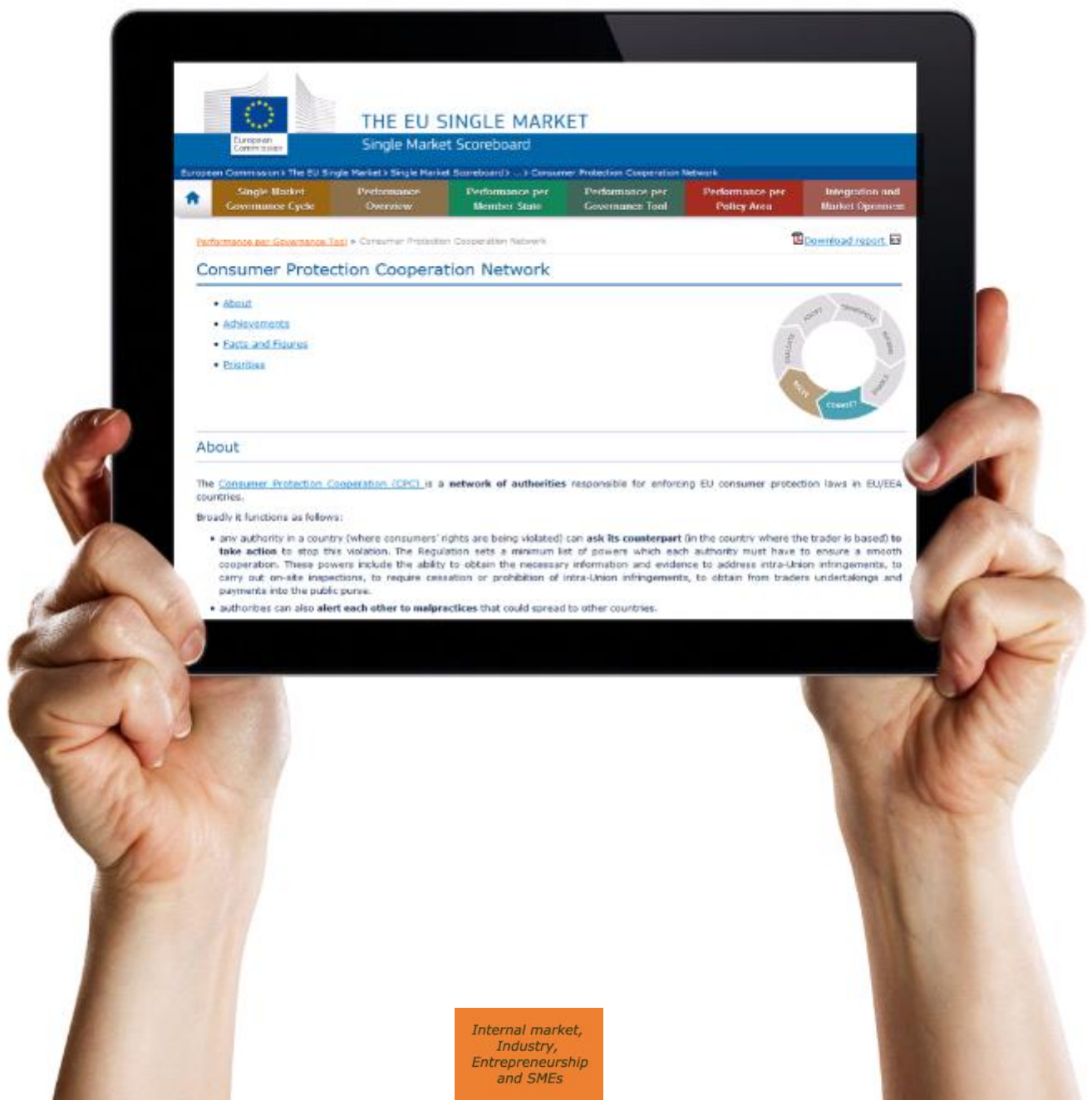


# Single Market Scoreboard

*Performance per governance tool*

## Consumer Protection Cooperation Network

*(Reporting period: 01/2016 - 12/2016)*



## About

The [Consumer Protection Cooperation \(CPC\)](#) is a **network of authorities** responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries.

Broadly, it functions as follows:

- Any authority in a country where consumers' rights are being violated can **ask its counterpart** in the country where the trader is based **to take action** to stop this breach of law. The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation sets a list of minimum powers which each authority must have to ensure a smooth cooperation. These include power to obtain the information and evidence needed to:
  - tackle infringements within the EU
  - conduct on-site inspections
  - require cessation or prohibition of infringements committed within the EU
  - obtain from traders undertakings and payments into the public purse.
- Authorities can also **alert each other to malpractices** that could spread to other countries.
- Authorities, with the Commission's support, can also **coordinate their approaches to applying consumer protection law so as to tackle widespread infringements**.

## Achievements

- The CPC network's **2015 sweep**, which focused on the quality of the information that is available to consumers online before making a purchase. This "pre-contractual information" is regulated by the Consumer Rights Directive. In total, the EU Member States' authorities checked 743 websites in what was the largest sweep conducted so far. The full spectrum of traders was checked across these websites, ranging from smaller players to big e-commerce platforms. 6% of the websites checked ceased to exist before the enforcement phase of the exercise started. Irregularities were confirmed in 436 cases (63%) as a result of this sweep. Since then, 353 out of 436 websites have been corrected. National administrative or legal proceedings continue for the 83 websites which are still not compliant.
- The CPC network's **2016 sweep** targeted online comparison tools. The consumer protection authorities checked in total 352 websites that compare offers and prices mainly in the travel sector. Out of all the websites checked:
  - 23,6% compared accommodation prices



### What is a "sweep"?

A "sweep" is a set of **checks** carried out **simultaneously** by **national enforcement authorities** to identify breaches of EU consumer law in a particular sector.

- In the enforcement phase, these authorities ask the traders concerned to take **corrective action**.
- The Commission coordinates the sweep action.

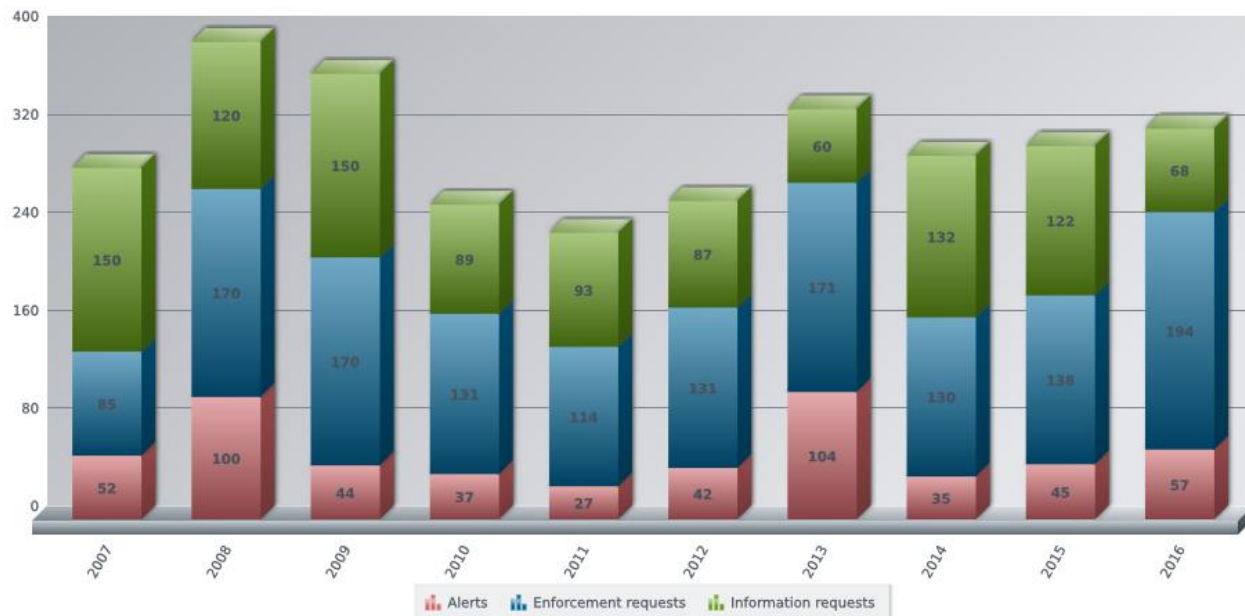
- 21,3% tickets prices (air, boat, train, bus)
- 5,1% car rental prices
- 44,6% offered a combined comparison of various products and services of the travel sector (tickets, accommodation, holiday packages, etc.).

The authorities identified irregularities in 235 websites (66,8% of the total swept websites) and will proceed with further investigations, in order to establish and correct those issues.

- The new **shared enforcement** approach, first applied to the in-app purchases initiative launched by the CPC and coordinated by the Commission in 2014, has also been used to resolve problems encountered by consumers when renting a car (2016). In 2017, the [focus is on social media operators](#) requesting them to modify terms that appear to infringe consumer law and create a mechanism for removing frauds and scams misleading consumers.
- An **E-enforcement academy** was set up to boost the CPC and product safety networks' ability to conduct online investigations. The first results are expected in 2017.
- The CPC projects have used the **CPC knowledge exchange platform**, an IT tool developed in 2014-2015, to support collaborative work and share results with the wider CPC network.
- On 25 May 2016 the Commission put forward a proposal for the [reform of the Consumer Protection Cooperation \(CPC\) Regulation](#)  . The reform addresses the need to better enforce EU consumer law, especially in the fast evolving digital sphere:
  - Enforcement authorities will get the powers they need to work together in a quicker and more efficient manner. Authorities will be able to request information from domain registrars and banks to detect the identity of the responsible trader, carry out mystery shopping to check geographical discrimination or after-sales conditions, and order the immediate take-down of websites that host scams.
  - The Commission will be able to launch and coordinate common actions by consumer protection authorities in the Member States to address EU-wide problematic practices. A one-stop-shop approach to consumer law is proposed where enforcement authorities will notify the businesses concerned of the issues, asking them to change their bad practices.
  - To detect market problems earlier, organisations with an interest in consumer protection such as consumer organisations and European Consumer Centers will be able to signal bad cross-borders practices to enforcers and to the European Commission.
  - Finally, the list of laws to which this modernised framework applies will be updated to ensure that all the relevant consumer protection rules are included, especially in the transport and retail financial services sectors.
  - The Commission's proposal is under discussion in the European Parliament and Council.

## Facts and Figures

**Number of CPCS cases 2007-2016**



### How the network works

Under the [CPC regulation](#), participating countries are obliged to provide **mutual assistance**.

They do this largely by **sharing 3 types of information via a database** (the CPC system) run by the Commission:

- **information requests** - an authority is asked for information to establish whether:
  - a trader registered on its territory has breached EU consumer law
  - there is reason to suspect that such a breach might take place.
- **requests for enforcement measures** - an authority is requested to do everything necessary, without delay, to halt or outlaw breaches.
- **alerts** - if an authority suspects or is warned about a breach then it informs the Commission and its counterparts in the other countries.

### Priorities

- Keep improving the network's **efficiency** and **effectiveness** - through meetings, workshops and coordinated enforcement actions.
- Build the capacity of the network to conduct online investigations, also via the e-enforcement academy project.

- **Conclude review of the CPC Regulation:** the legislative proposal is planned to be adopted by the Council and European Parliament in 2017.