

ECC NET EXTERNAL EVALUATION



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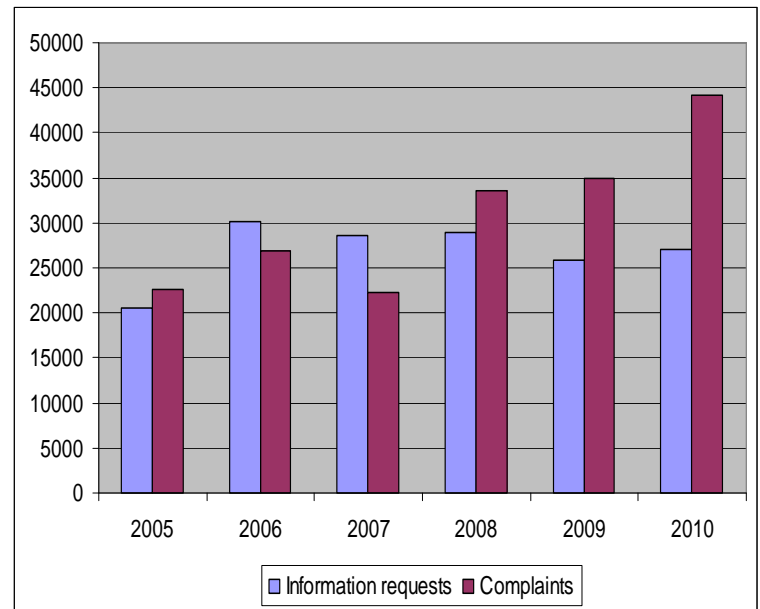


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1. The European Consumer Centres Network – Main facts and figures

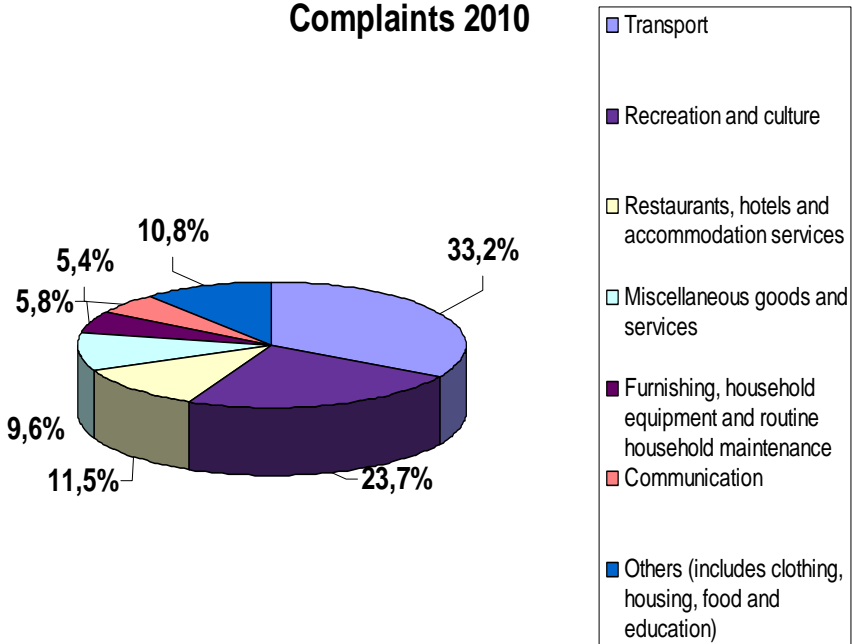
- A unique, Pan-European network
- To inform / support consumers in their cross-border activities
- 1 centre in each country
- 71,000 contacts with the consumers in 2010
- 340.000 + since 2005
- €8.6 M/ year budget



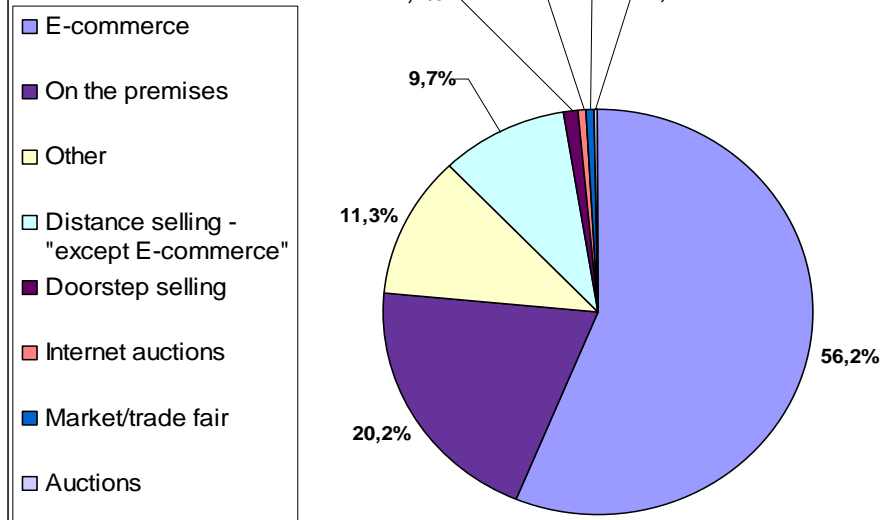
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Complaints 2010



Selling Method



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2. The external evaluation

The aim of the External evaluation was to:

- **Assess** the operation of the network
- Provide **recommendations** for development of the network

The evaluation assessed the relevance, impact, effectiveness, cost efficiency, visibility, added value, functioning of the network as a whole, coherence and synergies with other networks, feedback for policy-making, visibility and awareness

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3. Process of the evaluation

- **Call for tender** – Dec 2009
- **Method:** Desk research; interviews with EC officials; survey among users of the network; survey among all ECCs; mystery shopping; case studies- study of real cases in 10 countries, interviews with ECCs, ADRs, NEBs, NGOs, CPC authorities, CPN, other EU networks
- **Steering committee:** 4 meetings
Composition: CFPCommittee (5); Europe Direct (1); EAHC (1); COM – Non SANCO (3); SANCO (4)
- **Submission of final report:** 15 February 2011
- **Acceptance of final report** by Steering committee: 10 March 2011

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4. The questions

- Relevance and impact :
 - does the network meet the real needs of the consumers?
 - should other objectives be added to meet the needs of the consumers?
 - does the network contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the EU consumer policy?
 - what is its impact at EU and national levels?

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5. The questions

- Effectiveness and coherence:
 - Visibility
 - Cooperation with other stakeholders for promotion
 - Consumer satisfaction with service
 - Resources / objectives?
 - Quality of internal communication and with ADRs
 - Cooperation to establish new ADRs
 - Cooperation with enforcement bodies
 - Value and role of joint projects
 - ECCs participation in consultations on consumer policy issues
 - Efficiency of ECCs contribution to policy-making

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5. The questions

- Cost/efficiency:
 - Optimal level of objectives / financial and human resources
 - Are financial resources in line with the objectives?
 - Are ECCs adequately resourced?
- Recommendations for improvement:
 - Further potential?
 - Focus?
 - Lack of a legal basis
 - Rationalisation of activities (e.g. policy-making, Promotion)

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6. Main findings – Strengths I

- **Positive Cost / benefit ratio** – For every euro invested in the network €1,77 worth of complaints are settled
- **Significant non-quantifiable activities** like increasing confidence in cross border shopping
- EU cross border consumer detriment €500m - €1B / year
- Consumers claims handled in 2010 - €14 M (**2-3 % !!!**)
- Volume **increase** by 25% in 5 years.
- **Value for business** - level playing field.
- **87%** of the respondents to the user survey consider the service **useful**

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7. Main findings –Weaknesses I

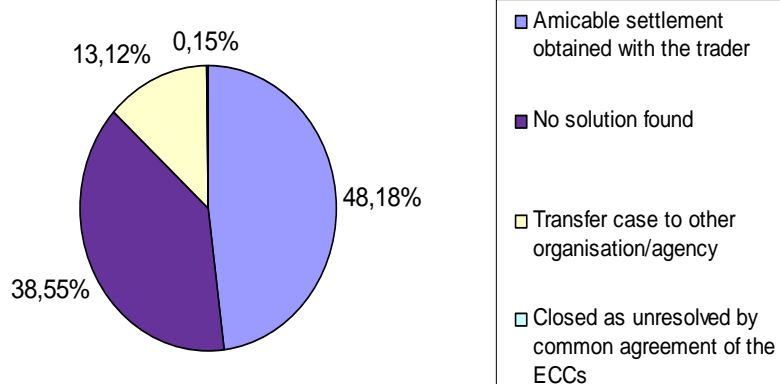
- **Only 15% of European citizens and 20% of the cross border shoppers have heard of the ECCs.**
- **Funding uncertainty** (annual contracts/budget)
- **Financial constraints** (no reserves for additional promotional activity or an increased volume)
- **Access to redress** determined by the willingness of traders

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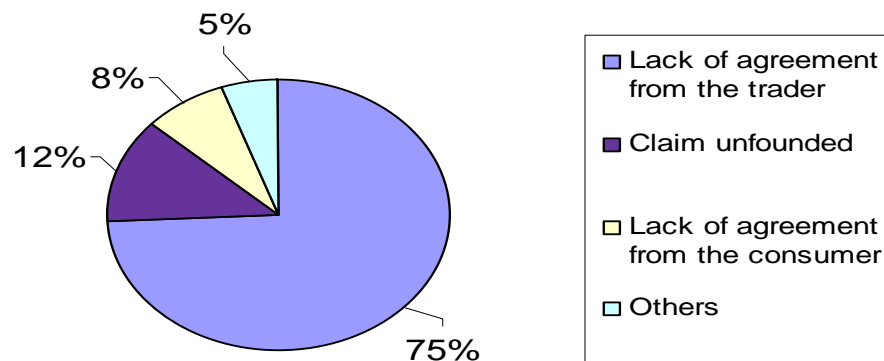


39% of cases were closed without solution mainly due to
« lack of agreement from the trader » in 2009

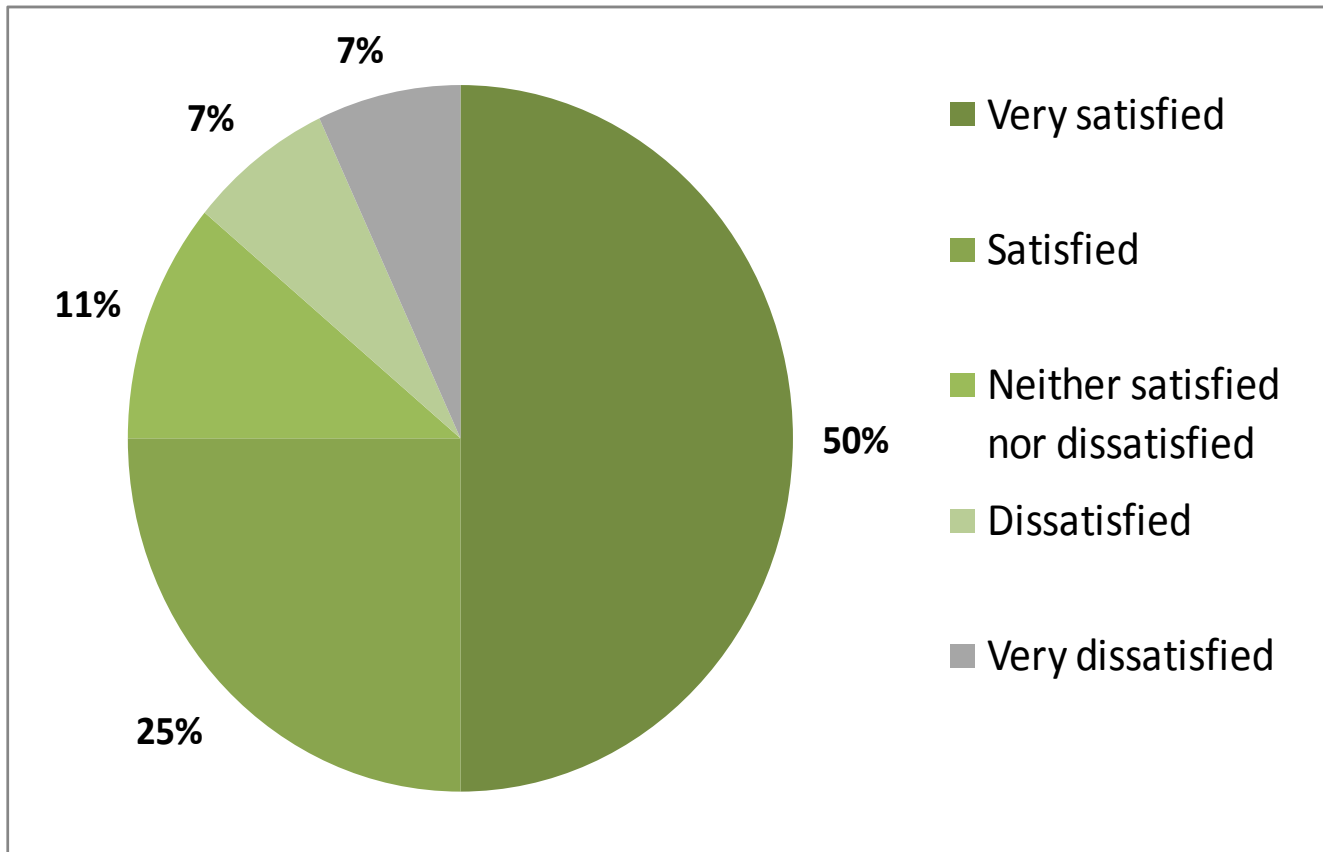
Case closure



No solution found - Why



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The length of handling time is the main reason for non - satisfaction

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8. Recommendations I

Promotion and visibility

- Promotional activities should be targeted, preventive (such as scams awareness and myth busters) and educational.
- Need to coordinate promotional activities with European and national stakeholders.

Financial and contractual issues

- Four year Framework Partnership Agreement with the host organisation to increase stability and continuity
- Need for measurable performance benchmarks and performance based incentives

Role of the ECCs

- Improve cooperation with enforcement bodies

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8. Recommendations II

Case handling

- Need for further standardisation across the network
- To manage consumer expectations by informing them about the role and competences of the network
- Need for further IT-tool development
- Introduction of a standardised feedback questionnaire.
- To clarify roles with ADR schemes, NEBs and other networks

Policy-making

- Better marketing of the achievements
- Better cooperation with CPN, CPC, ADRs, etc.

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8. Recommendations III

Visibility

- Increase the **network** aspect - a common mosaïque name? (like SOLVIT, RAPEX, ...) , similarly structured websites?
- Annual **promotional planning** as part of the annual work programme (pooling of funds, audience, impact, actions)
- Cooperation with **businesses multipliers** (airport, sea ports, train and bus stations, travel agencies, car rental industry)
- Build a consumers' email address **database** for promotional purposes
- **Cooperate** with **key business sectors** to create codes of conduct/guidelines with industry + make them use a message « Not satisfied? Contact your national ECC »

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9. Recommendations to rationalise I

ADR

- To make ADR development optional
- To conduct price comparison activities and to make it available for policy makers and consumers

Assessing the value

- To assess reasonably the societal benefits of the ECC actions (e.g. changes in trader's behaviour, the deterrence effect of ECCs' action on other traders and potential impact on consumer confidence etc.)

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10. On-going actions - I

Visibility – June 2011: A pilot campaign

- Promotion of the network through display advertising and search engine advertising in 12 countries (IRL, FR, DE, AT, DK, SE, PL, RO, CS, LU, BE, IT)
- Revamping of the central pages of the ECC-Net on EUROPA so that it guides consumers to national centres
- Input for improvement of the online advice on national sites

Enhanced cooperation between the ECC-Net and CPC-network

- An ECC / CPC expert group is considering the different options and identifying potential areas for cooperation.

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11. Ongoing actions - II

Case handling protocol

- Updating is underway. A new version before Summer.

Collaboration with the industry

- **Leaseurope**, long term cooperation – guidelines / sectoral ADR // change in business practices

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12. Timetable

- **Consultation with stakeholders (ECC, CPN, EP) - Ongoing**
- **Review of network objectives by COM – End of Summer**
- **Finalisation - (in a CPN meeting Q4)**
 - **Adoption of a revised Vademecum**
 - **Adoption of the new network objectives / priorities**

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Thank You!