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# Consumer Protection Cooperation

## IMI User guide for entities sending external alerts

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## 1 Introduction

This document explains how to use the Internal Market Information system (IMI) to send and manage External Alerts pursuant to the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 (hereinafter “CPC Regulation”)<sup>1</sup>, including:

- Creating an external alert (Chapter 3.1)
- Sending the external alert (Chapter 3.2)
- Following-up on the external alert (updating, correcting) (Chapter 3.3)
- Withdrawing and closing the external alert (Chapter 3.4 and 3.5)

### IMI

IMI<sup>2</sup> is a secure, multilingual online information exchange tool. It was developed to facilitate the exchange of information between public administrations across the EU and the European Institutions and Bodies involved in the practical implementation of EU law.

### REGISTRATION OF YOUR ENTITY IN IMI

If your entity is not yet registered in IMI, please get in contact with the Single Liaison Office of a Member State that empowered you to issue an external alert pursuant to Article 27 of the CPC Regulation.

As regards EU level entities the empowerment is granted by the Commission.

## 2 Using IMI

### 2.1 Logging in to IMI

IMI is accessed via a standard Internet browser. To log into IMI, copy and paste the following link into your Internet browser, or click below:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/imi-net/>

When logging in for the first time, enter your username and the temporary password provided to you.

For users logging in for the first time, you will immediately be asked to change the temporary password to a new password of your choice. Once this is done, you will be asked to create and confirm a 12-character security code that will be used each time you log into IMI.

For subsequent logins, you will need to enter your username and password, and then provide three randomly selected digits from your security code as highlighted on screen.

Once logged in you will be redirected to the IMI home screen.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (Text with EEA relevance), *OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 1–26*; Articles 27(1) and (2)

<sup>2</sup> **IMI Website:** [https://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/index_en.htm)

## 2.2 The IMI Home Screen

When you successfully log into IMI, your IMI dashboard will be presented. A menu on the left side of the screen allows you to:

- Create new alerts
- Search for existing alerts issued by your entity
- Download reports of your alerts
- Change your password and security code
- Manage / view your entity 's details

## 2.3 Language Translations

You can fill in the required information in any of the official EU languages. The IMI system provides machine translation of free text fields into all official European languages. Recipients can either translate an individual free text field or they can use the **Translate all** button to translate all free text in an external alert into the language in which the screen is displayed. Translation of attached documents is not currently available.

## 3 External alerts

External alerts can be sent only by entities empowered by Member States, or by the Commission to issue external alerts.

Under Article 27 (1) of the CPC Regulation, Member States shall confer, unless justified otherwise, on **designated bodies, European Consumer Centres, consumer organisation and associations (and where applicable trader associations)** with the necessary expertise the power to issue an external alert to Member States and the Commission. Commission, following the procedure under Article 27 (2) of the CPC Regulation, shall confer this power on associations representing consumer and, where appropriate, trader interests at a Union level.

The CPC competent authorities are not in any case bound to initiate a procedure or take any action on the basis of and external alert they receive.



You have an obligation to keep the information provided correct, up to date and accurate.

You need to correct the notified information without delay, and you have a right to withdraw the external alert as appropriate.

To see how to register these entities, check the previous chapter.



The external alert will be automatically closed after a **6-month** period.

### 3.1 Creating an external alert

1. From the menu on the left side, click on "Alerts" ▶ "Create Alert".
2. You start the creation of the external alert in the **Alert Summary** tab.

Select the **Recipient Member States** from the drop down list. These countries will receive your external alert.



#### In IMI, all mandatory fields are marked by asterisks:

- Fields marked by **red asterisks (\*)** have to be completed before you can save your draft alert.
- Some fields are marked by **orange asterisks (\*)**. If you do not fill in these fields, you will still be able to save your draft and complete it later, but you will not be able to send it.

3. Now you can navigate between the following tabs of the external alert using the **Previous** and **Next** buttons in the top right hand corner of the page:

- **Legal Basis**
- **Trader details**
- **Information on the infringement**
- **Information on the legal measures**

For the details of the information that you have to provide in these tabs, refer to the *Annex – Required information about the infringement*.

4. When done with the content of the tabs, click **Create** in the top right hand corner of the page to create the external alert.



The external alert has not been sent yet! The status of the external alert is **Draft**.

- You can still erase this draft alert from the system by clicking **Delete draft alert** on the toolbar. No trace of it is kept in the system.
- You can still edit your draft by clicking **Edit**.

### 3.2 Sending the external alert

To send the external alert, click **Submit alert** on the toolbar.



**The system will warn you if you forgot to include mandatory information, highlighting the related tab in orange.**

To complete the external alert and be able to send it, click on **Edit** on the toolbar, provide the missing information, click **Save** and finally **Submit alert**.

### 3.3 Follow-up to an external alert



Recipient Member States are not legally bound to initiate a procedure or take any other action in response to an external alert sent with the above procedure.

They might nevertheless send comments on the external alerts (e.g. asking further information on providing feedback), which you will be able to see and react on in the comments tab.

After sending the external alert, you can check the **Management Information** tab. The **Management Information** tab is useful to keep track of the main data about your entry, including:

- **Entry number:** number to uniquely identify the entry in the system (e.g. 6335)
- **Status:** current status of the entry (e.g. Broadcast – Open for comments)
- **History:** list of the actions taken by a user on the entry, with time and date.

You can also provide updates about your alert, correct it, if necessary and exchange documents with the recipient Member States.

#### 3.3.1 How to update or correct the external alert

- **Provide Updates about trader details:** go to the Trader details tab and click **Add comment** in the related field.
- **Provide Updates about the infringement:** go to the Information on the infringement tab and click **Add comment** in the related field.
- **Add other general comments:** go to the Attachments and comments tab and click on the **Add comment** button.
- **To correct the information already sent, Add comment** in the related field.



Comments added are visible to all the recipient Member States.

#### 3.3.2 How to exchange documents with the Member States

1. Click on the **Attachments and comments** tab.
2. Consider if it contains **Personal Data** or not. Then, click **Upload File** on the corresponding section.
3. Fill the **Add attachment** panel with the following information:
  - **Name:** type the name of the document.
  - **File:** click **Browse** and select a document to upload.
  - **Comment:** free text field to provide additional info about the document. Providing comments is particularly useful if the content of the uploaded document is in a language that the receiver may not understand. We suggest you to provide an English summary of the attachment(s), if not in one of the EU working languages.
4. Click **Save**.

### 3.4 Withdrawing an external alert

You can withdraw the external alert, effectively closing it, if at any point, it is no longer required for whatever reason or if it was created by error.

The status of the external alert will change to Withdrawn, but it will not be deleted.

To do this, click **Withdraw** on the toolbar and provide the mandatory **Justification**.

### 3.5 Closing an external alert

The external alert will be automatically closed after a **6-month** period.

However, you can also close your external alert beforehand.

The status of the external alert will change to Closed, but it will not be deleted.

To close the external alert, click **Close alert** on the toolbar and provide the mandatory **Justification**.

### 3.6 Searching existing external alerts

The search functionality in IMI allows you to search for existing external alerts in IMI by specifying search criteria to filter your results.

There are two menu options for retrieving external alerts, 'Search all forms', and 'Search by form'.

You are **recommended** to use the '**Search by form**' menu option, which also offers wider search criteria.

For example, if you want to search for a previously sent external alert involving a specific EU legislation, from the menu select

"Alerts" ▶ "Search by form", then select the **Applicable EU legislation** and click on **Search** on the toolbar.

### 3.7 Reporting of external alerts

Your entity may wish to keep a record of the external alerts sent through IMI.

To this end, IMI enables users to generate, electronically save and print PDF reports about external alerts.

Reports can be generated at all stages of the external alert lifecycle, including when the external alert is in Draft status or after its closure, by clicking on the **Print** button on the toolbar.

The generated report can then be downloaded from the **My reports** section of the menu on the left.

### 3.8 Reusing an external alert

You can create a new draft external alert as an exact copy of the one at hand by clicking the **Reuse data** button on the toolbar.

You will be able to edit the content of this new draft before sending it.

## 4 Resources

### IMI WEBSITE:

[https://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net/](https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/)

### NATIONAL IMI COORDINATORS:

[https://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net/contact/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/contact/index_en.htm)

### IMI HELPDESK:

[GROW-IMI-CPC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:GROW-IMI-CPC@ec.europa.eu)

## Annex – Required information about the infringement

The following tables list the information you will need to provide about the infringement when creating the external alert.

### Legal Basis

**Applicable EU legislation:** check the box of the Directives or Regulations related to the infringement.

**Relevant articles in the selected EU legislation:** provide the references to the specific articles using the free text box.

**Details of national legal basis:** this information is mandatory if you selected any Directive as applicable EU legislation. In addition, you can also attach documents and provide a direct link to the national legal basis.

### Trader details

**Name of the trader:** this is the name of the company involved in the infringement. If this information is available, click **Known** and specify whether the name of the company includes personal data (such as when it includes the owner's name).

**Trader's presence on the Internet:** if available, select **Known** and provide all available information about apps, social media accounts and websites related to the trader.

**Details of the online interface:** you can add new items to this list by clicking on **Add**. Then, select the **Type of online interface** and fill the available fields (e.g. name, direct link, etc.).



Alerts shall only be sent if either the trader's name or its online interface is known.

**Details concerning the trader:** provide the names of the trader's representatives, if any, and specify if there is a **parent company** involved.

**Type of business / sector:** if **Known**, select the type of business / sector of the trader from the dropdown list.

**Identification:** if **Known**, you can provide the Tax / VAT number of the trader and any additional information useful for its identification, such as registration and bank account

numbers

**Establishment details:** if **Known**, provide all the available addresses of the trader. You also have to specify if, as far as you know, the trader also operates in other EEA countries.

**E-mail address and other contact details:** if **Available**, provide all the contact details of the trader, such as email addresses and phone numbers.

### Information on the infringement

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**Type and nature of the infringement:** provide a **Short summary** of the infringement / suspected infringement using the free text field.

In addition to that, you will have to specify **Nature**, **Status** and **Assumed type** of the infringement.

**Product/service and media involved:** provide the **Name of the product or service** involved in the infringement and select the **Advertising medium** and **Sales medium** used from the list.

In addition, here you can also provide complementary information about the impact of the infringement.

### Information on the legal measures

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**Legal proceedings:** if **Known**, you will have to provide information about the **Launch date** and **Status** of the legal proceedings in your Member State.

**Measures:** you can add new items in the list of Measures by clicking on **Add**.

Then, select the **Type of measure** and provide its **Implementation date**.

For each measure, you can also provide a description and additional information, including attachments.