



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

31 January 2020

Online shopping: Commission and Consumer Protection authorities urge traders to bring information policy in line with EU law

Today, the European Commission is publishing the results of an EU-wide screening ("sweep") of nearly 500 e-shops selling clothing and footwear, furniture and household items, and electric appliances. This sweep was carried out by consumer protection authorities of 27 countries under the coordination of the Commission. The findings reveal that two-thirds of the screened websites do not comply with basic EU consumer rights.

Didier **Reynders**, Commissioner for Justice, said: *"It is not acceptable that European consumers are not being properly informed of their rights relating to online deliveries in 2 out of 3 web shops. The EU right to return goods within 14 days boosted consumers' online trust, traders owe a lot to it. They should not bury it in small print."*

[EU Consumer Rights Directive](#) ensures that while making an online purchase every consumer has the right to receive clear, correct and comprehensible information about delivery arrangements, withdrawal rights and the legal guarantee in case the product is faulty.

Some of the key results of the screening include:

- More than a quarter of the flagged websites did not inform consumers about how to withdraw from a contract. This must be presented in a clear and understandable manner, specifying the right to withdraw within 14 days of receiving the good without the need to give a justification.
- Nearly half of the flagged websites were not clear about the time-limit to return the item within 14 days from the moment they have notified the trader of their intention to withdraw.
- In over one fifth of the flagged websites, the price initially shown was incomplete as it did not contain delivery, postal or other possible additional charges or information about the possibility of such charges.

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- Over a third of the flagged websites did not inform consumers about the minimum 2-year legal guarantee to have a good repaired, replaced or reimbursed in case it was faulty at the moment of delivery (even if this becomes evident later on).
- Even though EU law mandates traders to include an easily accessible link to the [Online Dispute Resolution platform](#) on their website, informing consumers on their possibilities in case of a dispute, nearly 45% of all the websites screened did not provide such a link.
- One fifth of the flagged websites did not respect the [Geo-blocking Regulation](#) which allows consumers to shop from websites not delivering in their country of residence, provided they can get it delivered to an address in the country served by the trader i.e. the “shop like a local principle”.

As next steps, the national authorities will carry out an in-depth investigation of the above-mentioned irregularities, and the traders will then be requested to correct their websites. Consumer protection authorities will ensure full compliance by traders by activating their national enforcement procedures where necessary.

Background

The [Consumer Protection Cooperation \(CPC\)](#) is a network of authorities responsible for enforcing EU consumer laws to protect consumers’ interests in all EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. To tackle cross-border issues, their actions is coordinated at EU level.

The [new CPC Regulation](#) applies since 17 January 2020 and brings stronger powers to consumer authorities and improves how the European Commission and Member State authorities can work together to stop bad practices against consumers.

[EU wide sweeps](#) are carried out annually by the network of consumer protection cooperation authorities on the basis of a common questionnaire prepared by the European Commission. The area of research is corresponding to the most common topics for consumer complaints. The objective is to cover as many web shops as possible so as to cover a large part of the market under scrutiny.

For More Information

[Sweeps - website checks](#)

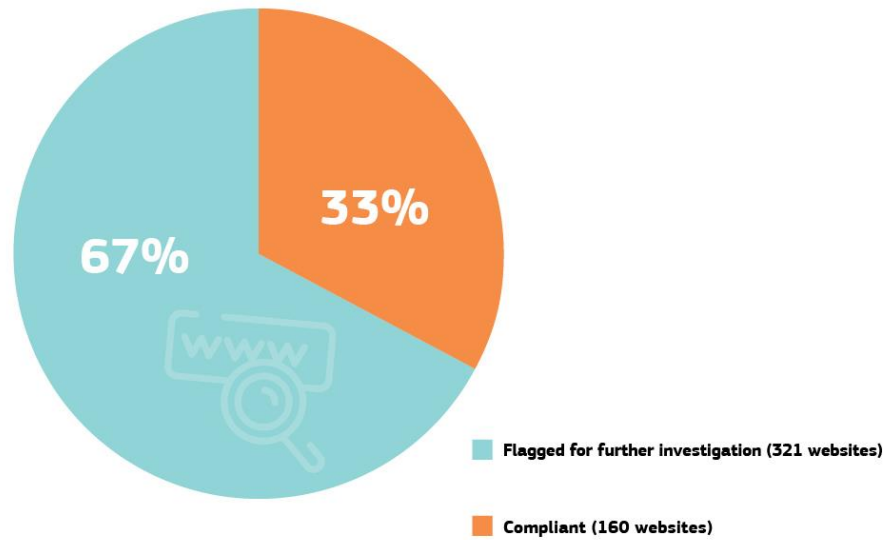
[Consumer protection Regulation - factsheet](#)

[Your consumer rights when shopping](#)

Annex

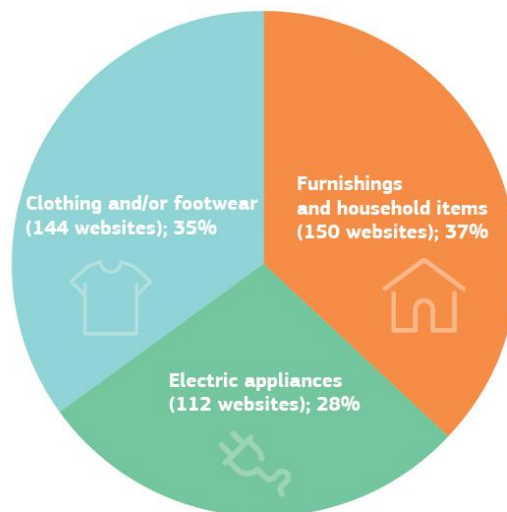
1. Irregularities were found in over 2/3 of the websites and further investigation is needed.

Websites flagged for further investigation



2. The flagged websites were spread out evenly across the categories of goods sold

Goods sold by websites flagged for further investigation



3. Many different elements were missing from the scanned websites

