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Sort Sort by date
Keyword "consumer behaviour"

34 result(s)

Creation date: 23-02-2020
EU policies – Delivering for citizens: Protecting European consumers

Publication type Briefing
Date 28-06-2019
Author Nikolina SAJN
Policy area Consumer Protection
Keyword single market | consumption expenditure | digital single market | consumer information | food safety | consumer behaviour | economic growth | energy efficiency | product safety | carriage of passengers | labelling | principle of legal certainty

Summary Consumer protection rules have been improving the rights of consumers in the European Union since the 1970s. While the level of protection is today considered to be among the highest in the world, consumers in the EU are still faced with a number of issues. According to the latest available data, in 2016 one in five consumers said that they had had a reason to complain in the last 12 months, a level which has remained largely unchanged since 2008. Since 2014, efforts have been made in a number of areas, including stronger cross-border cooperation between national authorities in charge of consumer protection and market surveillance. Notably, the Commission proposed a ‘new deal for consumers’ in April 2018, to enable representative legal actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers and to modernise EU consumer protection rules. Sector-specific efforts included: eliminating roaming charges across the EU in 2017; legislation aimed at facilitating consumer participation in the digital single market; reforms on the rules on privacy and data protection; enhancing the rights of energy consumers and passengers; and efforts to address the ‘dual quality’ of branded food products. The EU budget for consumer protection is relatively small, because although rules in this field are made at the EU level, their implementation and enforcement are carried out by the Member States. The consumer programme has a budget of €188 million for the 2013-2020 period, or roughly €0.05 per citizen per year. This may change in the new multiannual financial framework, as consumer protection becomes part of a wider single market programme, which is expected to create synergies between its various components. Future policies could focus on longer product lifetime, labelling and quality requirements for non-agricultural and industrial products, fairer food labelling and retail financial services. This is an update of an earlier briefing issued in advance of the 2019 European elections.

Briefing DE, EN, FR
Multimedia EN

Low-cost air carriers and tourism

Publication type At a Glance
Date 20-06-2017
Author Ariane DEBYSER
Policy area Transport | Tourism
Keyword transport economics | consumer behaviour | liberalisation of the market | transport market | low cost airline | carriage of passengers | common transport policy | traveller | transport statistics

Summary The liberalisation of air transport, which resulted in the creation of new routes and new business models for airlines, in particular the development of low-cost carriers, has led to lower fares and wider access to air transport. In many countries, air transport is a catalyst for tourism development. As low-cost carriers in the EU have experienced substantial growth, serving mostly short-haul destinations, they are increasingly looking into investing into the long-haul market for their future development.

At a Glance EN

Resource efficiency: Reducing food waste, improving food safety

Publication type At a Glance
Date 10-05-2017
Author Ivana KATSAROVA
Policy area Food Safety | Agriculture and Rural Development
Keyword aid to disadvantaged groups | VAT | fight against wastage | consumer behaviour | food waste | self-sufficiency in food | foodstuff | food consumption | tax exemption | waste management

Summary As part of its action plan on the circular economy, the EU is aiming to give substance to a more efficient use of resources by reducing food waste and increasing food security. The European Parliament is due to vote in May 2017 on an own-initiative report proposing measures to cut the 88 million tonnes of edible food wasted annually in the EU by half by 2030.

At a Glance ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, PL
Multimedia EN
How an EU Lifespan Guarantee Model Could Be Implemented Across the European Union

Publication type: Study
Date: 31-01-2017
External author: Dr. Klaus TONNER; Prof. Rosalind MALCOLM
Policy area: Environment | Public international law | Private international law and judicial cooperation in civil matters | Consumer Protection | EU Law: Legal System and Acts
Keyword: single market | guarantee | third country | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | EU Member State | durable goods | national implementing measure | principle of legal certainty
Summary: This study was commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee. It looks at the interrelation between the Consumer Sales and Guarantee Directive (CSD) and the Ecodesign Directive (EDD) with respect to guarantees and product expected lifetime. Through legal research and stakeholder surveys, it develops an EU lifespan guarantee model, which could be implemented by amendments to the proposal for an Online Sales Directive (OSD) and the EDD. It recommends extending the EDD to include the lifespan and extending the limitation period of the OSD. A commercial guarantee for the lifespan of a product is also suggested.

Insects – soon to be a regulated food?

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 17-06-2016
Author: Tarja LAANINEN
Policy area: Food Safety
Keyword: insect | food safety | consumer behaviour | food resources | foodstuffs legislation | market approval
Summary: There is increasing interest in the EU – as in other parts of the world – about how to make use of insect protein in animal feed and human food. While most EU Member States have forbidden the use of insects as human food, others have adopted a more flexible approach, allowing some products on their markets. Until now, EU legislation on insects for human food had had an uncertain stance, but the revised Regulation on novel foods will change this.

EYE 2016 – 360° strategy: Moving things around in a circle

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 28-04-2016
Author: Didier BOURGUIGNON
Policy area: Environment
Keyword: security of supply | consumer behaviour | EU action | sustainable development | product life | economic instrument for the environment | waste recycling | action programme
Summary: Unlike a traditional linear economy based on a 'take-make-consume-throw away' pattern, a circular economy is based on sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling in an almost closed loop. Moving towards a circular economy could deliver benefits but also poses challenges. In 2015, the European Commission presented a circular economy package seeking to enable a transition to this new model, in particular by updating EU waste policy. This note has been prepared for the European Youth Event, taking place in Strasbourg in May 2016. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format.


Publication type: Study
Date: 19-04-2016
Author: Anna ZYGIEREWICZ
Policy area: Environment | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Energy
Keyword: consumer behaviour | energy efficiency | EU Member State | application of EU law | energy consumption | public consultation | directive (EU) | energy saving
Summary: In its 'Energy 2020 strategy' in 2010, the European Commission stated 'Energy efficiency is the most cost effective way to reduce emissions, improve energy security and competitiveness, make energy consumption more affordable for consumers as well as create employment, including in export industries'. A year later, the Commission presented a proposal for a Directive on energy efficiency, which entered into force on 4 December 2012. A further three years later, the European Implementation Assessment was launched to accompany the ITRE Committee in its scrutiny of the implementation of the directive. Input was received from three independent groups of experts representing: CPMC SPRL, the University of Oxford and the University of Sussex, and Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei. The first research paper presents opinions of national stakeholders' at Member States' level, gathered during interviews and surveys. The second research paper presents the Member States' plans and achievements towards the implementation of obligation schemes under Article 7 of the Directive (Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes, EEOS). The third research paper presents the implementation of Article 7 of the Directive in the household and building sectors specifically. The introduction to this European Implementation Assessment presents the overall legal and political context of energy policy in the EU, as well as of the Energy Efficiency Directive and its implementation in particular. Key findings present main elements of the analysis provided by the external experts in the three research papers, which are included in full as annexes.
Bridging the digital divide in the EU

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 10-12-2015
Author: Maria Del Mar NEGREIRO ACHIAGA
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword: single market | Internet | transmission network | regulation of telecommunications | consumer behaviour | telecommunications policy | socially disadvantaged class | digital literacy | elderly person | digital divide | EU financing

Summary: Digital technologies play an important role in the everyday life of most Europeans: the internet allows people, businesses and governments to transform the ways they communicate and engage with one another. Yet some parts of the population are still excluded from using these new methods. Improving the EU fast broadband internet infrastructure is as important as upgrading the digital skills of citizens: 10% increase in broadband penetration may raise gross domestic product (GDP) by 1-1.5%, and by 2020, 90% of jobs will require some digital skills. The digital divide has been substantially reduced over the last decade in Europe, but the gap remains far from closed: according to the 2015 European Commission's Digital Agenda Scoreboard, two related targets have already been met (all EU households can access basic broadband and 75% of all Europeans are regular internet users). However, there is a danger that targets related to fast and ultra-fast speed broadband will be missed, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, important challenges on internet use remain, as about half of the less-educated and the elderly in the population do not use it regularly, and about 58 million EU citizens (aged 16-74 years old) have never used it at all. The digital divide also varies across Member States. The European Commission is working to improve the situation under the Digital Agenda for Europe and the Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy. Among the main EU support actions in place are proposals for legislation, different broadband funding mechanisms and support for multi-stakeholder partnerships and research projects to improve digital inclusion and assistive technologies.

Online consumer reviews: The case of misleading or fake reviews

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 27-10-2015
Author: Jana VALANT
Policy area: Consumer Protection
Keyword: ISO | single market | France | United Kingdom | Internet site | consumer protection | European Consumer Centres Network | drafting of EU law | business morals | virtual community | consumer survey | electronic commerce | BEUC | Germany | consumer behaviour

Summary: Online consumer review sites and platforms are tools that are widely used by consumers and are becoming embedded in both consumer behaviour and business models. A 2013 European Consumer Centres' Network web survey showed that 82% of respondents read consumer reviews before shopping. Tools for increasing consumer awareness and raising their trust in the market should not, however, mislead consumers with fake reviews, which, according to different estimates, represent between 1% and 16% of all 'consumer' reviews.

Directive 2005/29/EC, the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market defines misleading or aggressive commercial practices and prohibits, in particular, the practice of falsely representing oneself as a consumer. Misleading or fake reviews undermine consumers' confidence in the integrity of online reviews and lead to consumer detriment. A fake review can be defined as a positive, neutral or negative review that is not an actual consumer's honest and impartial opinion or that does not reflect a consumer's genuine experience of a product, service or business. Some European consumer organisations say review sites would benefit from being regulated, or to some extent standardised.

The problem of fake online reviews not only concerns individual consumers; it can lead to an erosion of consumer confidence in the online market, which can reduce competition. To deal with this issue, some guidelines have already been adopted by consumer enforcement bodies, regulators and other stakeholders, in the EU and internationally. Enforcement actions have also been taken. Fake online reviews should be taken seriously, as more and more consumers buy online, and the practice is becoming increasingly sophisticated.
The sharing economy and tourism: Tourist accommodation

Publication type Briefing
Date 25-09-2015
Author Maria Niestadt
Policy area Tourism
Keyword electronic commerce | freedom to provide services | economic consequence | consumer behaviour | impact of information technology | property leasing | restriction on competition | tourism policy | hotel industry
Summary Tourism services have traditionally been provided by businesses such as hotels, taxis or tour operators. Recently, a growing number of individuals are proposing to share temporarily with tourists what they own (for example their house or car) or what they do (for example meals or excursions). This type of sharing is referred to as the 'sharing economy'. It is not limited to tourism and can be found in many areas of social and economic activity, although tourism has been one of the sectors most impacted.

Sharing goods and services between individuals is nothing new in itself. However, the development of the internet and, as a consequence, the creation of online platforms has made sharing easier than ever. In the past decade, many companies managing such platforms have emerged on the market. A well-known example of a platform is one on which people can book accommodation (Airbnb).

The sharing economy has had a positive impact on tourism as well as a negative one. Its advocates think that it provides easy access to a wide range of services that are often of higher quality and more affordable than those provided by traditional business counterparts. Critics, on the other hand, claim that the sharing economy provides unfair competition, reduces job security, avoids taxes and poses a threat to safety, health and disability compliance standards.

The response to the sharing economy remains fragmented in the EU. Some activities have been regulated at local level. Neither the European Commission nor the Parliament have taken an official position so far, though a recent report from the Transport and Tourism Committee touches upon the issue. The Commission has announced that it plans to assess the role of platforms in order to see if any changes or new legislation is needed.

Tourism and the European Union: Recent trends and policy developments

Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 25-09-2015
Author Maria Niestadt
Policy area Tourism
Keyword travel | consumer protection | EU regional policy | economic statistics | admission of aliens | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic commerce | economic consequence | tourist exchange | consumer behaviour | tourism policy | common transport policy | EU competence | Treaty of Lisbon
Summary Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the European Union, making an important contribution to the EU economy and to job creation. Europe is the most visited region in the world. However, tourism in other regions is growing faster and Europe's market share, in terms of international tourist arrivals and receipts, is shrinking.

Tourism businesses in the EU are confronted with a number of changes in tourist profile and behaviour, for example in terms of age, country of origin, how they plan and buy their travel, or which mode of transport they use.

Tourism policy remains a competence of the Member States. As the Treaties allow the EU only to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, EU tourism policy has been rather limited, consisting mainly in providing financial support or legislating through other EU policies. The current framework for tourism policy is based upon a 2010 Communication; a revised strategy is expected to be adopted by the European Commission later in 2015.

Competition Policy: Delivering for Consumers, Proceedings of the Workshop

Publication type Study
Date 10-08-2015
External author Frédéric JENNY, Peter FREEMAN and Isabelle BUSCKE
Policy area Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues | Consumer Protection | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword electronic commerce | EU competition policy | economic concentration | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | restriction on competition | opinion poll | business morals | competition law | free competition | international competition | data protection
Summary Allowing consumers to have a fair share of the benefits resulting from effective competition is one of the targets of competition policy. Better quality and innovative products, more choice and lower prices are the most prominent practical results. However, distortion of competition by antitrust infringements or an inefficient enforcement of competition rules still causes consumer harm. This workshop aims to examine in which areas consumers actually benefit from competition and where there is still room for improvement. This workshop and the respective document were prepared by the Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON).
Study EN
Challenges for Competition Policy in a Digitalised Economy

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-07-2015

External author: Nicolai VAN GORP (Ecorys Netherlands) and Olga BATURA (University of Bremen)

Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues | Consumer Protection | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry

Keyword: communications systems | EU competition policy | merger control | protection of privacy | consumer protection | copyright | anti-trust legislation | electronic commerce | consumer behaviour | patent | innovation | data protection | digital technology

Summary: This study describes the challenges for competition policy in relation to the digital economy. It explores the specific characteristics of digital economy markets and how these characteristics impact competition policy. The study focuses on competition policy and its instruments such as anti-trust laws, merger regulation, State aid and sector regulation. Neighbouring policy fields such as copyright and data protection are outlined where important but not analysed in detail.

This study was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON).

Study DE, EN, FR

Reform of the European Small Claims Procedure

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 14-07-2015

Author: Rafał MAŃKO

Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council

Keyword: simplification of legislation | judicial cooperation in civil matters in the EU | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | commercial law | drafting of EU law | application of EU law | civil proceedings | legal expenses | civil procedure | claim

Summary: Second Edition - July 2015 On 23 June 2015, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on a compromise regarding the reform of the European Small Claims Procedure (ESCP). The compromise, which still requires to be formally adopted by the two co-legislators in the coming months, provides that the ceiling for claims will be raised from the current €2 000 to €5 000. In five years' time the Commission will be asked to look into the possibility of raising the ceiling even further. The court fees charged to claimants will have to be proportional to the value of the claim, but there will be no fixed cap on fees. Member States will have to accept electronic payments of court fees. The Commission's proposal to expand the scope of the ESCP to domestic cases with some cross-border implications was not taken on board. Although for the time being employment cases will not be subject to the ESCP, the Commission will be asked to look into the matter again in five years' time. The use of remote communications technology, like videoconferencing, will be increased and encouraged, although the Member States will not be under a legal duty to install such equipment.

This briefing updates an earlier edition of 20 May 2015, PE 557.014.

Briefing EN

Improving the financial literacy of European consumers

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 20-05-2015

Author: Jana VALANT

Policy area: Consumer Protection | Financial and Banking Issues | Education

Keyword: consumer information | public awareness campaign | consumer behaviour | credit | savings | business morals | financial services | financial instrument | adult education

Summary: The 2008 financial crisis highlighted consumers' low level of understanding of financial products, which they often deemed too complex. It therefore exposed the lack of financial literacy among consumers, financial literacy being a combination of awareness, knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour necessary to make sound financial decisions and achieve financial wellbeing.

Earlier this year, the Swiss National Bank decision to discontinue its currency ceiling, leading to the sudden leap in value of the Swiss franc (CHF) – with a direct impact on all CHF-denominated loans in the European Union – again revealed a persistent lack of financial literacy among certain consumers, as they were unable to predict this financial risk and consequently to fulfil their loan obligations. A 2012 Eurobarometer survey showed that many consumers do not receive advice when purchasing financial product or services and that 52% of them tend to opt for the first product they see when obtaining a current bank account or a credit card.

Major hurdles to financially sound behaviour appear to lie in individuals' psychological habits, culture, social and economic background. Levels of financial literacy can be improved directly through financial education, as well as indirectly by ensuring a good level of consumer protection in the financial sector and enabling consumers to make informed choices with appropriate advice, standardised information and comparison tools for financial products. Research shows that most people seem to learn through experience (or even more through adverse experience), but consumers also have a tendency to forget fast, making it necessary to repeat lessons in various forms.

Briefing EN
**Organic food**
- **Publication type**: At a Glance
- **Date**: 19-05-2015
- **Author**: Ivana KATSAROVA | Giulio SABBATI
- **Policy area**: Food Safety | Agriculture and Rural Development
- **Keyword**: food production | statistics | consumption | consumer behaviour | agricultural land | EU Member State | world production | agricultural trade | organic farming | organic product
- **Summary**: Organic production is an overall system of farm management and food production that aims at sustainable agriculture, high-quality products and the use of processes that do not harm the environment, human, plant or animal health and welfare. Globally, 43.1 million hectares of agricultural land was under organic production in 2013, six million more than the year before. With 10.2 million hectares, the European Union (EU) accounts for 24% of the world’s organic land. There are almost 2 million organic producers in the world, mostly in Asia (36%), Africa (29%) and Latin America (16%). The EU represents 13% of this total. The infographic first shows the production and consumption of organic food in the world. It then focuses on the EU figures for organic agricultural land, producers, sales and consumption. The last part describes the places where Europeans buy organic food and the reasons they choose to do so. Unless otherwise reported, data in this infographic are based on ‘The world of organic agriculture 2015’ - the largest global data collection on organics published by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in collaboration with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM - Organics International) and other partners. Data are collected and published annually.

**The Internet of Things: Opportunities and challenges**
- **Publication type**: Briefing
- **Date**: 19-05-2015
- **Author**: Ron DAVIES
- **Policy area**: Research Policy | Consumer Protection | Industry
- **Keyword**: Internet | telemedicine | waveband | consumer behaviour | impact of information technology | irrigated agriculture | data collection | research and development | personal data | market research | systems interconnection | home computing
- **Summary**: PDF Version The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to a distributed network connecting physical objects that are capable of sensing or acting on their environment and able to communicate with each other, other machines or computers. The data these devices report can be collected and analysed in order to reveal insights and suggest actions that will produce cost savings, increase efficiency or improve products and services. The IoT is growing rapidly, with an estimated 25 billion connected objects throughout the world by 2020, and added value from the IoT of US$1.9 trillion by the same year. The IoT can thus be a key contributor to achieving the EU’s Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. However the IoT also poses important challenges to society. Open standards and interoperability may need to be encouraged, in order to widen choices for consumers and ensure competition and innovation. Sufficient radio spectrum must be allocated for future needs. With so many interconnected devices, security is a major concern. A balance needs to be achieved between the rights of citizens to keep personal data private and protected, and to consent to its use in other contexts, and the significant benefits that can accrue to enterprises and society from the analysis of such rich data sources. The European Union is supporting the development of the IoT through funding for research as well as competitiveness and innovation. While EU institutions have taken a notable interest in the IoT, the balance between too much and too little regulation may need to be carefully managed if the full benefits of the IoT are to be realised.

**European film in the digital era**
- **Publication type**: At a Glance
- **Date**: 20-04-2015
- **Author**: Magdalena PASIKOWSKA-SCHNASS
- **Policy area**: Culture
- **Keyword**: electronic commerce | United States | consumer behaviour | impact of information technology | distributive trades | film industry | technological change | European audiovisual area | international competition | copyright | audiovisual piracy
- **Summary**: The fast pace of technological change is creating both challenges and opportunities for the film industry, notably in terms of distribution via new release channels (video on demand, downloading, streaming) and release windows (release chronology), and resulting changes in audience behaviour. New business models also raise questions over copyright for access to content.

**New Trends and Key Challenges in the Area of Consumer Protection**
- **Publication type**: In-Depth Analysis
- **Date**: 15-12-2014
- **Author**: Carine PIAGUET
- **Policy area**: Forward Planning | Consumer Protection
- **Keyword**: electronic commerce | unfair terms of contract | protection of privacy | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | impact of information technology | electronic money | data protection | financial services
- **Summary**: (This paper, prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee for Internal Market and Consumer Protection, presents the emerging trends having an impact on consumers and identifies the challenges associated to them in the area of consumer protection. It aims at guiding future reflection on policy actions.)
Reducing the use of lightweight plastic carrier bags

Publication type: At a Glance  
Date: 10-04-2014  
Author: Gregor ERBACH  
Policy area: Environment  
Keyword: EU law - national law | consumer behaviour | plastics | market approval | packaging product | environmental tax | prevention of pollution | waste management | proposal (EU) | Italy  
Summary: Europeans use about 100 billion plastic carrier bags every year. Some of these are dropped as litter, ending up in the environment, where long-lasting plastics accumulate and harm wildlife. Most EU Member States have initiatives to curb the use of plastic bags. A proposed EU Directive aims to encourage and enable action by all Member States to reduce the use of lightweight plastic carrier bags.

At a Glance

Fair trade and consumers in the European Union

Publication type: At a Glance  
Date: 25-03-2014  
Author: Ron DAVIES  
Policy area: International Trade | Economics and Monetary Issues  
Keyword: common commercial policy | public contract | social labelling | consumer information | consumer behaviour | farmers’ income | sustainable development | fair trade  
Summary: Fair trade seeks to promote sustainable development by providing a fair return to primary producers and workers in developing countries. Although fair trade goods may have difficulty competing with other products solely on the basis of price-quality ratio, many consumers consider ethical and environmental factors, particularly when purchasing commodity products like coffee. Support for fair trade products continues to increase in Europe.

At a Glance

Tackling food waste: The EU’s contribution to a global issue

Publication type: Briefing  
Date: 23-01-2014  
Author: Ivana KATSAROVA  
Policy area: Environment | Agriculture and Rural Development  
Keyword: aid to disadvantaged groups | economic consequence | fight against wastage | developing countries | consumer behaviour | foodstuff | food industry | food shortage | wastage | environmental impact | agri-foodstuffs  
Summary: In the EU, food waste has been estimated at some 89 million tonnes, or 180 kg per capita per year. Besides the economic costs, this has significant negative effects for the environment. The EU is taking steps to tackle this trend and aims to halve the disposal of edible food in the EU by 2020.

Briefing

The EU and tourism

Publication type: At a Glance  
Date: 13-12-2013  
Author: Ivana KATSAROVA | Giulio SABBATI  
Policy area: Tourism  
Keyword: holiday | consumer behaviour | cultural heritage | nature reserve | tourist region | tourism statistics | EU statistics | tourist profession  
Summary: Tourism is an important sector in the EU economy, providing an estimated 12-14 million jobs and accounting for over 5% of EU GDP. Collectively, EU Member States attract more tourists every year than any other part of the world. This InfoGraphic looks at the EU and tourism, providing in a graphical way various key data for the industry, including numbers of tourists, top EU destinations and breakdowns for the modes of transport and types of accommodation which are used.

At a Glance
Focus on: The Challenges of Connected TV
Publication type Briefing
Date 15-11-2013
Author Miklos Laszlo GYORFFI
Policy area Culture
Keyword programmes industry | economic concentration | Internet | technical standard | regulation of telecommunications | consumer behaviour | television equipment | telecommunications industry | competition law | systems interconnection | audiovisual communications policy
Summary Connected TV is an internet-enabled TV which for the first time connects linear and non-linear media services in one device. In connected TV the boundaries between online and TV disappear, giving rise to the question of whether the existing regulations are prepared for this. In fact, the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive regulating the linear signals is quite strict, but regulations drafted for non-linear services are not adapted to the present and future situation. The big question remains whether it makes sense to keep this division and how to develop legislation, and the AVMS Directive in particular for the challenges of the future.
Briefing EN

Payment Accounts: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment
Publication type Briefing
Date 15-10-2013
Author Claudio COLLOVA
Policy area Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword single market | consumer information | bank | consumer behaviour | publishing of prices | advertising malpractice | banking policy | bank charges | banking system
Summary This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying its proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features (COM (2013) 266 final), submitted by the Commission in May 2013. It analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission’s own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal.
Briefing DE, EN, FR

European small claims procedure: An opportunity for enhancing cross-border enforcement
Publication type Briefing
Date 03-10-2013
Author Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law
Keyword judicial cooperation in civil matters in the EU | translation | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | conflict of jurisdiction | application of EU law | trade dispute | legal expenses | appeal | civil procedure | Treaty of Amsterdam
Summary Legislatures in some EU Member States (MS) have introduced special, simplified and accelerated tracks for small claims in legally uncomplicated cases. Those procedures vary both as regards the threshold and level of simplification. The Treaty of Amsterdam gave the EU powers to harmonise civil procedure. As part of that mandate, the EU has adopted a number of coordination instruments (regulating conflicts of jurisdiction and mutual recognition) and created two autonomous EU civil procedures, including the European Small Claims Procedure (ESCP).
Briefing EN

Trademark law in the European Union: Current legal framework and proposals for reform
Publication type Briefing
Date 27-09-2013
Author Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area Research Policy | Intellectual Property Law | Education | Industry
Keyword brand name | consumer protection | approximation of laws | consumer behaviour | European Union Intellectual Property Office | comparative advertising | case law (EU) | EU trade mark | trademark law
Summary The legal framework for trademarks in the EU is based on the coexistence of national trademarks systems, harmonised by a Directive since 1988, and a unitary Community Trademark, introduced in 1994 by a Regulation. In March 2013 the Commission adopted a reform package for EU trademark law.
Briefing EN
Unfair contract terms in EU law: Unfair Terms Directive and Common European Sales Law

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 19-09-2013
Author: Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law
Keyword: unfair terms of contract | sale | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | harmonisation law | case law (EU) | consumer policy | selling price | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: Standard terms contracts are an inevitable part of everyday transactions for both businesses and consumers. Parties using such contracts may, however, rely on their advantageous position in order to impose unfair terms on the other contracting party. This has prompted national courts and legislatures to implement measures aimed at combating such terms. In order to bring about harmonisation of such measures in consumer contracts, the EU enacted the Unfair Terms Directive in 1993. The Commission's proposal for a Common European Sales Law (CESL) also addresses the issue of unfair terms, not only in consumer contracts, but also in transactions between businesses.

The notion of 'consumer' in EU law

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 06-05-2013
Author: Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection
Keyword: trade by product | business start-up | consumer protection | approximation of laws | consumer behaviour | liability | consumer policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | private international law | judgment of the Court (EU)
Summary: The notion of 'consumer' is a key concept de-limiting the application of consumer-protection rules. However, not only is there no consistent and uniform definition in EU law, there are also divergences amongst the Member States.

Indication of origin marking on products

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 06-05-2013
Author: Marcin SZCZEPANSKI
Policy area: International Trade | Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection
Keyword: World Trade Organisation | traceability | EU customs procedure | consumer information | consumer movement | consumer behaviour | NAFTA | labelling | designation of origin | certificate of origin
Summary: Non-food products imported into the EU currently require no labelling or marking of the country from which they originate. In January 2013, the European Commission made a new proposal to introduce obligatory indication of origin on non-food consumer products as part of the product safety and market surveillance package.

Proceedings of the Workshop on "Packaging of Unhealthy Products"

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-10-2012
Author: Paul Trott (Innovation Management at University of Portsmouth, UK and Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Technical University of Delft, NL), Constantine Vardavas (Centre of Global Tobacco Control at the Harvard School of Public Health, EL), Alberto Alemanno (HEC Paris, Georgetown University Law Centre, FR), Ruth Veale (BEUC, the European Consumer's Organisation), Eric Poudellet (European Commission, DG SANCO) and Danielle Hanekuyk (European Commission, DG ENTR)
Policy area: Consumer Protection | Public Health
Keyword: consumer information | consumer behaviour | dangerous substance | public health | disease prevention | labelling | packaging | tobacco
Summary: This report summarises the presentations and discussions at the Workshop on Packaging of Unhealthy Products, held at the European Parliament in Brussels, on Wednesday 19 September 2012. The aim of the workshop was to exchange views on the marketing power of packaging, its effects on consumers' behaviour, the role of packaging in health promotion and disease prevention as well as on the regulatory framework applicable to the packaging of unhealthy products. The workshop was hosted by MEP Glenis Willmott (S&D, UK) and MEP Alojz Peterle (EPP, SL), Co-chairs of the Health Working Group within the ENVI Committee.
Effect of Smart Metering on Electricity Prices

Publication type Study
Date 15-02-2012

External author M. Altmann, P. Schmidt, H. Landinger and J. Michalski (Ludwig-Bölkow-Systemtechnik - LBST) , A. Brenninikmeier, I. Buscke and P. Trucco (HINICIO) , J. Barquin

Policy area Energy | Consumer Protection
Keyword energy supply | energy demand | price of energy | protection of privacy | consumer behaviour | energy efficiency | meteorology | data collection | energy consumption | cost-benefit analysis

Summary Large-scale smart meter rollout is expected to take place in most of Europe by the year 2020. Thanks to bi-directional communication between consumer and producer, this technology allows a better monitoring of energy consumption and the introduction of flexible energy tariffs, which are better suited to fluctuating renewable energy production. However, a number of issues have also been raised in relation to smart meters; particularly in relation to data privacy and the risk of an increase in electricity prices due to high investment costs passed on to the consumer. It will be fundamental for policy makers to ensure that costs and benefits related to the rollout will accrue fairly to each stakeholder, while ensuring protection of the weaker members of society.

Study EN

Executive summary DE, FR

Study on consumer information on fuel economy and CO2 emissions of new passenger cars

Publication type Study
Date 17-05-2010

External author Mr Max Grünig (Ecologic), Mr Ian Skinner (IEEP), Ms Mary Ann Kong (BIO), Mr Benjamin Boteler (Ecologic). In addition for the case studies: Ms Megan Lewis (IEEP), Mr Wojciech Szymaslki (ISD), Ms Pirke Suoheimo (SYKE), Ms Alena Dodoková (IEP) and Mr Frans Oosterhuis (IVM)

Policy area Environment | Transport | Consumer Protection | EU Law: Legal System and Acts
Keyword consumer information | consumer behaviour | motor car | application of EU law | reduction of gas emissions | fuel | environmental indicator | marketing

Summary The European Union has set target values for CO2 emissions from new passenger cars and taken measures to ensure that information on the CO2 performance of new passenger cars is readily available for citizens. This study examines the implementation of Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and CO2 emissions with respect to the marketing of new passenger cars; and assesses potential amendments to the legislation, taking into consideration research results in the field of consumer behaviour.

Study EN

The Effect of Advertising and Marketing Practices on Child Obesity

Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 07-02-2008

External author Davide Barnabè (Agri2000, CO.META, Milano, Italy)

Policy area Culture | Consumer Protection | Public Health
Keyword advertising | consumer behaviour | child protection | food consumption | public health | nutritional disease

Summary Childhood obesity and overweight children are serious and widespread problems in developed countries and in particular in the European Union. Many factors influence the diffusion of this epidemic: food advertising is certainly a significant factor. This study, based on existing data and expertise, assesses several aspects: the problem's dimension, to what extent the exposure to advertising and marketing influences children diet behaviour; existing regulations in food and beverages marketing towards children and the impact of production and distribution on children's obesity. This paper is committed to presenting a balanced picture of the variety of views supported by professionals in this field. Several studies indicate that food advertising is associated with preferences among children towards advertised products. According to one of the most important researchers (Lobstein and Dibb, 2005), there is a significant positive correlation between overweight prevalence and the promotion of energy dense foods, and a negative, but weaker correlation with the promotion of healthier foods. This correlation between advertising and overweight is associative: causal evidence remains to be found; in fact the correlation may be due to other factors such as environmental or social factors encouraging children to become overweight. This brings to the reasonable conclusion that even if there is not yet a clear evidence of this correlation, policy recommendations should be based on the precautionary principle. Most European countries have specific provisions on advertising as a special protection for children and youth. However, the situation varies from country to country as presented in this study. The most widespread regulations are those regarding television, but in most countries the general rules established by law and by the advertising self-regulation code also apply to internet. On children's exposure to advertising, available data for France, UK, Italy, Germany and