



Shopping in the EU – how to make a complaint

European legislation protects you every time you shop in Ireland or in another EU Member State. Consumers can benefit from a larger selection of items and potentially cheaper prices offered by the European Single Market. But consumer problems that occur when you shop across borders are often more difficult to resolve than problems with local traders. Language differences and distance can make it difficult to complain effectively. The European Consumer Centre Ireland is there to support you if you have a problem with a supplier of goods or services in another EU country. ECC Ireland provides a free and confidential information and advice service on consumer rights in the EU. We are part of an EU-wide network of consumer centres and we offer assistance to consumers with disputes against traders based in other member states of the EU. We do this by trying to solve the dispute directly with the provider of goods or services, and if this fails, we can provide information on alternative means of pursuing your complaint.

If you have a problem with a trader in another EU country you should:

1. Contact the retailer or service provider (ie the trader) to seek a remedy.
2. If the trader cannot or will not help, put your complaint in writing:
 - Enclose a copy of the receipt and any other paperwork and give them a time limit in which to resolve the matter (e.g. fourteen days)
 - State clearly what the problem is and what you want to achieve. Be polite and realise your limits
 - Keep a copy of your letter of complaint and proof of its submission (e.g. postage receipt if you send it by registered post)
 - You can often find the preferred manner to file your complaint and the contact information in the trader's terms and conditions

WHAT TO DO NEXT

If the trader does not reply to your letters, refuses to do anything, or makes a final offer that you are unwilling to accept, you can contact the European Consumer Centre Ireland for further advice on your rights and information on out-of-court-settlement procedures throughout Europe.

You can send the details of your complaint to our office by post or by email at the address listed below:

European Consumer Centre
13a Upper O'Connell Street
Dublin 1
Email: consumeradvice@eccireland.ie

You can also find further information on our website at www.eccireland.ie where you can also submit queries or questions via our on-line form.