

# ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE CZECH REPUBLIC 2015

## ECC

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE PROVIDES FREE-OF-CHARGE INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS WHEN SHOPPING IN OTHER EU COUNTRIES, NORWAY, AND ICELAND. IT HELPS RESOLVE THEIR DISPUTES WITH TRADERS FROM THESE COUNTRIES. CZECH ECC IS FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE CZECH TRADE INSPECTION AUTHORITY AS THE HOSTING ORGANISATION. ECC DOES NOT SOLVE DISPUTES OF CZECH CONSUMERS WITH CZECH TRADERS.

information

## ECC-NET

WHEN RESOLVING CROSS-BORDER DISPUTES, LAWYERS OF ECC CZ COOPERATE WITH COLLEAGUES FROM EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRES NETWORK (ECC-NET) THAT OPERATES IN EU MEMBER STATES, NORWAY AND ICELAND.

advice

## HIGHER NUMBER OF CASES

In 2015, the European Consumer Centres Network celebrated 10 years of its activities. Its Czech office organized an anniversary press conference together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT) and the Czech Trade Inspection Authority (CTIA), the hosting organization of the ECC.

After two years of stagnation the number of consumer contacts increased by almost 10% from 926 to 1113. The figure was about 400 in 2008 which was the last year before the ECC moved from the MIT to the CTIA.

The increase was significant especially concerning the number of cases in which the ECC provided direct assistance or advice to consumers in particular cross-border disputes against traders from other EU countries, Norway and Iceland. It was the first time that the number of such cases exceeded 600. The rest of the contacts concerned information requests from consumers.

Complaints most frequently related to e-commerce, air transport, accommodation services, car purchases and car rental.

With its foreign partners from the ECC-Net the ECC carried out a number of activities in order to increase general knowledge concerning consumers' rights in the European market.

These activities included an update of the mobile application ECC-Net: Travel which contains not only consumer rights in specific situations, but also phrases in 25 European languages. The centre also had its stands at travel trade fairs in Prague, Brno and Jablonec n. N. and carried out an information campaign on international buses. The Representation of the Commission invited the centre to its stand at the festival Colours of Ostrava.

The ECC re-released its brochures on consumer rights within cross-border purchases. Its employees gave lectures to university and high school students as well as the general and expert public. They also talked to the media about up-to-date subjects.

- ECC MOST FREQUENTLY HELPED RESOLVE PROBLEMS OF CZECH CONSUMERS WITH VENDORS FROM GERMANY, LUXEMBOURG, GREAT BRITAIN, POLAND AND SLOVAKIA.
- COMPLAINTS OF FOREIGN CONSUMERS AGAINST CZECH TRADERS CAME MOST FREQUENTLY FROM SLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA AND POLAND.

legal assistance

## SUCCESSFUL CASES

- A stone from another car's wheel broke the front window of a car rented by a Czech consumer in Iceland. The other car was luckily driven by another Czech consumer who by chance stayed at the same camping site, so it was possible to fill in a damage report easily and contact the car rental company immediately. The company withdrew €572 from the consumer's card stating that the front window wasn't covered by the insurance. After having complained, the consumer was advised to turn to the company's headquarters. However, the headquarters claimed that documents from the consumer weren't repeatedly delivered and stopped communicating. The ECC-Net resolved the problem within a month. The whole withdrawn amount was reimbursed.
- A Polish trader sent wrong bolsters together with a purchased sofa set to a Czech consumer. Based on a consumer's complaint the vendor personally delivered new bolsters to the consumer's home, but the bolsters were the same wrong type as before and didn't fit with the sofa. The trader took all bolsters away and never delivered bolsters that would fit. After the European Consumer Centres Network intervened, the trader reimbursed €149 paid for the unsuitable parts of the sofa set.
- Legal expertise of the German ECC helped reduce a cancellation fee by €170 in a case of a Czech consumer who cancelled a package holiday. The German tour operator asked for a 40% cancellation fee which was paid by the consumer who however asked for a free cancellation, thinking that there was still enough time to sell the product to somebody else. The European Consumer Centres Network managed to make the vendor comply with the German legislation which stipulates that the maximum of 20% can be required as a cancellation fee when a package holiday is cancelled more than 30 days before its start. The consumer got back the €170.



Take a look at the celebrations in ECC Italy. Its Bolzano office surprised journalists at the annual conference. A special cake was prepared with the motive of the 10th anniversary of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net). The Czech centre also organized its annual press conference.



In 2015, Věra Jourová visited the office of the European Consumer Centre Czech Republic as the first European Commissioner ever. The picture was taken during a warm welcome by Mojmir Bezečný, the Director General of the Czech Trade Inspection Authority.

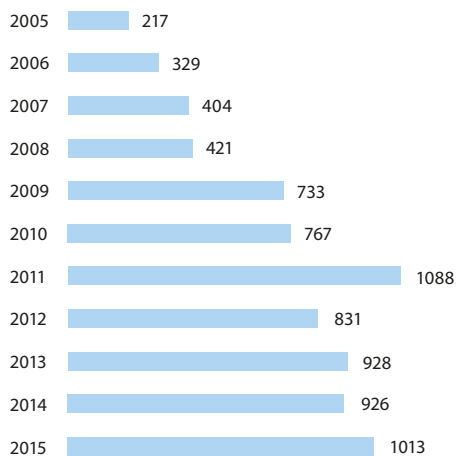


Students of the Secondary School of Information Science and Services in Dvůr Králové set a European record in the number of downloads of the mobile app for travelling in Europe "ECC-Net: Travel" at once. 32 students installed on their mobile devices information about consumer rights for various types of transport, accommodation services, purchase of goods in the EU and so on. The record was beaten by German students with 34 downloads of the app which also provides phrases for complaining in 25 languages.



Cooperation with other institutions is a part of the activities of European consumer centres. Besides consumer organisations, state administration bodies are involved, including the Czech Trade Inspection Authority which is the hosting organization of the ECC and whose employees also contribute to the resolution of cross-border consumer disputes. The picture was taken during a meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

## ECC Czech Republic: Development of consumer contacts



One of the tasks of the European Consumer Centre is provision of information to consumers about their rights in the internal market. Besides media performances, lectures for students and both the general and expert public, the centre targets visitors of travel trade fairs in Prague (Holiday World – information stand in the picture), Brno (GO) and Jablonec nad Nisou (Euroregion Tour).

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Help and advice for consumers in Europe

