



your update

UK European Consumer Centre

Information and support for consumers shopping across the EU

Welcome to the first issue of Your Update in 2016, brought to you by the UK European Consumer Centre. The aim is for this newsletter to give you a flavour of what the UK ECC does to help consumers, show examples of cases we have worked on and give you useful tips and advice to make the most of your cross-border shopping. I hope you find this newsletter useful and look forward to more editions in 2016. If you wish to subscribe to the UK ECC Newsletter - Your Update - please register for your copy of YOUR UPDATE from the home page of www.ukecc.net

For free legal advice, call the UK ECC on 01268 886690 weekdays between 9am and 5pm.

Andy Allen, UK European Consumer Centre Director

Hiring a car in the EU? Know before you go

Will you be hiring a car in the EU this summer? You would be well advised to heed the UK ECC's advice in its 'know before you go' car hire campaign.



As complaints to the UK European Consumer Centre about car hire in the EU have continued to rise over the past year, the UK ECC is promoting a campaign aimed at equipping UK consumers with the tools to be well-prepared when hiring a vehicle elsewhere in the EU.

Car hire complaints went up in 2015 by almost 7% over the previous year. This compared to an overall rise of 2% of complaints by UK consumers to the UK ECC.

The European Commission and national consumer protection authorities (led by the UK's Competition and Markets Authority) recently worked with the top five car rental companies operating in the EU - Avis-Budget, Enterprise, Europcar, Hertz and Sixt - to improve car rental practices. Read more about the car hire company [pledges](#).

Andy Allen, UK ECC director, said: "On a positive note, we hope that the European Commission's work with the top five car rental companies to review their practices towards consumers will start to pay dividends as 2016 progresses.

"In a bid to help consumers further, the UK ECC has also joined together with other partner consumer protection organisations this Summer (2016) to run a consumer awareness campaign on car rental, in advance of the main holiday season when people often decide to rent a car."

The UK ECC advises consumers to:

- Do pre and post-rental vehicle inspections (with photos where possible) and ensure both parties sign these

Did you know?

In a move which warns that scams could be an own goal for England fans, football supporters who've



bought Euro 2016 tickets on the 'secondary ticket market' are being urged to be aware of their rights if their ticket isn't what they thought.

France is set to be a top destination for England football fans backing their team during the UEFA Euro 2016 Championship from 10 June to 10 July. The UEFA website says that tickets for England games have sold out, but urges fans to try again later "as availability may change".

Andy Allen, UK European Consumer Centre (UK ECC) director, said: "With tickets to England games in short supply, fans may have been tempted to go through unofficial channels to buy their tickets. They must now be on their guard in order to minimise any fall-out if things do go pear-shaped."

The UK European Consumer Centre receives complaints and enquiries every year from UK consumers who've had problems with event tickets. Although fairly small, the number is increasing. In 2015 there were 70 such complaints, whereas in 2014 there were just 56.

But what protection do consumers have if they find themselves without the ticket they thought they'd bought?

Consumers have little protection if a ticket has been bought for a specific date. But remember:

documents at the time and retain a copy.

- Shop around for the best rate (if booked online, you have no right to cancel and claim a refund). Prices may also vary according to the time of year.
- Read all paperwork before signing, including terms and conditions.
- Check what is and isn't covered on the insurance.
- Confirm the company's fuel tank policy. There may be compulsory refuelling service charges or penalties for returning the car with insufficient fuel.
- Check any extra charges you may be liable for.
- Allow enough time to drop the car off.
- Research the country's highway code and local road legislation.
- Request evidence of disputed charges.

Advice to UK consumers about car hire abroad is also included in a leaflet called 'Trains, planes, cars and boats.' It gives motorists hints and tips to protect themselves. Consumers can download a copy from the UK ECC's website: www.ukecc.net

- You may have rights if there are significant changes to the product/service offered i.e. if an event is simply replaced.
- The Consumer Credit Act 1974 (section 75) places equal liability with the seller on the credit card company (so long as you paid at least part of the ticket price - total cost more than £100) with a credit card.
- Other legal protections may come into play in certain circumstances, for example there may be a third-party buyer protection scheme operating on some websites.

Case study:

Mr C, a UK consumer, ordered a pair of football boots with a trader in Poland. He paid 649.99 Polish Zloty, equal to £113.12.



Shortly afterwards, the trader contacted him stating that they could not send the goods abroad and so they would need to cancel the order. Mr C then emailed the trader to say that he wanted a refund. He even sent them his bank details etc, but said that nothing was forthcoming.

Mr C contacted the UK ECC for help and advice and (with the consumer's consent) we shared the case with ECC Poland, who liaised with the trader. The consumer received a full refund.

Have you seen?



The Consumer Rights Act 2015 ruled that anyone reselling via a secondary market site must provide the exact seat location, the face value of the ticket and any restrictions on the ticket user (such as age). But last week (26 May 2016), an independent review into consumer protection in the secondary ticketing market made a number of negative observations about the secondary and primary ticketing markets.

The review, led by Professor Michael Waterson (economics professor at Warwick University), reported that in order to achieve optimum chances of both selling - and selling at a good price! - sellers may end up advertising the same tickets for resale on a number of different sites, meaning that there is a possibility of the tickets being sold more than once.

Such actions encourage the sellers to provide less information than required under the Act's secondary ticketing provisions so that they can substitute other tickets. The end result? Fans may be left without the tickets they thought they'd bought.

Nearly a quarter of ticket buyers surveyed as part of the review thought that the reseller website was an official vendor of the ticket. Professor Waterson said that this demonstrates a lack of consumer knowledge of the role of intermediaries, such as online ticket marketplaces, who do not own the tickets they are 'transacting'.

The review, viewed in full [here](#), gives practical [tips](#) for consumers when buying tickets for a major event.

UK ECC staff top tips - Euro 2016 special

Here are our three Euro 2016 special UK ECC top tips:

One: If you are lucky enough to be travelling to France to see England during any of its Euro 2016 games, then you might want to check out [UK ECC's website](#) for seven tips for visiting football fans.

For example, if you're looking for something to wear at Euro 2016 games and decide to buy your right football kit online, then beware of fakes.

If you book into a hotel during your stay, don't forget to check the accommodation's cancellation policy.

And don't forget that you have rights in the event of cancellation or long delays of your plane or train.

Two: For more information about your consumer rights in a whole host of situations (travel, car rental, hotel etc), why not download the FREE [ECC-Net Travel App](#) before you leave home? Then you can check out your rights in any of 25 European languages. The handy little app - free, works offline, easy to download and easy to use - will also be able to present those rights in your chosen language. Stay "h'APP'y" this summer!

Three: You can get news about Euro 2016 ticket availability is via the ticketing portal, accessible via the UEFA website:

<http://www.uefa.com/uefaeuro/ticketing/>

Contact us:



[UK ECC contact details](#)

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