change your existing classification methodology to be in line with a voluntary harmonised methodology?	Yes
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What would be the cost implications of changing your methodology?	Do not know
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Do you use an IT tool to classify complaints?	Yes
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Please provide more information on the system: is it a specialised software or a single spreadsheet, etc.

We are using the IT Tool set up by DG Sanco for the ECC-Net.

Comments

The best way of empowering consumers and making businesses act in more consumer friendly manners is by publishing the names of companies and how many complaints they are receiving. There is a wide range of websites dedicated user generated reviews of traders. You can legislate as much as you want, but at the end of the day what really matters is making consumers aware of what sort of company they are going into business with. In the US the Better Business Bureau provides this sort of service. Some national legislation, e.g. German, do not allow publishing consumer complaints against particular traders. This must be changed in order to make any substantial progress in consumer protection and empowerment.

Personal data

Name of organisation

The European Consumer Centre Norway

Country of establishment of the Organisation

Norway

Address

Rolf Wickstrøms vei 15, 0404 Oslo

Website address (if available)

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Name contact person	
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Stakeholder group	NGO
Size of the organisation	1 - 49