

# Record number of citizens using EU advice services



*The 2009 SOLVIT and the Citizens Signpost Service (CSS) annual reports show that a growing number of Europeans are turning to the EU's advice and assistance services to find concrete answers and fast solutions to questions and problems they encounter in the Internal Market. The two systems have successfully developed into complementary empowering tools enabling European citizens and businesses to claim their place at the heart of the Internal Market. By offering fast and pragmatic solutions, SOLVIT has clearly established itself as an effective alternative to longer infringement procedures.*

The reports were published on 1 March 2010 and presented by the Internal Market Commissioner Michel Barnier to the Competitiveness Council the same day.

In 2009, SOLVIT helped a record number of 1,500 citizens and businesses who ran into difficulties getting their Internal Market rights recognised by national public administrations, a 54% increase compared to the previous year. The CSS provided free and practical legal advice within three working days to approximately 12,000 citizens in 2009, an increase of 8.5% compared to the previous year. By helping citizens and businesses make the most of their rights, SOLVIT and CSS are clearly contributing to the better functioning of the Internal Market. In fact, for the past three years, the number of SOLVIT cases has been higher than the number of formal complaints and infringement cases in the Internal Market area, showing that the service has developed into a very effective alternative to longer and heavier infringement procedures.

Building on the successes of SOLVIT and CSS, the Commission will continue to strengthen its information, guidance and problem solving services through better integration of the different tools available to Europeans. The new 'Your Europe' webportal ([www.europa.eu/youreurope](http://www.europa.eu/youreurope)), designed as a 'one-stop-shop' offering detailed and practical information as well as easy access to specialized assistance services, is the next step in this process.

The 2009 SOLVIT and CSS reports are available on: <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/> and <http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/>

The common form for asking either a question to CSS or making a complaint to SOLVIT is available on: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/front\\_end/css\\_solvit\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/front_end/css_solvit_en.cfm)

## **SOLVIT helps Tunisian citizen get UK residence permit**

A Tunisian living with his Polish wife in the UK had to wait longer than the 6-month period imposed by EU law to be issued a UK residence permit. SOLVIT's intervention speeded up the process and the permit was issued soon after.

**Solved within 10 weeks**



## **Hungarian wood gets a coat of Austrian wood preservative**

An Austrian company was prevented from marketing wood preservative in Hungary because the local authorities insisted that having a representative in the country was a requirement. SOLVIT told the Hungarian authorities that all that was needed was an office in the European Union, and the imports were allowed through.

**Solved within 2 days**

### Info

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