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Consumer satisfaction and network industries providing services of general economic interest

EC and EESC workshop on

**“Evaluating the performance of network industries
providing services of general economic interest”**

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Consumer Strategy, 2007-2013

Objectives

- Empower consumers
- Enhance consumer welfare
- Protect consumers effectively

Putting consumers at the heart of other EU policies and regulation

- SGI policy should go hand in hand with appropriate measures for consumers
- Universal Service should be safeguarded, where appropriate
- Empower and protect consumers

SGI Knowledge Base Projects

■ Eurobarometer on SGI

(electricity, gas, water, postal services, mobile telephony, fixed telephony, internet, urban transport, extra-urban transport, bank account)

■ Focus group on SGI

(postal services, mobile telephony, fixed telephony, internet, basic banking services)

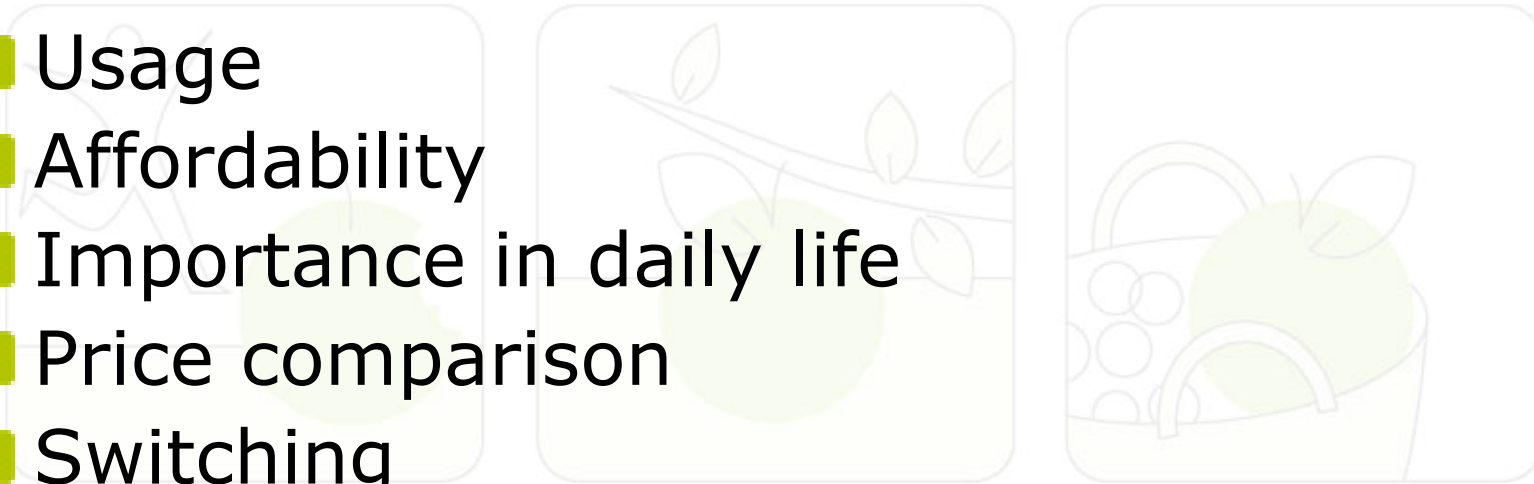
■ Consumer satisfaction study

(electricity, gas, water, postal services, mobile telephony, fixed telephony, urban transport, extra-urban transport, air transport, retail banking and insurance)

■ Facts and Figures publication

Issues examined

- Access
- Usage
- Affordability
- Importance in daily life
- Price comparison
- Switching
- Terms and conditions
- Complaints
- Overall consumer satisfaction



Key findings – Overall consumer satisfaction

- Most satisfied:
Mobile telephony, gas, electricity and postal services
- Least satisfied:
Urban and extra-urban transport
- Socio-economic analysis:
Most satisfied:
Consumers in higher age group, retired consumers satisfied
- Least satisfied: self-employed, students
- No clear distinction between old and new MS

Consumer satisfaction drivers

Main drivers:

- Price
- Quality
- Image

Consumers more satisfied with quality rather than price or image.

Yet, for most services, statistical analysis reveals that **pricing** tends to be the main element determining consumer satisfaction

Key findings –

Access, usage, affordability

- Access – Improvement in nearly all services
- Usage – SGI are becoming more and more important in consumers' daily lives. Indispensable for economic, social, regional cohesion
- Affordability –
Improved for most users
Problem for non-users (baseline varies)

Key findings – Comparing offers, switching, protection of consumer interest

- « Confusopoly » - Providers deliberately try to make it difficult for consumers
- Switching levels vary – Many consumers are not satisfied but do not switch
- Overall, consumers think that they are « well protected »

Results vary significantly between MS

Consumer markets taskforce

- Mission - Gather data and develop analysis in order to understand, monitor and take into account consumer interest in the Internal Market
- Consumer scoreboard –Regular publication of consumer data. Facilitate long term monitoring

References

■ Consumer Strategy, 2007-2013

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/overview/cons_policy/index_en.htm#strategy

■ Studies on consumers and SGI

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_int/serv_gen/cons_satisf/index_en.htm

■ Facts and Figures

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/topics/facts_en.htm