

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

## Meta Informations

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06-10-2008

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User name

null

Case Number

346253254271528008

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?

We do not have a definition for complaints or enquiries per se and strictly speaking we do not even call or classify consumer contacts as complaints, but rather as notifications. All contacts are recorded in our registration tool, but they receive different classifications and are dealt with differently depending on the content of the contact. If they reveal a particular problem (for e.g. marketing, contract terms) falling into the scope of the supervisory duties of the Consumer Ombudsman, they are classified as supervision matters. Consumers' requests for information and most claims that involve purely a dispute between a trader and a consumer, which do not involve supervision element are registered separately into a class of their own and mainly dealt with by local consumer advisers.

How do you define enquiries?

See above. We would classify as enquiries requests for general information, which do not reveal a particular problem.

Other definitions. Please specify here.

Who is eligible to send you a complaint?	Consumer Business Other
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Please specify other

Any party that wishes to attach the Consumer Ombudsman's attention to a problem falling into the scope of its statutory supervisory duties may do so.

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](mailto:SANCO-consumercomplaints@ec.europa.eu)

We do not have a classification based on sectors, but the consumer ombudsman in its supervisory duties uses a list of search terms/key words on the nature of the case, which contain terms indicating certain key business sectors (e.g. housing, aviation - the list is not exhaustive), types of issues (e.g. discount, loyalty rebate, defects and guarantees), or the group of consumers involved, e.g. children.

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

Introduce a voluntary system

Please explain.

As this space did not admit explanation, this will be sent by separate email.

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?

Yes

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

Number of complaints

Yes

Number of enquiries

No

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.)	Yes
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)	Yes
Should the system use COICOP?	No
Should the system use an alternative sectorial classification?	Yes
Please specify	
The use of COICOP is readily available and has the merit of uniformity and comparability with other systems, which we support. On the other hand, it is slow and cumbersome to use, outdated in some areas and not very easily adaptable to novel products that markets bring forth, and it is especially scant on services, which is a developing area. A lighter and more flexible uniform system could be desirable.	
How often should participating parties report aggregate collected complaints to the Commission?	Yearly
Would you be prepared to change your existing classification methodology to be in line with a voluntary harmonised methodology?	Do not know
What would be the cost implications of changing your methodology?	Do not know
Do you use an IT tool to classify complaints?	Yes
Please provide more information on the system: is it a specialised software or a single spreadsheet, etc.	
Specialised software	
Comments	
<b>Personal data</b>	

Name of organisation	
The Finnish Consumer Agency/Ombudsman	
Country of establishment of the Organisation	
Finland	
Address	
P.O.Box 5 FIN 00531 Helsinki	
Website address (if available)	
www.kuluttajavirasto.fi	
Name contact person	
Satu Toepfer or Hertta Hartikainen	
Telephone number contact person	
+ 358 9 7726 7296	
E-mail contact person	
satu.toepfer@kuluttajavirasto.fi or hertta.hartikainen@kuluttajavirasto.fi	
Stakeholder group	Member State Authority
Size of the organisation	50 - 99