

COM0021/EISMEA/2021/29
Awareness raising campaign
on consumer rights
Questions for consumers

What is the campaign about?

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) is preparing to launch a digital campaign to raise awareness about recent changes in the field of consumer rights and to highlight the benefits these changes bring for consumers across the European Union (EU).

The changes include new rules for online shopping, particularly in relation to traders' obligations and consumer reviews, as well as the ranking of offers in search results, price reduction claims, withdrawal rights or cancellation rights for 'free' digital services, and remedies for victims of unfair commercial practices. The campaign will also raise awareness and further explain key topics that are covered by existing legislation, such as influencer marketing, dark patterns, gaming practices and environmental claims¹.

The digital campaign will target small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and consumers across the EU. Specifically, it will present to SMEs the changes the new legislation brings for the business sector and explain the actions they need to take in order to adapt to the new rules. This information campaign will run in April 2022. The campaign targeting consumers, which will run over the summer of 2022, will inform them about their rights and the benefits the new rules will bring to their online shopping experience.

A dedicated webpage will be created for each target group (SMEs and consumers) to ensure they have access to the information they need.

How you can help

For the design of the campaign, your feedback on your online shopping experiences is crucial! Therefore, we would like to invite you to participate in a 1-hour interview session to share with us your stories and experiences based on the questionnaire below. It mainly consists of open-ended questions, which aim to gather testimonials to inform the campaign.

At this stage, you do not need to answer the questionnaire below. You may use it to help you prepare for the interview. After the interview is conducted, we will share with you your testimonials for final validation together with a consent form, giving us the right to use them for the purposes outlined above. Your name and any other personal data will not be published. The testimonials will be anonymised and used as examples, published mainly on the campaign webpages.

However, for internal purposes, we would like you to provide us at this stage with the following information. This information will remain confidential and will be deleted after the termination of the campaigns. This information will also allow us to compile a representative sample of consumers from different backgrounds.

¹ Relevant legislation and documentation:

[Review of EU consumer law | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

[EUR-Lex - 52021XC1229\(05\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

[EUR-Lex - 52021XC1229\(04\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

[EUR-Lex - 52021XC1229\(06\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Demographics	
First name	
Last name	
Email	
Age	
Country of residence	
Highest educational qualification	
Profession	
Availability for interviews (please provide two alternative dates/timings)	

We thank you in advance for your participation. We look forward to meeting with you and discussing your online shopping experience.

Questionnaire

General Questions

1. Which are your main sources for receiving information about your rights as a consumer?

2. What do you consider helpful practices in online shopping? What could make your online shopping experience more pleasant? (You can select more than one answer)
 - a. Clearly presented information about the trader and the payment, shipment and return policies.
 - b. Visible criteria about search results and why a specific item appears first in the list of choices.
 - c. Consumer reviews that appear to have been authenticated (with information including but not limited to the reviewer's name, country of origin, time of purchase).
 - d. Clear break down of the price of a product or service (especially in the case of discounts).
 - e. Something else? Feel free to provide us with your personal experience and/or ideas on the issue.

Point for further discussion: Can you elaborate on why you chose this answer/these answers? Is there a particular experience that influenced your answer(s)?

3. What are the most common online shopping problems you face? (You can select more than one answer)
 - a. Followed by website cookies and algorithms around the web (your search for a product or service leads to personalised pricing or ads about it and similar products appearing everywhere).
 - b. Fake online reviews (by fake consumers and internet influencers who have been paid to endorse a product or service and are not transparent about it).
 - c. False claims regarding the item's benefits (unproven claims about products or services in terms of their environmental impact, claims about an apparent price reduction etc.).
 - d. Dark design patterns (difficulties to cancel a service, trick questions that leave you confused about what you are signing up to, pre-checked options, pressure through permanent count-down clocks etc.).
 - e. Something else? Feel free to provide us with your personal experience and ideas on the issue.

Point for further discussion: Can you further explain why you chose this answer/these answers? Is there a particular experience that influenced your answer(s)?

4. In your view, what are the main characteristics of a positive online shopping experience? Do you have a particular story when a trader actively protected your rights as a consumer?

Price reduction claims

5. Do you usually monitor the price of a product or service long before making a purchase, especially during sales? Have you ever encountered a situation where you noticed that the pre-sale prices had been altered? If so, how did you react?

Personalised pricing

6. Have you ever noticed the price for a product or service changed depending on the device or user account used when accessing the same webshop/online marketplace?

Unfair commercial practices

7. Have you ever been misled by marketing claims that are false or hide important information? If so, what was your immediate reaction?

Environmental claims

8. Can you always tell if claims regarding the environmental benefits of a product or service are true? Have you ever fallen victim to false claims regarding the environmental impact of a product or service? If so, please provide an example.

Transparency on online marketplaces

9. When shopping on an online marketplace, is it always visible/clear that the seller is a professional trader? Have you ever purchased an item or service from an individual seller posing or appearing as a business? If so, what implications did this have for your shopping experience?

Products / services ranking

10. What has been your experience regarding the ranking of offers on online marketplaces? Do you trust that the products or services appearing first in the search results are really the best in terms of your search criteria?

Consumer reviews

11. Do you usually trust the consumer reviews published on a trader's website or online platform? Has a very positive or extremely negative review ever swayed your decision to make a purchase?

Free digital services

12. Companies may provide free digital services in exchange of your personal data, which may be used for multiple purposes such as advertising. What is your overall experience with the terms and conditions of free online services? Have you ever wanted to sign up to something but hesitated because you were not sure how your personal data would be used? Did you ever have problems withdrawing from a free service?

Ads by influencers

13. Is it always clear to you when an influencer has been paid (or received free goods or other benefits) to endorse a product or service? Have you ever purchased a product or service which was promoted by an online influencer, but did not meet expectations created by the endorsement?

Dark design patterns

14. Have you ever encountered elements on websites that seem manipulative or misleading such as countdown timers that restart after refreshing the page, trick questions that leave you confused about what you are signing up for, and pre-checked options resulting in the purchase of extra services (such as insurance) or allowing your data to be used for advertising purposes. If so, provide an example.

Ads and paid content in games

15. How often do you play online games? Have you ever spotted ads in these games that are not specifically characterised as such? Are you willing to purchase a product or service based on advertising in games?

- Thank you -