



your update

Information and support for consumers shopping across the EU

Welcome to the February 2013 issue of Your Update - brought to you by the UK European Consumer Centre. The aim of the newsletter is to give you a flavour of how the UK ECC helps consumers, show examples of cases we have been working on and, more importantly, provide you with the best advice on cross-border shopping. I hope you find this newsletter useful and interesting and look forward to receiving more editions in 2013.

Andy Allen, UK European Consumer Centre Director

Don't let love blind you - caution urged for consumers: check what you're signing up to

UK consumers wanting to find love as they look back wistfully at Valentine's Day on their own are being urged to understand exactly what they are signing up to on dating websites.



Complaints about such websites are becoming more frequent says consumer advice organisation UK European Consumer Centre (UK ECC).

In 2012 the UK ECC received 55 complaints and enquiries about dating websites. UK consumers were in dispute with EU traders based in a variety of countries over their quest to find love online.

Andy Allen, UK European Consumer Centre (UK ECC) Director, said: "Complaints span a variety of issues, but are often made by consumers who have entered into contracts, sometimes on a trial basis, but have been unable to cancel and in some cases are being pursued for payment by a debt collector."

See our **UK ECC Staff top tips** at the bottom of this newsletter for general advice to UK consumers considering signing up to a dating website. [More here](#)

Have you seen?



...that the European Court of Justice has ruled that air passengers who suffer delays more than a day after a strike must be compensated by their airlines. The court ruled on the case

of a man from Finland whose Finnair flight was delayed two days after a strike at Barcelona airport.

The airline had argued that the strike delay was an extraordinary circumstance and that compensation was not due. The court disagreed and said that strikes were not extraordinary enough.

European rules say that airlines must pay compensation to their passengers if they have been 'denied boarding' on flights within the EU of more than 1,500 km.

Only if the delay takes place on the day of the strike itself can a strike be deemed to be a good enough reason for stopping someone from boarding a booked flight, with no compensation, the court ruled.

More details can be found here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19831181>

Case study:



Mr H entered into a contract with a German company to buy some crockery and arranged to have it delivered to an address in Germany because he was living there temporarily. Unfortunately the goods were not delivered to the consumer within the 30 day deadline set by the Distance Selling Regulations.

The consumer attempted to resolve his complaint directly with the trader but was unable to obtain a satisfactory response. The trader claimed he was unable to locate the address and deliver the goods. He offered to refund the cost of the memorabilia, but refused to refund the cost of delivery. After contacting us at the UK ECC we transferred Mr H's case to our counterpart office in Germany and Mr H is now in receipt of a full reimbursement of his 45.5 EUR.

Did you know?



The UK European Consumer Centre has a new website - www.ukecc.net – which went live at the end of 2012. It will continue to be developed with new sections throughout 2013.

The new website was developed to conform to common harmonisation guidelines designed to enhance the image of the ECC-Net network's 29 centres. The overall objective of revising the websites was to improve their visibility and quality throughout the network – every EU country plus Norway and Iceland. ECC-Net is a Europe-wide network of all European Consumer Centres, who cooperate closely to help settle complaints between consumers and traders based in different EU countries.

Andy Allen, UK ECC Director, said: "The UK ECC website was five years old and was looking rather tired and dated in its design. Although the content was regularly updated, the volume of subject matter had snowballed and was a little unwieldy. Each ECC had a website which was very different in design from each other. Therefore there was no unified vision of the ECC-Net and how its centres cooperate to get the best for EU consumers.

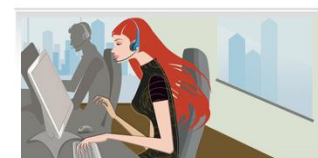
"By introducing a similar design across countries (with the added benefit of localisation and customisation), there is now a much better feeling of unity through the visual image and website content that the network projects. Consistency has brought us all together for the benefit of consumers."

UK ECC staff top tip:

Contact us:

Our general advice to UK consumers signing up to dating websites include:

- Thoroughly check the dating website's terms and conditions, which may include consumers' obligations, before you sign up. This should contain any cancellation period. In some cases, these terms and conditions can be quite long and appear complicated, but it is important that consumers understand what they are agreeing to.
- Consumers using a dating website would find that they no longer have the seven working day cooling-off period protection which the Distance Selling Directive provides if the service starts immediately (and this is explained in advance in writing in the terms and conditions). [More tips here](#)



[UK ECC contact details](#)

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This UK ECC Newsletter arises from the project "European Consumer Centres' Network – ECC-Net" which has received funding from the European Union. This is in the framework of the Programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy 2007-13.

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Delivered by the **Trading Standards Institute.**

Funded by the **European Commission** and the **Department for Business, Innovation & Skills**