



INFO-C

Information from the Consumer Policy Service of the European Commission - Quarterly-N°4

European Ministers back consumer protection

This issue of INFO-C is particularly concerned with the results of the Council of Ministers on consumer affairs which took place on 29 June this year. The Council Resolution on consumer policy is published "in extenso".

and which received confirmation in the Treaty on Political Union signed at Maastricht, but also invites the Commission to undertake a series of actions at community level to build on the progress already made in 1993.

This Resolution is of great importance to the Consumer Policy Service. In a period of confusion concerning the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, following the Danish referendum on 2 June, the Council not only reiterates and confirms its commitment to the principles of a consumer protection policy, for which the first steps were taken in the Single European Act

The Council Declaration even reveals some impatience with the progress made under the present programme in that the Commission is invited to propose, as soon as possible, measures to ensure that consumers have confidence in the Internal Market through improvements in transparency, information, health protection and the safeguarding of their interests.

INFO-C

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Date : texts finalised the 20/7/1992
ISSN N° 1018 - 5755

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

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CEL: XXIV/14

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 29 June 1992

on future priorities for the development
of consumer protection policy

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,

Whereas the improvement of the quality of life implies, inter alia, protecting the health, safety and economic interests of consumers and informing and educating them;

Whereas measures taken under Article 100a of the Treaty must provide for a high level of consumer protection, particularly in the case of consumer health and safety;

Whereas, in addition, the Maastricht European Council considered that consumer protection should be included among the Community's policies;

Whereas a Resolution of the European Parliament on the need to enhance consumer and public health protection for the realization of the internal market was adopted on 11 March 1992;

Whereas the Council Resolution of 9 November 1989 set out future priorities for a relaunch of consumer protection policy which continue to be valid;

Whereas the Three Year Action Plan (1990-1992) of the Commission has been progressively implemented but not yet fully realized;

Whereas the Commission should be asked to draw up a further plan to address consumer protection policy issues in the years ahead taking account of the priority measures in the previous plans which have not yet been carried out, technological and socio-economic changes and the need to develop the European Community;

Whereas the goods and services supplied to consumers must not endanger or put at risk consumer health and safety;

Whereas the consumer's freedom to choose from a diverse range of goods and services should be assured by improved information;

Whereas consumers' capacity to choose should be enhanced by fostering education programmes at the appropriate levels;

Whereas further measures to secure consumer confidence in the operation of the single market are required particularly in the areas of transparency, information, guarantees and warranties;

Whereas it is important to promote consumer redress within the meaning of the Resolution of 25 June 1987 on consumer redress (1) and the Resolution of 9 November 1989 on future priorities for relaunching consumer protection policy (2)

Whereas it is important to ensure enforcement of Community legislation and constant monitoring of its effect on consumers;

Whereas the implementation of the single market will require greater attention to be paid to the quality of services and goods, in particular as regards food-stuffs;

Whereas it is necessary to take consumers' interests into account in the other Community policies and to have a thorough knowledge of the impact of the internal market on consumers;

Whereas consumers' capacity to defend their interests should be strengthened, in particular so as to settle transfrontier consumer disputes, including by the development of Transfrontier Information Centres;

Whereas consumers' capacity to benefit from the various possibilities of the single market should be enhanced by fostering the development of consumer associations;

INVITES

the Commission to propose as soon as possible measures to create consumer confidence in the single market, in particular as regards greater transparency, information, health and safety and protection of the economic interests of consumers; also invites the Commission to look further into the question of unfair advertising with a view to submitting a relevant proposal to it;

INVITES

the Commission, having regard to these priorities and those listed in the Annex to this Resolution, to present by 31 December 1992 at the latest a report assessing the current plan of action and, on that basis, a proposal for a further plan of action covering the period 1993-1997, designed to develop the consumer protection policy and to achieve these objectives;

AGREES

to encourage the Commission to submit to it proposals to improve consumer information;

INVITES

the Member States also to promote consumer information and education campaigns;

NOTES

the Commission's intention of examining the feasibility of a "European Year of the Consumer".

References : (1) OJ N° C 176, 4. 7.1987, p.2.
and (2) OJ N° C 294, 22.11.1989, P.1.

Annex to the Resolution

PRIORITIES FOR THE POLICY OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF CONSUMERS' INTERESTS

1. Integration into other common policies of the policy of consumer protection and promotion of consumers' interests

- Completion of the comprehensive study of the consequences of the realization of the internal market for consumers;
- Drawing up an adequate impact assessment concerning proposals particularly sensitive for the consumer;
- Stepping up taking into account consumer interests in standards-setting and certification procedures;
- Protection of consumer interests, particularly as regards food, financial services and payment systems.

2. Consumer information and education

- Consumer information and education on the single market, designed to safeguard consumers' interests and rights;
- Better information on services to consumers, particularly by developing transfrontier information centres;
- Improving price transparency of services, particularly of the professions and financial services;

Consumer Protection

- Consumer information on programmes of recycling, rational use of natural resources and use of ecological labelling.

3. Legal redress

Without prejudice to national provisions on the matter, encouragement of Member States to facilitate legal redress.

- Simplification of procedures for settling consumer disputes;
- Legal aid for consumers in respect of cases brought before the European courts;
- Access for consumer organizations having, under national law, a legitimate interest in the matter to courts in the Member States according to the lex fori of the court to which the case is referred.

4. Safety and health

- Development of any necessary harmonized systems to ensure that safety and health legislation is being effectively applied;
- Fostering the levelling up of scientific know-how and practices of consumer product inspectors in the Member States;
- Further harmonization of the packaging, labelling and classification of products.

5. Representation of consumers

- Stronger representation of consumers at all levels in order to improve dialogue between various economic operators;
- Fostering the development of Community-wide consumer associations.

6. Economic interests

- Improvement of application of Community consumer legislation;
- Assessment of the usefulness and desirability of approximating guarantee arrangements and improving after-sales services for goods and services in the internal market;
- Improvement of the quality and transparency of payment systems;
- Examination of the question of excessive consumer indebtedness;
- Taking into account the consumer's interests in promoting conditions favouring free competition in the internal market;
- Development of comparative trials.

PROGRESS OF THE DIRECTIVE ON GENERAL PRODUCT SAFETY

INFO-C already gave you details of the procedural status of the draft directive on General Product Safety in the editorial of the previous edition. This draft (see Info-C N° 2) has now been adopted as a directive by the Council of 29 June 1992. A clear explanation of the different aspects of this directive is set out below.

The Directive on General Product Safety was first proposed by the Commission on April 27, 1989.

The first reading in the European Parliament was March 1990, which resulted in a substantial number of amendments. Having taken into account a fair number of amendments, the Commission forwarded to the Council an amended proposal on June 11, 1990.

The Council of Ministers adopted a common position in December 1991.

The directive, including two amendments from the Parliament in second reading, was finally adopted by the Council on June 29, 1992.

Member States are required to adopt the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the directive by June 29, 1994.

Why the directive is needed

For a given number of products (e.g. machinery low voltage, gas appliances, etc ...), safety requirements are already part covered by specific vertical directives.

However, "gaps" exist in legislation in certain sectors and in some Member States.

This directive seeks therefore to close those gaps and provide the Member States with effective means and powers to adequately intervene where necessary, and in particular, the power to organise the effective and immediate withdrawal of a product at any stage from the market.

Scope of the directive

In terms of the directive's scope, the definition of a "product" is, for the time being, limited to any product that is intended for consumers or likely to be used by them; supplied, whether for a consideration or not, in the course of a commercial activity and whether new used or reconditioned.

This definition does not, however apply to second-hand goods supplied as antiques or as products in need of repair or reconditioning prior to use, provided the supplier clearly informs the purchaser that this is required.

The main objective

The main objective of the directive is to provide a general safety requirement imposing a general obligation on producers to introduce only safe products into the market.

The obligation is "general" in the sense that it proposes to establish, as a basic residual rule of law, a general common denominator to more specific legislation on product safety in any area, to which recourse can be taken where there are loopholes or inadequacies in existing legislation or where no such legislation currently exists.

What constitutes a safe product ?

A "safe product", as defined in article 2 (b) is any product that when used under normal conditions does not present a risk or only minimal risks compatible with its use.

The definition, therefore, takes into account four points in particular :

1. The characteristics of the Product, including its composition, packaging and instructions for assembly and maintenance;
2. The effect on other products, where it is reasonably foreseeable that it will be used with other products;
3. The presentation of the Product, the labelling, any instructions for its use and disposal and any other indication or information provided by the producer;
4. The categories of consumers at serious risk when using the product, in particular children.

Finally, the definition makes it clear that the feasibility of obtaining higher levels of safety or the availability of other products presenting a lesser degree of risk shall not constitute grounds for considering a product to be "unsafe" or "dangerous".

What can be considered a dangerous product ?

The directive clearly states that any product that does not meet the definition of a "safe product" shall be deemed a "dangerous product".

Assessment criteria

The general safety requirement becomes operational using assessment criteria that refers to European or national legislation relevant to the safety of the products involved; European or national standards or technical specifications; codes of good practice or the state of art and technology.

Thus a closed system, which did not previously exist, is provided for determining whether or not a product is deemed to be safe by compliance with these provisions.

When does the Product Safety Directive apply ?

In general, where specific Community rules exist which govern the safety aspects of a product or category of products, the general safety requirement will not apply towards those aspects already covered.

Thus, no dual obligations will be imposed on producers in respect of the same product.

The general safety directive is therefore of horizontal application, filling in the gaps in existing vertical legislation and covering sectors which have not been the subject of specific legislation.

Monitoring of products

Under the new directive, and insofar that these provisions were not already imposed under specific vertical directives, producers and other economic operators in the supply chain are obliged to constantly monitor the safety aspects of the products they market. In this context, they are required to take the necessary provisions enabling the identification of their products.

Safety Management

Under the principle of subsidiarity, the day-to-day management of the general safety requirement provided in this directive is carried out in first instance by the Member States themselves. The Commission only intervenes whenever Member States cannot cope with an urgent situation in an effective and uniform manner. In consequence, specific procedures may only be triggered at community level when :

1. There is the presence of serious and immediate danger
and;
2. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of consumers.

In terms of health and safety, the directive includes a clause based on those that exist in specific directives which applies where no safeguard clause or other notification procedure exists in specific EC rules. Action may only be initiated at Community level on the basis of facts formally transmitted to the Commission by the Member States.

Information Gathering

The directive integrates the rapid exchange of information system in existence since 1984 enlarging its scope substantially to provide for a Community procedure in terms of Article 8. This ensures that emergency measures, as a last resort, can be taken when a divergence exists between Member States as to the appropriate action required in order to deal with serious and immediate danger.

This emergency procedure allows for rapid measures to be taken and allows for a community decision obliging Member States to apply the measures required.

The Interim Period

Until the General Product Safety Directive becomes fully operational (June 1994), the Rapid Alert System, in operation since 1984, and EC legislation will continue to apply in the case of serious and im-

mediate danger, as a parallel procedure to notification under the rapid safeguard clauses whenever applicable under specific EC legislation.

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Consumer Policy Service

The tasks increase, the Service gets bigger.

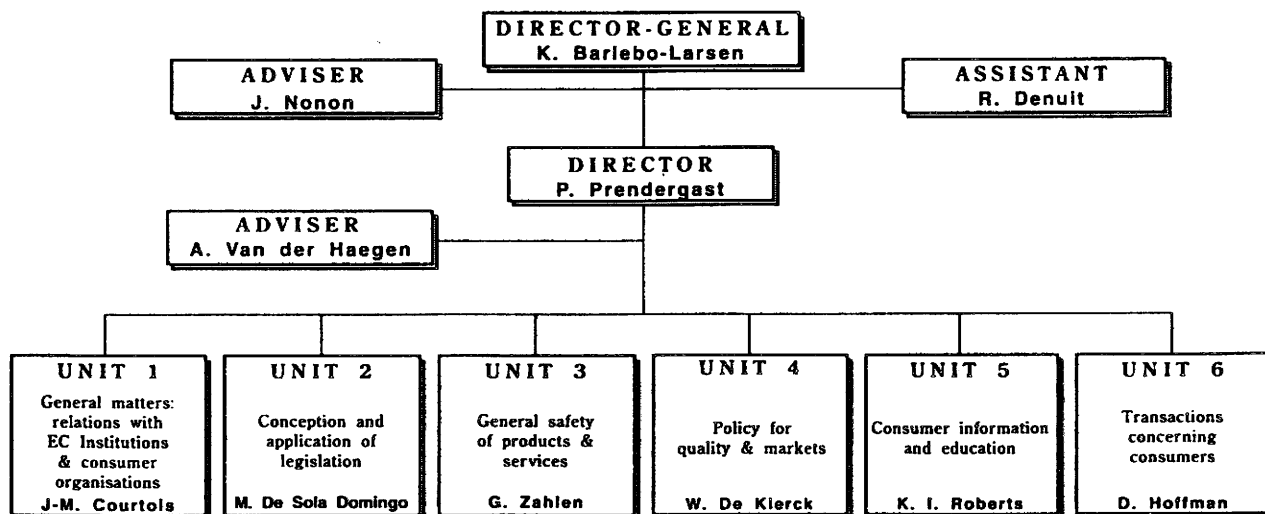
From its creation in 1989 as an independent service, the Consumer Policy Service of the Commission of the European Communities was made up of four Units.

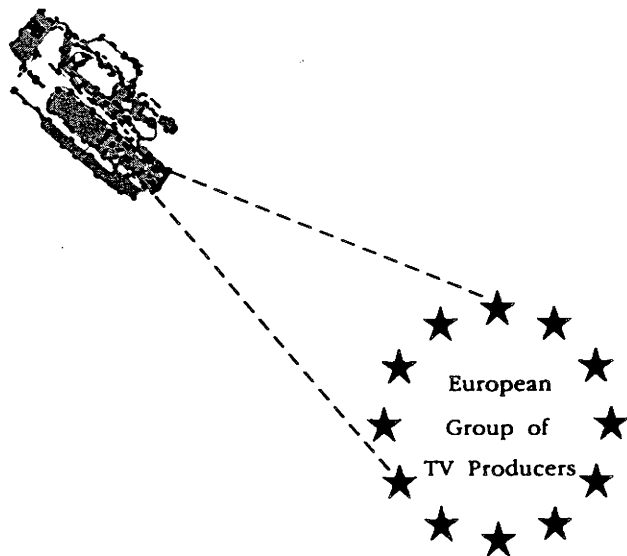
The attention paid by the various Community Institutions to consumer protection has allowed the Consumer Policy Service to develop its activities rapidly. The actions undertaken to defend consumer interests

have not only required an increase of staff but also a new distribution of their work.

So was it that, on 1 June 1992, the Consumer Policy Service gained two new Units, one of which was the former legal section, transformed into a full-blown Unit.

INFO-C presents the re-organized Service to its readers via the following organisation chart:





Faithful to their appointment for the annual meeting of the European Group of Producers of Consumer TV programmes, participants from Community countries plus Switzerland met again (see INFO-C no.1) this year in Brussels on 22 and 23 June.

This meeting, organized by the Consumer Policy Service, allows producers of TV programmes specializing in this field to exchange their experiences and discuss common problems. At the centre of this event was the showing of films which illustrated the respective approaches of the various programmes, which had had a significant impact or which had run into particular problems during their production. It is in this

way that cooperation between TV networks and also between independent producers can be stimulated. Furthermore this meeting gives the Consumer Policy Service the opportunity to make the participants more aware of what is being done in this area by the European Commission.

The discussions which took place brought out the problems which often confront consumer programmes: limited budgets in general which do not allow expensive surveys or tests to be done, legal problems vis-a-vis certain advertisers who consider themselves to have been prejudiced, etc.

Varied themes which showed that consumer problems do not stop at the frontier were also the inspiration for the videos shown during the two days: price comparisons in French-speaking Swiss supermarkets or the pitfalls of consumer credit.

The outlook, often sombre, in certain countries, for the information and education of consumers via TV, shows the need for the European Community to support TV producers and to encourage them to cooperate between themselves.

Contact :

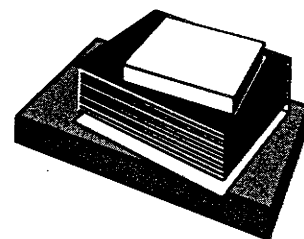
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PUBLICATIONS AND AUDIOVISUAL AIDS



• The French consumer association ASSECO-CFDT, with the cooperation of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the support of the Commission's Consumer Policy Service and the French Ministry of Trade and Consumer Affairs, has made a ten-minute video film highlighting the risks of accidents in the home.

"Ouvrons l'oeil" (keep your eyes open) is the watchword of the Owl (the bird on the watch at night) when dealing with the dangers to which a young boy and his grandfather are exposed at home. Do not be surprised if the owl gives you a wink !

ASSECO-CFDT has received plenty of good advice from the French Committee for Consumer Safety.

This film is available in French with English subtitles (PAL).

Price per copy : 153 FF.

It is obtainable from :

ASSECO-CDFT

4, Boulevard de la Villette

75955 PARIS CEDEX 19

Tel : +33/1/42.03.83.50

Fax : +33/1/42.03.81.44 or 45.

- * The Portuguese Association for the Defence of Consumers (DECO) has published a book, called "Buying Guide". The aim of this guide is to help the Portuguese consumer in his choice of purchases.

"Buying Guide" (Guia de Compras) is on sale at 1500 ESC (members) or 1650 ESC (non-members), plus P + P, from :

DECO

Avenue Defensores de Chaves, 22
P - 1000 Lisboa.
Tel. : +351/1/57.39.08
Fax : +351/1/57.78.51

- * "In Deep Water : a study of consumer problems in Towyn and Kinnel Bay after the 1990 floods" : is the title of a report published by the Welsh Consumer Council. This report, published at the end of February, brings out the problems which consumers in these two towns situated in North Wales had to face following the flooding there, as, for example : difficulties with insurance, poor-quality building repairs, loss adjusters and consumer advice and information.

The report can be obtained, price £ 5, from :

Welsh Consumer Council

Castle Buildings
Womanby Street
UK - Cardiff CF1 2BN
Tel. : +44/222/396.056
Fax : +44/222/238.360

- * "Question Santé", the Belgian association with the mission of informing the public and creating a greater sense of responsibility in health matters, has brought out a "Passport to Health". This is intended for people who go to Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean or to tropical countries and gives all sorts of useful advice for keeping in good health. It also gives answers to all questions consumers might have concerning vaccination, be it obligatory or only advisable.

The "Passport to health" exists in English, Dutch (Gezondheidpas) and French (Passeport Santé).

One or several copies (English and French) can be obtained free of charge from :

Question Santé

rue du Viaduc, 72
B - 1050 Bruxelles
Tel. : +32/2/512.41.74
Fax : +32/2/512.54.36

The Dutch version is available from :

Omtrent Gezondheid

Sans Soucistraat, 65
B - 1050 Bruxelles
Tel. : +32/2/502.09.75

(The fax number is the same as for "Question Santé").

- * The Central Transport Consultative Committee in Great Britain (CTCC, see article "Users' Charter" under "Member States") has told us about several of its publications, among which : Annual Report 1990/91 of the CTCC on the country's transport as well as certain European Community initiatives in this area; the Corporate Plan 1991/93 and "Privatising British Rail - Protecting Passengers' interests" a 1989 report on the possible consequences of the privatisation envisaged by the government.
- * The Institute for Research and Reflexion on European Cooperation (IRRCE) at Montpellier (France) has published, with the French Ministry for Youth and Sport, a multi-media tool entitled, "All Europe in a suitcase". The pack, prepared with the technical help of the Commission and the European Parliament, tackles eight themes, such as "Europe and Culture", the practicalities of Europe, Social Europe.

It contains eleven videos, information sheets, transparencies, audio-cassettes, computer disks ... and is brought up to date each year.

The suitcase is available, price 3750 FF (VAT included but excluding postage) from :

IRRCE

rue de Fontcouverte, 1401
F - 34070 Montpellier
Tel. : +33/67/47.92.94
Fax : +33/67/41.38.80

For the present it is only available in French but the possibility of an English version (and perhaps the other seven Community languages) is being examined.

ITALY

SALES AWAY FROM BUSINESS PREMISES : A WATCH-DOG FOR DISPUTES.

A draft agreement has recently been drawn up in Rome between certain trade associations (AVEDISCO, ANIPAV, AIE) and consumer associations (ADICONSUM, ADOC, AGRISALUS, FEDERCONSUMATORI, MOVIMENTO CONSUMATORI, UNIONE NAZIONALE CONSUMATORI, LEGA CONSUMATORI, LEGA CONSUMATORI ACLI, ASSOUTENTI) concerning the setting-up of a watch-dog organization for contracts made outside business premises.

This organization is charged with making periodic checks on disputes brought to the attention of signatories, in order to detect any which have been conducted in an unlawful way. In any case involving members of the AIE (Association of Italian publishers), AVEDISCO (Association of mail order firms - consumer service) or of ANIPAV (National Association of Travel Sales Promoters), the relevant association will take the necessary steps to have the unlawful procedures stopped.

Should it be a case of deception or behaviour adversely affecting the rights of consumers by a firm not belonging to one of the associations mentioned above, it will nevertheless be examined jointly and the watch-dog organization will report the case to the competent authorities.

Having examined the first cases put forward by the consumer associations, the organization has already discovered delays and mistakes by numerous firms in applying the Italian law 50/92. This law gives the consumer the opportunity to rescind from a contract to purchase by means of a registered letter to be sent within seven days of the signature of the contract. As a consequence, a study of ways to put an end to such practices has already been started.

RESULTS OF THE FIRST "ADICONSUM" CONGRESS.

The first Adiconsum National Consumer Congress was held in Rome in the presence of 180 delegates from all regions of Italy.

Five resolutions, summarized below, were drawn up during the three days of debate and the two "round-table" sessions which examined the questions of product safety and the quality of Italian services as well as the fresh problems which could arise as a result of the completion of the Single Market".

- **Law on the rights and the representation of consumers** : this is the first demand to be addressed to the new parliament and to the government, since Italy is the only country in the EEC without specific legislation in this field.
- **One hundred information offices throughout the land** : these will give advice and assistance to consumers. In two years time the numerous victims of fraud and deception will be able to avail themselves of an Adiconsum office.
- **Comparative tests** : their purpose is to improve the information provided for consumers and to bring out, in an objective way, the various qualities of competing products. Adiconsum believes that certified products should be given priority. Nevertheless such products should be subject to stricter controls.
- **A "guarantor" to check public sector tariffs** and an authority to ensure a linkage between tariffs and quality. In the opinion of Adiconsum, proposals in the services sector should involve the citizen more. This could be done, for example, by setting up users' committees with which the enterprise concerned would have to discuss opening hours and other qualitative aspects of service.
- **A law against excessively high rates of interest**, which would protect citizens against the thousands of finance houses which dupe them by applying interest rates in excess of 30 %. Adiconsum will demand a parliamentary bill which prohibits these legalized forms of usury by fixing a maximum rate of interest of 10 %.

Source :

Information given by

Adicomsum

Via Boncompagni, 19

I — 00187 Roma

Tel. : + 39/6/482.49.56

Fax : +39/6/482.60.05

UNITED KINGDOM

CLASSROOM COMMERCIALS ?

Business sponsored education materials in the UK

Advertising for children is carefully monitored and regulated through the Advertising Standards Authority. Commercially sponsored material for use in the classroom is not subject to any similar supervision. Yet teachers are more and more dependent on business-sponsored education materials in their day-to-day work in the classroom. Major changes in the curriculum have

put greater emphasis on project work and on links with business. This has stimulated demand for new kinds of learning materials, whether written, visual or audio. Businesses have been eager to meet this demand. All this has occurred at the same time that schools have had less and less to spend on teaching aids. So, it may seem that subsidized education materials would be welcome. But, teachers, parents and consumer groups are not convinced it is always in the best interests of children. There is a risk of the young people being exploited however vigilant their teachers and parents are.

The National Consumer Council takes the view that it is in everyone's interest to establish and maintain trust in the quality and integrity of such materials. Bad practice lowers the confidence of teachers, parents and pupils and blocks the effective use of good materials.

With the help of a working party representative of business, consumer interests, teachers' associations and local education authorities, the NCC drafted guidelines (1) to assist sponsors in the production of education materials and help educationalists assess their suitability for use in the classroom.

While the guidelines appear to have gained wide acceptance amongst sponsors and educationalists alike, a new issue has developed which is requiring further and urgent attention. The government's publication of guidelines on healthy eating (the COMA report) has called into question the activities of commercial sponsors concerned with health and nutrition education. For example, attempts by government health educationalists to encourage young people to reduce the intake of sugar and particular kinds of fats, are being combatted by the production of sponsored education materials carefully and expertly prepared to meet the demands of the new curriculum but which subtly promote such products in young minds. This has led to another initiative to develop an "accreditation scheme" (2) to regulate the use of such health- and food-related education materials.

While the guidelines and the accreditation scheme will help, it will not be enough. The NCC believes that a thorough grounding in consumer education must be included in the curriculum for all children throughout their schooling. They need good consumer skills and critical awareness to resist the sales pitches aimed at them, whether in the classroom or elsewhere.

Contact :

Mr. John WARD
Development Director
National Consumer Council
20 Grosvenor Gardens
UK - London SW1W ODH

- (1) "Guidelines for business sponsors of education materials" available from the National Consumer Council, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W ODH, United Kingdom.
- (2) "Health Education Resources Concerning Food & Health: a policy statement", available from the Coronary Prevention Group, 102 Gloucester Place, London, W1H 3DA.

BRITISH RAIL'S PASSENGER'S CHARTER.

The Office of Fair Trading in London in its monthly publication "Bee Line" and the Central Transport Consultative Committee (CTCC), which represents rail users in Great Britain, inform the readers of INFO-C of the adoption by British Rail of a British Rail Passenger's Charter.

This Charter represents a commitment by British Rail to its passengers and covers various aspects, such as :

- punctuality & reliability;
- waiting time at ticket offices to be limited to five minutes;
- staff training to improve customer relations.

British Rail has provision for compensation to be given to passengers in cases where the standards of the Charter are not respected. However the redress proposed does not completely satisfy the CTCC : compensation is not given in the form of money (but of train tickets, for example); passengers on services run by Passenger Transport Executives locally or regionally using British Rail trains, have initially been excluded from the Charter and lastly British Rail has adopted lower punctuality and reliability standards on many routes.

Source :

CTCC
Golden Crosshouse
Duncannon Street
UK - London WC2N 4JF
Tel. : 44/71/839 73 38 or 930 13 04
Fax : 44/71/925 22 28

Bee Line - Office of Fair Trading.
Address : see article on Bureaux de Change.

BUREAUX DE CHANGE.

Regulations recently published by the then Consumer Affairs Minister Edward Leigh will enable consumers to compare rates for the exchange of currency more easily and allow them to shop around for the best deal.

The Price Indications (Bureaux de Change) Regulations 1992, which came into force on May 18 1992, mean that exchange rate indications must :

- * give full details of the terms on which transactions will be conducted. Where a operator buys and sells a currency at different rates, or buys and sells travellers cheques at different rates from notes, all rates will have to be given;
- * give full information on commission rates and any other fees, and where written, these must have the same degree of prominence as the exchange rates themselves; (this will take effect on 18 May 1993 to give operators time to modify or replace display equipment) and
- * be easily visible to customers as they approach the premises.

In addition, customers must be given :

- * all information relevant to a particular transaction when they enquire about an exchange rate;
- * receipts setting out details of the transaction, (except in the case of some machines); and
- * a clear explanation of the basis on which the rate will be determined when currency is ordered for supply at a later date.

Source :

Beeline n° 92/1 - May 1992 - London.
Office of Fair Trading
Field House
15 - 25 Bream's Buildings
UK - LONDON EC4 A1 PR
Tel.: 44/71/242.28.58
Fax: 44/71/269.88.00

FRANCE

A TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR DISPUTES DURING THE SUMMER.

Veronique Neiertz, Secretary of State for consumer affairs in France, has issued a reminder that the toll-free telephone number traditionally available during the summer period will be in operation from 1 July to 30 August. By dialling 05.12.05.12 French holiday-makers will be

helped in their search for solutions to their disputes as consumers. But in order to avoid having to use this line, which implies they already have a problem, Madame Neiertz's service advises consumers to anticipate potential problems by consulting their Minitel.

The 3614 CONSOM will give them practical advice on summer hirings, language courses and organized trips.

The consumer will also get information on legislation covering hotels, camping sites, eating-places and motorways. A section is obviously devoted to safety at the holiday place.

As every year, the authorities are being particularly vigilant and will be carrying out tens of thousands of checks. (INC Hebdo n° 735). Officials from various Ministries will track down offenders, making use of a series of warnings and summonses covering a whole range of offences.

Source :

INC Hebdo n° 773 of 5 June 1992. Paris.
rue Lecourbe, 80
F - 75015 Paris
Tel. : 33/1/43 06 97 65
Fax : 33/1/45 67 05 93

SPAIN

ACTIVITIES IN THE SPANISH BASQUE COUNTRY.

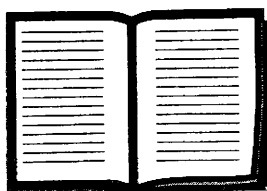
A grouping of consumers in the Spanish Basque Country (BKEE - ACUB) has reported that, with a view to helping consumers to be better informed about their rights to information and education, it is organizing various courses, some of which are intended especially for senior citizens. This is why BKEE - ACUB is arranging these courses not only in cultural centres but also in retirement homes. Course are also given on the radio.

The main subjects dealt with are : nutrition and the older person; food poisoning; anti-smoking; opinion polls as a means of communication between producer and consumer; "we are all consumers".

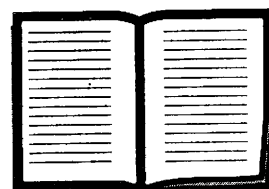
AKEE - ACUB also took part in the EXPOCONSUMO exhibition, devoted to consumer activities, at the Bilbao Trade Fair which took place from 29 April to 3 May 1992.

Source :

Basauri Consumers and Users Group
Juan XXIII, n° 2-4
E - 48970 Basauri
T : 34/4/440.70.04



Diary



- 7 to 9/9/92

"Second International Safe Communities Conference" - an international conference on safety which will take place in Glasgow, Scotland (United Kingdom). Organized by the Public Health Research Unit of the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, the Collaborating Centre for Community Safety Promotion at The Karolinska Institute, Sweden. This year the main theme will be, "The Impact of Safe Communities on the Quality of Life". Registration fee £ 175.

Information :

The Second International Safe Communities
Conference Secretariat
Meeting Makers
50 Richmond Street
UK - Glasgow G1 1XP
Tel. : +44/41/553.19.30
FAX : +44/41/552.05.11

- 1 and 2/10/92

The National Institute for Consumer Education in the United States is organising its 19th Annual Conference. Entitled "Money, Food, Health and Cars", it extends over two days and will tackle the various subjects mentioned in its title. The cost of attending the conference varies according to whether one is a member, non-member, student etc.

Information :

National Institute for Consumer Education
207 Rackham Building
Eastern Michigan University
USA - Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Tel. : 1/313/487.22.92

- 26/10/92

The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia is concerned with preventing poisonings. To this end, a conference entitled "The Bitter Pill" will take place in Melbourne, Australia.

It will bring together health and safety organisations, government, industry, consumer groups and other agencies to increase understanding of what needs to be done to reduce childhood poisonings.

Information :

Pamela Richards
Conference Management Pty Ltd
Suite 3
26 Liverpool Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Tel. : +61/3/876.14.64
FAX : +61/3/879.93.69

- 4 to 9/10/92

Reminder : Second International Cinema and TV Festival - "Quality of Life in a Consumer Society", at Santander (North Spain). This festival, which takes place every two years, is promoted by Santander Town Council, The National Institute of Consumer Affairs of Spain and the Commission of the European Communities. The aims and themes to be dealt with at the Festival were described in an article in INFO-C n° 3.

Information :

Mrs. Reyes Lata FERNANDEZ
Festival International of the Film, Television
and Cinema.
C/Cisneros, 2-3.
E - 39007 SANTANDER
Tel. : +34/42/22.89.60
FAX : +34/42/36.23.84

- 12/11/1992

Product Safety and the Single Market, with special emphasis on enforcement : conference in London organised by the Consumers in the European Community Group with support from the Commission of the European Communities.

Information :

CECG
24 Tufton Street
London SW1P 3RB
Tel +44 71 222 2662
Fax +44 71 222 8586

Diary for the Community Institutions.

The next "Consumer" Council of Ministers has been fixed, subject to confirmation, for 3 November 1992.

