



Ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007- 2013 and mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

Final report

Part 1 – Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer
Programme 2014-2020

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Ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

Final report

Part 1 – Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

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Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-20

Executive Summary

Study aims and method

This mid-term evaluation was conducted by Civic Consulting for the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers. It reviewed the state of play regarding the implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, and provided an interim assessment of the Programme's effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value, as well as the sustainability of the funded actions. The Programme was adopted in February 2014 to support the implementation of the 2012 European Consumer Agenda and the relevant goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. Its rationale is to contribute to ensuring a high level of consumer protection and complementing Member States' policies in seeking to ensure that citizens can fully reap the benefits of the internal market. Most funded actions therefore aim at helping national authorities and actors such as ECCs and consumer organisations to better assist consumers and fulfil their mandate with respect to ensuring a high level of consumer protection.

The evaluation considered all actions implemented since the Programme's start in 2014 and included an in-depth review of budget and other data, as well as published and unpublished reports on the implementation of Programme actions and results until the end of 2017 (results are presented in separate fact sheets for each of the funded actions). The study is also based on a broad scale interview process consisting of 182 interviews with stakeholder organisations in all 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland and at the EU level; six meetings with relevant EU networks; and eight case studies. A number of limitations and challenges were encountered during the course of the evaluation, which related principally to data availability and the difficulty in measuring wider effects of Programme activities, but also related to factors linked to the specific characteristics of the Consumer Programme (such as the diversity in terms of the scope of activities as well as beneficiaries and funding mechanisms). However, due to comprehensive data collection efforts and the triangulation of evidence, these limitations have not affected the validity of the evaluation results.

Main conclusions

Halfway through the Programme period, the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 has overall been mostly effective in reaching its objectives, though with some improvements necessary. Some activities are still at a formative stage. All four objectives of the Programme and the corresponding actions and activities are based on the priorities of EU consumer policy, and have been improved and adjusted over time, reflecting the results of the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme and specific evaluations conducted (e.g. regarding actions in the area of consumer education). The objectives are still fit for purpose, and – with some fine-tuning – also provide a framework of action to address new challenges and needs. Costs of the Programme and the related benefits appear to be mostly proportionate. This evaluation also concludes that the Consumer Programme is overall coherent with consumer-relevant EU policies and Programmes and provides genuine EU added value. In terms of the potential wider effects of the Programme, it is notable that during the evaluation period consumer trust in product safety, as well as their trust that public authorities protect their rights, and that retailers generally respect consumer rights, has increased, in parallel to the efforts in enforcing product

safety and consumer protection legislation in recent years, both at national and EU levels. In contrast, consumer awareness of their rights has not increased.¹

Effectiveness

Based on the indicators and associated targets defined in the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, substantial progress has been made in achieving the Programme's objectives. For most of the indicators evaluated, the targets for 2020 have already been achieved or are likely to be achieved. However, evaluation results also indicate that the level of achievement differs between objectives. While the Programme is on track to achieve two of its four objectives (I and IV), the level of achievement for the other objectives (II and III) differs between the priority areas funded. Evaluation results by Programme objective are:

- The Programme is on track to consolidate and enhance product safety through market surveillance in the EU (Objective I). Programme activities such as RAPEX and joint actions have improved information exchange and cooperation between Member States, thereby reducing differences in enforcement across the EU, with RAPEX having grown into an effective and important pillar of the EU market surveillance architecture.
- Similarly, the Programme is achieving Objective IV in the area of enforcement of consumer rights. The CPC Network has visibly consolidated and expanded its activity during the Programme period. Both the mutual assistance mechanism in the form of exchange of information and enforcement requests between national competent authorities, and sweeps and joint enforcement actions have seen improvement in terms of effectiveness, although time for handling enforcement requests in the network is often long. European Consumer Centres have established themselves further during the current Programme as an important institutional component of EU consumer law enforcement.
- With respect to Objective II in the area of consumer education and information and support to consumer organisations, progress varies between priority areas. The Programme is largely on track to develop the evidence base for consumer policy. Consumer scoreboards and market studies have led to policy uptake at EU and national levels, and are considered to be useful for benchmarking purposes in Member States. The EU-level organisation BEUC is making an important and consistent contribution to representing consumer interests at the EU level, and the local training courses for national consumer organisations and other consumer professionals funded under the Programme are appreciated by beneficiaries. However, the capacity of consumer organisations in many Member States remains limited. Also, the Programme's consumer information and education activities have so far been not as effective as other measures.
- The Programme has so far made limited progress in achieving Objective III concerning consumer rights and redress. While behavioural and other consumer policy studies contributed in varying degrees to smart regulatory action and evidence-based policymaking, other activities – mainly the ODR platform, awareness campaigns on ADR/ODR and networking – have only partly been successful in improving access to simple and low-cost redress. Possible reasons include the early stage of implementation of the platform, a limited awareness of consumers and traders of the platform, and the reluctance of traders to settle disputes via ADR.

Across all Programme areas, the selection of actions and related activities appears to be appropriate in light of the objectives. No major gaps were identified, and stakeholders interviewed in all Member States and at EU level were generally positive with respect to the Programme's effectiveness, although the differences in the level of achievement between objectives was clearly reflected in their views (with some activities only considered to be moderately effective, especially in the areas of consumer education and information, complaints registration and redress).

The main factors that have limited the Programme's achievements so far are mostly external in nature, i.e.

¹ According to the Commission's regular surveys on consumer attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. Note that consumer trust and awareness are influenced by a variety of factors. For a detailed discussion, see final report.

they do not relate directly to the implementation of the Programme. These are limited staff and financial resources for market surveillance and consumer protection authorities, as well as for consumer information and education at the Member State level; in the area of capacity building of consumer organisations they include resource constraints of the target organisations. Other factors include the rapid innovation of products and services, as well as new distribution channels (e.g. e-commerce with third countries) that make effective consumer protection more challenging.

Efficiency

The costs of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 have been proportionate to the benefits achieved for most of the funded activities, according to the available evidence. In terms of the efficiency of specific activities, network meetings and events in particular are assessed as activities which, with very little resources, achieve highly positive results of improved coordination, mutual learning and exchange of best practices in different areas of EU consumer policy. The allocation of funds among the four Programme areas is appropriate, a view shared by most stakeholders. Overall expenditures under the Consumer Programme of less than 5 Eurocents per citizen and year are small compared to the benefits achieved, but also compared to the challenges posed by the goal of reaching a high level of consumer protection in an internal market of more than 500 million citizens.

For most activities the costs borne by the interviewed organisations have been affordable given the benefits they received through the Programme. Administrative requirements for beneficiaries have been simplified, compared to the previous Programme period. However, the number of activities funded and related grant agreements or service contracts is large compared to the available budget, and individual disbursements are in some cases as low as several thousands of Euro (e.g. for the exchange of officials). This increases the workload for Programme administration.

Relevance

The four objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and related activities address the needs and problems identified at the start of the Consumer Programme. They are appropriate to the needs of consumers in general and to the needs of its direct beneficiaries. However, activities specifically targeted at vulnerable consumer groups have so far remained limited to consumer education activities aimed at school children and the ongoing awareness campaign targeted at households in fuel poverty.

The needs identified at the start of the Programme continue to be relevant. The objectives and priorities are still highly relevant and fit for purpose. With some fine-tuning, they can provide a framework of action in the consumer field to address new challenges and needs, such as sustainable consumption and innovations in products, services and markets.

Coherence and other evaluation criteria

The Consumer Programme is overall coherent with consumer-relevant EU policies and Programmes. Coherence is demonstrated at a practical level through Programme activities that have been relevant for other policy areas, e.g. specific activities regarding the Digital Single Market, the Energy Union or broader activities to develop the evidence base. Activities under the Consumer Programme, from RAPEX and the CPC Network to ECC-Net and building the evidence base, as well as support to BEUC, have generated genuine EU added value, as is largely recognised by stakeholders. While the positive effects from successful activities under the current Consumer Programme, such as enhanced market surveillance, better representation of consumer interests at EU level, better evidence base, enhanced consumer confidence, and improved enforcement can be expected to last for some time after the end of the Programme, in terms of sustainability it can hardly be expected that the activities carried out within the framework of the Programme will be readily taken over by Member States or by market actors in the absence of continuous Union support for these activities.

Recommendations

Based on the overall findings of the evaluation, the study provides the following key recommendations (for a full set of recommendations, refer to section 7 of the final report, Part 1):

- It is recommended to **further improve already effective activities** in the areas of market surveillance and enforcement, by continuously improving the IT infrastructure for RAPEX and the CPC Network and the cooperation of its members in the framework of the ongoing efforts of the Commission under the revised CPC Regulation and the proposed New Deal for Consumers. It is also recommended to continue the related trainings and workshops to safeguard a common understanding and harmonious application of EU legislation and to improve the adherence to common standards, as well as to support addressing emerging challenges. Activities for developing the evidence base for consumer policy should be continued, including through scoreboards, surveys, market research, behavioural and policy studies, while documenting systematically the policy uptake of the results. Similarly, support to the EU-level consumer organisation BEUC has been an effective measure, and it is recommended to continue and enhance this support.
- In contrast, a **shift in Programme focus** is suggested regarding the support to national consumer organisations. It is recommended to consider – in addition to continued training measures – possible approaches for providing financial support to national consumer organisations under the Consumer Programme. It is also recommended to further review the approach for consumer education and to explore alternatives to large scale awareness campaigns. For example, awareness raising activities could be implemented by consumer organisations and ECCs in countries sharing similar problems. Finally, a review of approaches for enhancing the effectiveness of complaint registration and improving access to redress through the ODR Platform is recommended, as well as an added emphasis on activities addressing consumer vulnerability, and international cooperation.
- It is recommended to increase the efficiency of Programme administration by **bundling and prioritisation of activities**. Where possible, the duration of contracts could be increased and their number reduced, e.g. in the area of training, including through the use of framework contracts. Most beneficiaries of the Programme suggest to **further simplify administrative procedures and reporting requirements**. It is therefore recommended to use all flexibility offered by the new Financial Regulation and review the related processes to simplify them where feasible.
- A possible new Consumer Programme could **build on the current objectives**, while also explicitly referring at the objective level to the promotion of sustainable consumption, and emphasise the overall goal of convergence to a high level of consumer protection across the EU.
- Considering the wide range of policy areas that are relevant for consumer protection, it is recommended to **further emphasise** the role of the Consumer Programme as a mechanism for catalysing the **horizontal aspects of consumer policy**. For example, networking activities and events that relate to consumer relevant policies led by other Commission DGs could be expanded.
- In light of its clear relevance and EU added value, it is recommended to **continue the Consumer Programme** after the current Programme expires, building on the experiences made so far, and the results of this evaluation. The new challenges for consumer protection and empowerment posed by market developments – such as rapid innovation of products and services, and emergence of new distribution channels and models – will require stepped up enforcement across the EU, increased financial support to consumer organisations, and more effective consumer education and awareness raising, amongst others. It is therefore recommended to increase the Programme's budgetary envelope, or at the very least maintain the current level of funding.

List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ANEC	European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation
B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to consumer
BEUC	Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (The European Consumer Organisation)
C2C	Consumer to consumer
CA	Competent authority
CESEE	Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe
CFPC	Consumer Financial Programme Committee
CHAFEA	Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency
CMEG	Consumer Markets Expert Group
COSING	Cosmetic Ingredient Database
CP	Consumer Programme
CPC	Consumer Protection Cooperation
CPCS	Consumer Protection Cooperation System
CNP	Consumer Policy Network
CPNP	Cosmetic Products Notification Portal
CSD	Consumer Market Scoreboard Database
CSN	Consumer Safety Network
DOLCETA	Developing On-Line Consumer Education and Training for Adults'
DSM	Digital Single Market
EAHC	Executive Agency for Health and Consumers
EC	European Commission
ECC	European Consumer Centre
ECC-Net	European Consumer Centres Network
ECCG	European Consumer Consultative Group
ECCRS	European Consumer Complaints Registration System
EEA	European Economic Area
EQ	Evaluation question
ExO	Exchange of officials
FC	Fitness Check
FSUG	Financial Services User Group
GPSD	General Product Safety Directive
ICCG	Inter-Committee Coordination Group
ICPEN	International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network
MMS	Market Monitoring Survey
NCA	National Competent Authority
NEB	National enforcement body

Acronym	Meaning
ODR	Online Dispute Resolution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PROSAFE	Product Safety Forum of Europe
RAPEX	Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
REFIT	Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme
SCCS	Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety
SCHER	Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks
SCHEER	Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks
SCHENIHR	Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
SMIR	Single Market Integration Report
SWD	Staff working document
TOR	Terms of reference
UCPD	Unfair Commercial Practices Directive
VCWG	Vulnerable Consumer Working Group
WP	Work Programme

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Abstract

This mid-term evaluation was conducted by Civic Consulting for the European **Commission's Directorate**-General for Justice and Consumers. It reviewed the state of play regarding the implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, and provided an interim assessment of the Programme's effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value, as well as the sustainability of the funded actions. The methodological tools applied included a broad scale interview process in all 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland and at the EU level; meetings with relevant EU networks; case studies; and an in-depth review of budget and other data on the implementation of Programme actions. The study concluded that halfway through the Programme period, the Consumer Programme has overall been mostly effective in reaching its objectives, although with some improvements necessary. The objectives are still fit for purpose, and – with some finetuning – also provide a framework to address new challenges and needs. Costs of the Programme and the related benefits appear to be mostly proportionate. This evaluation also concluded that the Consumer Programme is overall coherent with consumer-relevant EU policies and provides genuine EU added value. Specific recommendations focus on further improvements and finetuning of the existing objectives and actions.

1. Introduction

The European Commission's Directorate General for Justice and Consumers has commissioned the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, conducted by Civic Consulting. The findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented separately by Consumer Programme. This report is the final deliverable of the study concerning the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

The report presents the objectives and scope of the study and the methodology applied, describes the work carried out and provides detailed answers to the evaluation questions, as well as conclusions and recommendations. The report consists of two parts, each dedicated to one Consumer Programme:

Part 1 of the report presents the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and is structured as follows:

Section 2 describes the objectives and scope of the evaluation;

Section 3 presents the evaluation criteria and questions;

Section 4 describes the methodology of the study;

Section 5 provides a description of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020;

Section 6 presents answers to the evaluation questions; and

Section 7 presents conclusions and recommendations.

The Annexes of this part of the report present case studies and other relevant study results, the methodological tools applied, as well as a list of references and a list of organisations consulted.

Part 2 of the report presents the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013.

2. Objectives and scope of the evaluation

This section outlines the objectives and scope of the study, as indicated in the Terms of Reference for this assignment.

2.1. Objectives of the study

The present study covers two separate evaluations that are carried out simultaneously, whilst respecting the different scopes and nature of each evaluation. In particular, these are, according to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this assignment:

- The purpose of the ex-post evaluation of the Programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy 2007-2013 (hereinafter the Consumer Programme 2007-2013) is to assess the main outcomes and results achieved and to identify the main problems and solutions with regard to its implementation, including against recommendations from the mid-term evaluation of the same programme. Actions covered by this programme will also be assessed for their sustainability.
- The purpose of the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is to review the achievement of the objectives of all the measures (at the level of outputs, results and impacts, the latter to the extent possible), the state of play regarding the implementation of the eligible actions set out in Article 4 and the specific actions referred to in Annex I of the Regulation, the allocation of funds to the beneficiaries, the efficiency of the use of resources and the programme's European added value, taking into consideration developments in the area of consumer protection and other consumer-relevant EU policies, with a view to a decision on the renewal, modification or suspension of the actions.
- The evaluation shall equally address the scope for simplification, the programme's internal and external coherence including possible synergies/complementarities with other EU programmes, the continued relevance of all objectives, as well as the contribution of the measures to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The longer-term impacts and the sustainability of effects of the programme shall be evaluated to the extent feasible given that the programme is still being implemented with a view to feeding into a decision on a possible renewal, modification or suspension of a subsequent programme in terms of scope, nature and cost.

The TOR highlight that the two evaluations are carried out together because the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 builds on and continues the actions funded under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, and the most successful elements of the previous programme were maintained in the new programme.

Finally, the results of this study should support the Commission with the necessary evidence to prepare a Staff Working Document presenting the findings of the evaluation process, in particular to report on the implementation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 to the European Parliament and Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region in the first half of 2018.

2.2. Scope of the study

The scope of the study is defined by the two financial programmes. Aspects related to the management of certain actions by the executive agency, Chafea, have only been taken into account to the extent that they may be relevant for the evaluation of the financial programmes as defined by the evaluation questions, in particular with regards to the efficiency and effectiveness, and scope for simplification aspects.¹

More specifically, the TOR define the scope of the two evaluations as follows:

- The evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, shall cover all activities financed under the programme for the whole programming and implementation period. The evaluation will assess the long term impact of the programme and the sustainability of its effects.
- The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 shall review the state of play regarding the implementation of all the measures (at the level of results and impacts) and of the eligible actions set out in Article 4 and the specific actions referred to in Annex I.²

The two evaluations consider the implementation of the Programmes in all EU Member States (taking account of the date of accession), as well as in Norway and Iceland.

The present study assesses both programmes and all implemented actions, i.e. including those finalised, the ongoing ones and those contracted out by the date of the kick-off meeting (October 2017). The evaluation period is therefore the period covered by the two programmes until the signature of the contract, i.e. 2007 to 2017.³

¹ The work and management of the agency per se are not in the scope of the study, but the object of a separate evaluation exercise.

² Due to the timing of the 2014-2020 mid-term evaluation however, some final deliverables or data, in particular for the legal commitments signed in 2016, were not available at the time of evaluation.

³ Note that for some activities, data for the year 2017 was provided on a preliminary basis, as final reporting had not yet been concluded.

3. Evaluation criteria and questions

In this section, we present the common set of evaluation questions for both evaluations as well as the specific aspects that only apply to one or the other Consumer Programme.

The present study assesses separately the two programmes and all implemented actions, on: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value taking into consideration developments in the area of consumer policy as well as in other consumer-relevant EU policies. The following other evaluation criteria were also considered where applicable: utility, complementarity, coordination, equity, sustainability, acceptability as well as the scope for simplification.

The TOR also set out a total of 21 evaluation questions (EQs, including 3 sub-questions). They are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria	EQ number	EQ wording
Effectiveness	1	To what extent have the objectives of the programmes been achieved by the choice and implementation of their actions?
	2	To what extent do the activities and outputs of the actions match the objectives of the programmes?
	3	To what extent can these effects be credited to the Commission interventions?
	4	To what extent have different factors influenced the level of the achievements observed?
Efficiency	5	Which were the costs and the benefits of the actions?
	6	To what extent have the costs used in the actions and their distribution among the priorities of the programmes been justified, given the changes which have been achieved?
	7	To what extent are the costs proportionate to the benefits achieved (e.g. time between a problem identified and addressed)?
	8	What factors influenced the efficiency with which the observed achievements were attained?
	9	How affordable were the costs borne by different stakeholder groups, given the benefits they received?
	10	If there are significant differences in costs or benefits between Member States, what are these differences caused by?
Relevance	11	To what extent are the objectives and priorities of the programmes still relevant to the needs of the stakeholder community and to other consumer-relevant EU policies (such as energy, financial and digital sectors and environment, in particular sustainable consumption)?
	12 a,b,c	To what extent have the objectives of the programmes proven to be appropriate to consumer needs? To what extent have the actions under the programmes proven to be appropriate to the specific needs of different consumer groups? Are the needs identified at the time of the adoption of the 2014-2020 Programme still relevant or have new needs emerged which necessitate an adjustment of the Programme?
	13	How well adapted is the intervention to subsequent economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances?
Coherence	14	To what extent have the objectives, priorities and actions of the Consumer Programmes been coherent with those of the Consumer policy and/or with other consumer-relevant EU policies, in particular those which have similar objectives, and other EU programmes, such as the 2014-2020 Multiannual 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme? ⁴

⁴ Possible synergies/complementarities with other EU Programmes shall be assessed in this context as well, especially policy priority areas such as digital, financial, environment (in particular sustainable consumption) and energy as well as the programmes' contribution of the measures to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth should be assessed.

	15	To what extent have the priorities of the Consumer Programmes produced synergy, focus and coherence between the funded actions in delivering on the objectives?
	16	To what extent were/are the interventions/actions coherent within the Consumer Programmes?
EU added value	17	What is the additional value resulting from the EU interventions compared to what could have been/be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels?
	18	To what extent do the issues addressed by the interventions continue to require actions at EU level?
	19	What would be the most likely consequences of stopping or withdrawing the existing EU interventions?
Complementarity	20	To what extent do the actions of the Consumer Programme/policy support, complement and usefully supplement and monitor policies pursued by the Member States?
Sustainability	21	How likely are the effects to last after the interventions' end?
<i>Total</i>	<i>21 EQs with 3 sub-questions</i>	

Source: TOR.

The TOR then specify that in addition to the above described common set of questions that should underpin the evaluation of both programmes, the evaluations will cover some specific aspects that only apply to one or the other programme, namely:

- The evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 will also address how the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 were taken into consideration.
- The evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 will take into account evaluation results on the long-term impact of the predecessor programme. In addition it shall identify the specific actions among those set out in Annex I of the Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, that have not been implemented by the end of 2016, and that cannot be implemented by the end of the Programme (including those that are no longer relevant for the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 2 and 3 of the Programme).⁵

⁵ See list of identified actions in Annex VIII.

4. Methodology

In this section we provide an overview of the methodological approaches applied for the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-13 and the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-20 to address the specific tasks provided in the Terms of Reference.

4.1. Structuring the evaluation

The aims of the structuring phase of the study were to conduct exploratory interviews and initial research concerning the Consumer Programmes and funded actions, to map the data available as well as outstanding data needs, and to refine the intervention logics and the methodological approach for the next project phases.

The intervention logics for both Programmes and the analytical framework for the evaluation were refined in light of the exploratory research and in line with the guidance provided in Tool #46 of the Better Regulation Toolbox, e.g. by refining the causal assumptions and relationships between the specific actions, their outputs, and their expected wider impacts based on evidence gathered during the course of the evaluation.⁶ The intervention logic for the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is presented in section 5.1 (Part 1) and the analytical framework of the evaluation is presented in Annex VI of this report.

Based on the results of the structuring phase, the evaluation team refined the methodological approach and prepared the methodological tools, such as the interview questionnaires for different stakeholder groups and interview types, and selected the final set of case studies in coordination with the Commission (see below).

4.2. Reviewing existing evidence on implementation of Programme actions, results and impacts

Evidence needs were identified early on and all evidence reviewed and processed in line with the guidance under Tool #4 of the Better Regulation Toolbox, beginning with an evidence-mapping exercise to identify the state of existing data and determine the remaining gaps to be filled. All available published reports, academic literature and other documentation on the actions and activities funded under the Consumer Programmes, including relevant Eurobarometer and Eurostat data as well as non-published documents that have been made available by the Commission, CHAFAEA and beneficiaries (e.g. BEUC), were collected, included in a literature database, tagged, reviewed and processed, in total 289 documents.

Key data on the actions and activities (concerning funding, outputs and results as well as wider effects) were extracted from the identified information sources and fact sheets for each action were compiled on this basis (see below). The complete list of the literature reviewed is presented in Annex IV.

⁶ All tools available from https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-toolbox_en

4.3. Defining the baseline

The evidence collected fed directly into the development of a baseline to be used as a point of comparison against which the effects of the Consumer Programme can be measured. We have considered the starting point for the baseline to be the state of affairs in the period before the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 was adopted. In defining the baseline, we have drawn on the 2011 impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020⁷ and mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme 2007-2013⁸ as well as the results of the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 presented in Part 2 of this study in order to identify the problems/needs and policy rationale of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 at the time of adoption. These are discussed in conjunction with the policy context and intervention logic of the Programme in section 5.1.

In line with the Commission's guidance on constructing an evaluation baseline in the Better Regulation Toolbox,⁹ we have sought to quantify the baseline to the extent possible, using four different kinds of quantitative indicators:

- Indicators set out in the annex to the Regulation;
- Other output/result indicators;
- Stakeholder assessments (that were expressed on a numerical scale); and
- Indicators for potential wider effects of activities.

The baseline values for these indicators were defined to be the average over the three years preceding the current Consumer Programme, i.e. the average over 2011-2013, in order to control for outliers.¹⁰ The baseline values are reported by objective in the answers to the evaluation questions and used to assess the progress made during the evaluation period (2014 to 2017); see section 6.1.

4.4. Consulting stakeholders

In the framework of this study, a wide range of consultation activities were undertaken to reach out to relevant stakeholders across the EU in line with Tool #54 of the Better Regulation Toolbox. In total, 182 interviews were conducted with stakeholder organisations in all 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland, and at the EU level. The evaluation team also participated in six meetings with relevant EU networks and sixteen written contributions were received from ECCG and CPN representatives following network meetings.

The Commission's open public consultation originally foreseen for this study was conducted as part of a larger exercise combining several consultations (Public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market) that ran between 10 January 2018 and 9 March 2018. This larger exercise focused on the EU budget in order to support the preparation of the

⁷ European Commission, Impact assessment accompanying the document 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Consumer Programme 2014-2020', SEC(2011) 1320 final

⁸ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011)

⁹ See Tool #46: Designing the Evaluation.

¹⁰ Where the available data did not allow to calculate an average over the years 2011 to 2013, other years were used as baseline, generally the most recent period for which data was available.

Commission's proposal for the post-2020 Multi-Annual Financial Framework.¹¹ We received two position papers from BEUC and ANEC through this online public consultation.

In more detail, the following activities were carried out as part of the consultation task for this study:

Seventeen exploratory interviews were conducted with EC officials and key stakeholders in order to better understand the main issues at stake regarding the implementation, results and impacts of the actions financed under the Consumer Programmes and contribute to the fine-tuning of the methodological tools. The interviews followed the evaluation criteria/questions and concerned main aspects of interest, especially regarding key and cross-cutting issues, and specifically focused on the areas covered by the interviewee. The table below provides a summary of the exploratory interviews conducted.

Table 2: List of exploratory interviews

Organisation	Type of organisation	Date of interview
BEUC	Consumer organisation	November 2017
Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Vzbv)	Consumer organisation	October 2017
ECC Sweden	European Consumer Centre	November 2017
Zentrum für Europäischen Verbraucherschutz (ODR contact point Germany)	ODR contact point	November 2017
DG JUST units 03, 04, E1, E2, E3, E4 (8 interviews)	European Commission	November 2017
DG CNECT	European Commission	November 2017
DG GROW	European Commission	November 2017
DG ENV	European Commission	November 2017
DG ENER	European Commission	March 2018
DG REGIO	European Commission	March 2018

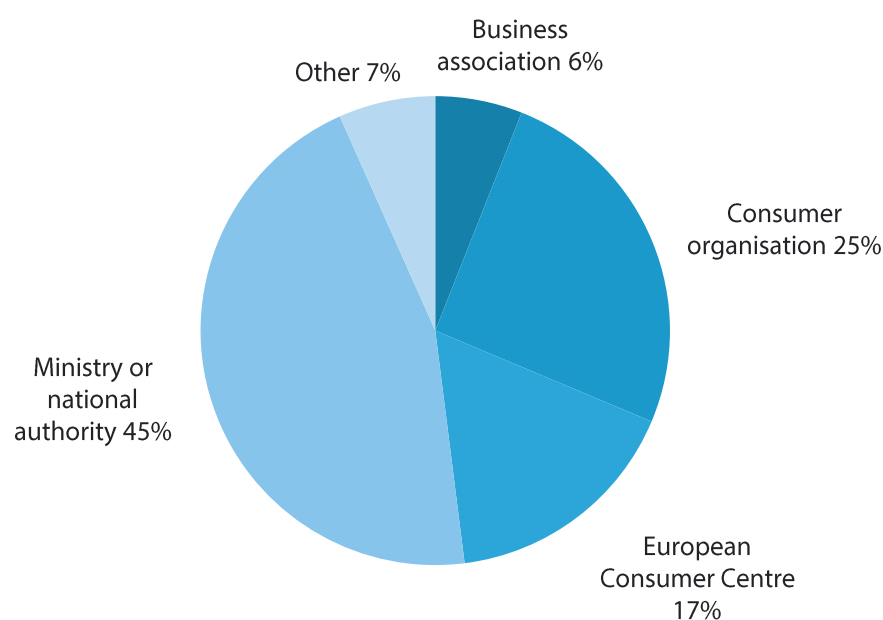
Subsequently, a broad-scale interview process focusing on key stakeholder organisations was conducted in all 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland, as well as with EU level organisations. Structured interviews took place on the basis of the interview guide that is presented in Annex IX and which was developed in line with the guidance on question and questionnaire design presented in Tool #54 of the Better Regulation Toolbox, i.e. using a combination of closed and open-ended questions which were clearly and neutrally worded, organised thematically, and tied to the specific scope of the evaluation.

Stakeholder interviews covered ministries in charge of consumer policy or consumer agencies, national authorities responsible for enforcement of consumer legislation and other national authorities responsible for policy and enforcement of relevant

¹¹ As indicated on the dedicated webpage, the Commission will publish the replies and will summarise the replies after the end of the consultation period, which has not yet been the case at the time of writing (see https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-eu-funds-area-investment-research-innovation-smes-and-single-market_en)

legislation, national representatives of the Consumer Safety Network (CSN) or RAPEX contact points, national consumer organisations and European Consumer Centres. The evaluation team also contacted national business organisations and reached out to relevant EU level business organisations for interviews. Finally, the interview process covered several Commission officials at DG JUST, CHAFEA and other DGs, BEUC and ANEC. The figure below displays the breakdown of interviews by type of stakeholder.

Figure 1: Types of stakeholders interviewed



N=150. Note that the 150 completed interview questionnaires correspond to 165 interviews, as in some cases separate interviews were conducted with two representatives of the same organisation that cover different areas (e.g. product safety and consumer policy), but were documented in one questionnaire, depending on the preference of the organisation. "Other" includes other government entities or ODR bodies

The table below shows the number of completed interview questionnaires by country.

Table 3: Number of completed interview questionnaires, by Member State

Country	# interview questionnaires	%	Country	# interview questionnaires	%
Germany	10	7%	Latvia	4	3%
Hungary	9	6%	Lithuania	4	3%
Croatia	8	5%	Malta	4	3%
Czech Republic	8	5%	Romania	4	3%
Poland	8	5%	Slovakia	4	3%
France	7	5%		3	2%
Italy	7	5%	Cyprus	3	2%
Bulgaria	6	4%	Greece	3	2%
Sweden	6	4%	Luxembourg	3	2%
Denmark	5	3%	Netherlands	3	2%
Estonia	5	3%	Spain	3	2%
Portugal	5	3%	Belgium	2	1%
Slovenia	5	3%	Iceland	2	1%
United Kingdom	5	3%	Norway	2	1%
Finland	4	3%	EU-level	4	3%
Ireland	4	3%	<i>Total</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>100%</i>

Note: The 150 completed interview questionnaires correspond to 165 interviews.

Results of the consultation exercises are one of the main sources of data for this evaluation and were evaluated in line with the relevant guidelines on data analysis of stakeholder feedback under Tool #54 of the Better Regulation Toolbox. In particular, the quantitative results of the stakeholder interviews are presented to illustrate the majority, or averaged, views of interviewed stakeholders and the qualitative results are presented to complement these average ratings and provide more detailed insights into the reasons for ratings and in particular the reasons behind more critical assessments. While quantitative results are presented consistently in section 6, qualitative insights are only presented where they were expressed by at least three interviewees, unless otherwise indicated, to ensure a balanced representation of key themes from the interviews.

The evaluation team attended meetings with relevant EU networks to present the evaluation and carry out targeted consultation activities. The table below presents an overview of the meetings with relevant EU networks during the evaluation.

Table 4: Contributions to meetings with relevant EU networks

Network	Date	Focus of the meeting
European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG)	October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inform network participants about the objectives and methodology of the evaluation; ▶ Promote an interactive dialogue on their views regarding the relevant actions financed under the two Consumer Programmes, and their implementation and related results and impacts;
Consumer Financial Programme Committee (CFPC)	October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Obtain contact information for exploratory interviews and country-level interviews.
European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG)	January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inform network participants about the objectives, methodology and status of the evaluation; ▶ Carry out targeted consultation activities: Prior to the meetings, participants were provided with questions related to the effectiveness of the activities funded under the Consumer programmes, to the continued relevance of the Programme objectives and priorities, and to needs for changes in a possible new Consumer Programme; they were then invited to share their views during the meetings and/or to provide written answers to the questions;
Consumer Policy Network (CPN)	January 2018	
Financial Services User Group (FSUG)	February 2018	
Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC)	February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote an interactive dialogue on their views regarding the evaluation and support the stakeholder interview process.

For a complete overview, the list of organisations consulted is provided in Annex V.

4.5. Conducting case studies

For this Programme evaluation, a total of eight case studies were prepared, with four of them being action-specific and the remainder cross-cutting. To arrive at a sufficiently differentiated selection of the case studies that allow for a balanced picture concerning key actions across the two Consumer Programmes and their objectives, as well as covering all stakeholder groups and geographical regions of the EU, the selection of case studies was done on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Case studies cover all Programmes' objectives;
- Case studies on key actions involve considerable financial resources;
- Case studies on key actions are relevant for both Consumer Programmes;
- Case studies on key actions are essential for identification of main results, and consequently for assessing their effectiveness;
- For the selected key actions, separate evaluations have not been recently conducted;
- Cross-cutting/thematic case studies cover policy priority areas or themes;
- Cross-cutting/thematic case studies provide synergies/complementarities with other EU Programmes;
- Cross-cutting/thematic case studies cover essential elements of EU consumer policy/the Consumer Programme(s) under evaluation;
- Cross-cutting/thematic case studies provide key insights for addressing specific evaluation questions (e.g. related to coherence with other EU policies/priorities).

As a result, the four action-specific case studies focused on the following Consumer Programme actions:

- Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement action on product safety (Action 2);
- Capacity building and training: for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion, Action 5) and for CPC/GPSD enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy, Actions 2 and 10);
- Facilitating access to ADR/ODR (Action 9); and
- Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (Action 10).

In addition four cross-cutting case studies focused on Consumer Programme activities that are relevant for the following topics:

- Digital Single Market;
- Energy consumers and sustainable consumption;
- Evidence base for EU consumer policy;
- Convergence to a high level of consumer protection between different Member States.

For all case studies, relevant information and data were compiled based on the literature review, the interview process, the fact sheets and complementary data collected. The results of the case studies were documented (see Annex I) and informed the overall analysis.

4.6. Preparation of fact sheets on actions

The information collected from the various sources for each action has been consolidated and presented in fact sheets for each action under both Consumer Programmes. The fact sheets are structured as follows:

- Specific objective and eligible actions;
- Description of activities;
- Amounts committed during Programme period;
- Specific activities funded during Programme period;
- Outputs and results of activities;
- Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations;
- Stakeholder assessment of the effectiveness of activities under the action;
- Key sources.

The fact sheets formed an essential basis for answering the evaluation questions. The fact sheets for actions financed under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are presented in Annex II of this report.

4.7. Overall analysis, conclusions and recommendations

To prepare the basis for the overall analysis, all evidence collected during fieldwork was processed and validated. Where any gaps or contradictions in the data were

identified, they were addressed in follow-up correspondence with the relevant stakeholders and EC officials, and members of the evaluation team.

As indicated above, results of the consultation exercises, both quantitative and qualitative, are one of the main sources of data for this evaluation. We have also considered all available evidence on all activities funded, regarding inputs, outputs results and wider effects, as well as any previous evaluations of the activities, where such data and information were available.¹² In particular, data on outputs and results, as well as indicators for wider effects, were used for the analysis of effectiveness. Unit costs were calculated on this basis, where possible, and used in the analysis of efficiency (see tables on costs and benefits of activities per Programme area in section 6.2), i.e. we calculated the ratio of costs per unit of key outputs/results (e.g. costs per RAPEX notification, or costs per exchange of official).

Evidence and results obtained from the different methodological tools and tasks described above served to answer the evaluation questions, arrive at conclusions, and develop recommendations.

4.8. Limitations and challenges encountered

A number of limitations and challenges were encountered during the course of this programme evaluation. These challenges related principally to data availability (e.g. that data was missing or not collected for a sufficiently long period), but also to factors linked to the specific characteristics of the Consumer Programmes, such as the kinds of activities and beneficiaries. The challenges encountered are discussed in the following first at a general level and then by evaluation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, and other evaluation criteria).

The availability of data on activities or on the achievement of the Programme objectives was one of the main difficulties encountered in the course of the evaluation, posing particular challenges for the assessments of effectiveness and efficiency. Data on outputs and especially on results was not always consistently documented or available for particular activities. This was a problem encountered already in the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013¹³ as well as a point noted by several stakeholders interviewed for this study, some of whom remarked that they were unable to provide an assessment of the effectiveness and benefits of certain activities due to a lack of data available to them (e.g. regarding the level of product safety and product-related injuries or the use of Consumer Classroom materials in schools).

Data on potential wider effects of the activities (e.g. on consumer trust in product safety, in consumer organisations, in national authorities, etc.) was generally available through the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard. However, these data series measure potential effects only at a high level, and are not directly linked to the activities funded under the Consumer Programme. Changes and trends in these series are influenced by many factors other than the Consumer Programme. While a direct causal link therefore cannot be established between these data series and the activities funded under the Consumer Programme, indicators for potential wider effects have been

¹² Where possible, we have referred to multiple sources of evidence in the answers to the evaluation questions in line with the guidance on data triangulation under Tools #4 and #46 the Better Regulation Toolbox.

¹³ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 175

reported where available in order to show the trends in these series in parallel to the Consumer Programme and provide possible insights at the impact level.

Two factors that posed specific challenges for data collection relate to the characteristics and the implementation of the two Consumer Programmes. Namely, the Consumer Programmes are highly diverse in terms of the scope of their activities as well as their beneficiaries and funding mechanisms (see section 5.8 on the implementation of the Consumer Programme), and have gone through multiple changes in administration since 2007 (e.g. the delegation of the Programme management to CHAFAE in 2008 and the reorganisation of DG SANCO into DG JUST and DG SANTE in 2014). As a result, the relevant evidence was dispersed across multiple sources and authorities and not always available in a consistent and comparable format. It therefore often took considerable effort to assemble the data and bring it into a workable format. The fact sheets on the specific Actions of the Consumer Programme in Annex II show the comprehensive results of these efforts.

The nature of the Programme's stakeholders presented another limitation in the course of the evaluation due to the fact that the stakeholders of the Consumer Programme are also often its direct or indirect beneficiaries, and may therefore not entirely impartial in providing their assessment of its activities. Nevertheless, partly due to the other data limitations noted above, interviews with stakeholders who are familiar with the Programme and its outputs and results form a key part of the evidence base for this evaluation. We have therefore taken great care throughout the evaluation to triangulate the data from stakeholder interviews with evidence from other sources wherever possible, and to differentiate in the text between the assessments of direct beneficiaries (and participants in the activities) and other stakeholders.

Effectiveness

Another data limitation linked to the assessment of effectiveness in particular related to the indicators for measuring the objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, which were included in its legal basis.¹⁴ Including indicators in the Programme itself was a novel feature of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. These indicators were essential for measuring progress in the course of the present evaluation, especially once they were complemented with the data series provided by the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards, the Consumer Markets Scoreboards and the underlying surveys, as source of contextual information on consumer experiences and market developments during the evaluation period.

However, it became also clear that some of the indicators provided in the Regulation focused too narrowly on outputs rather than on results and impacts, or that the link between the indicators and the achievement of the objective itself was not always clear.¹⁵ Furthermore, despite being listed in the Regulation, the indicators in Annex II of the Regulation on the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 were not always reported on a year-to-year basis, with several instances of missing years or other data gaps.¹⁶

¹⁴ Annex II of the Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual Consumer Programme for the years 2014-20

¹⁵ For example, for Objective II (Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations), there was only one indicator defined relating to the number of complaint bodies and countries submitting complaints to the European Consumer Complaints Registration System, with no indicators relating to consumer education or support to consumer organisations. As another example, for Objective III, the one indicator related to the ODR platform tracks only the number of complaints registered on the platform and not the number or proportion of complaints actually referred to ADR bodies.

¹⁶ For example, for one of the three indicators under Objective III (Rights and Redress), the percentage of cases dealt with by ECCs and not resolved directly with traders which were subsequently referred to

The lack of consistent reporting of indicators was a problem that had already been identified in the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013.¹⁷ In this programme evaluation, we have considered all available data regarding the indicators provided in the Regulation, and triangulated the results with complementary indicators on outputs and results, as well as concerning possible wider effects of the actions, and with the stakeholder assessments collected in the broad-scale interview process which covered EU level organisations, but also key stakeholders in all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland (see above).

Another limitation related to the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is the short period of time since the beginning of the Programme in 2014, meaning that the longer-term impacts of the actions (e.g. on consumer trust) may have yet to materialise. Additionally, activities that have been newly established under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, such as the ODR platform or the E-Enforcement Academy, have limited data available and may require more time to become better known among the target beneficiaries (e.g. consumers/traders or enforcement officials) before the results can be accurately assessed.

Efficiency

The limitations noted above related to assessment of effectiveness are also generally relevant for the assessment of efficiency, since the consideration of the benefits of the Consumer Programme relies on key inputs from the assessment of effectiveness.

One challenge specifically related to the quantification of the costs arises from the specific characteristics of the Consumer Programme, namely, that a number of actions support the implementation of legal obligations arising from different legislative bases, e.g. RAPEX (GPSD), the CPC Network (CPC Regulation), and support for ADR/ODR (ADR Directive/ODR Regulation). In consequence this means that implementation costs (including administrative costs) related to this underlying legislation overlap to some extent with costs of beneficiaries of the activities funded under the Programme. For example, the costs of Member States for staffing of the RAPEX contact point in their country arise from their obligation in the underlying legislation to contribute to this system. They are therefore unrelated to the Programme. The evaluation team has therefore taken great care to disentangle in its assessment, e.g. of effectiveness, the **activities' implementation through the Consumer Programme from the effects of the underlying legislation**.¹⁸ Also, the quantification of Programme costs in this evaluation focuses on direct Programme costs and co-financing contributions of beneficiaries, for which unambiguous data is available. Other costs are not considered, to avoid distortions through unclear delineations between Programme activities and those caused by the underlying legislation itself.

During the inception phase it also became clear that the potential benefits of Programme activities were mostly not suitable for quantification (e.g. better information on consumer markets and problems) or monetisation (e.g. wider effects such as an increase in consumer trust). Stakeholders were unable to provide quantitative estimates concerning the benefits they incurred, and the available evidence did also not allow for the assessment of wider benefits, such as the reduction of product-related injuries and accidents in the EU through RAPEX notifications on

alternative dispute resolution, data points could only be found for 2010 (the baseline value defined in the Regulation), 2015 and 2016.

¹⁷ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 175

¹⁸ We have in this evaluation therefore also included references to the underlying legislation, where this was essential for the assessment of Programme activities.

unsafe products (due to a lack of relevant data series, see section 6.1.1). Furthermore, as noted above, where indicators for potential wider effects did exist, these were available only at a high level and were not directly linked to the Programme activities. It was therefore decided to assess the Programme benefits at a qualitative level (see discussion of efficiency, section 6.2).

Other evaluation criteria

Another challenge related specifically to the assessment of relevance concerned the identification of consumer needs. Consumers are generally not asked directly about **their needs; rather, the assessment of consumers' needs at** the EU level is usually indirect, being mainly done through stakeholder consultation (e.g. with organisations representing consumer interests), market research, behavioural studies, and the monitoring of consumer conditions and markets through the Consumer Scoreboards. While these sources do provide key evidence on certain consumer needs, especially in the context of consumer problems and redress as well as the functioning of the consumer internal market, they are not equivalent to a systematic needs analysis and relate only indirectly to the specific objectives and activities of the Consumer Programme. Consequently, other potential consumer needs (such as the need to have unbiased information, e.g. regarding product and service quality, or emerging needs not covered yet by the Scoreboards) are explored in these sources to a lesser degree, or at a sectoral level only (e.g. in the context of energy efficiency). We have therefore supplemented the assessment of needs and problems with input from stakeholders which (in the case of national authorities, ECCs, and consumer organisations) are specifically tasked with protecting and/or representing the consumer interest and which are also familiar with the activities of the Consumer Programme.

5. Description of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

This section provides an overview of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 including the policy context, objectives and scope, baseline, intervention logic, and main activities, elaborates the continuity with the previous Programme and describes its implementation.

5.1. Context, baseline and intervention logic of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

5.1.1. Policy context

The Commission adopted the European Consumer Agenda in 2012, which set out its strategic vision for EU consumer policy and aimed to be a more ambitious approach than previous Consumer Strategies.¹⁹ Directly referencing the **Europe 2020** goals,²⁰ the Consumer Agenda emphasises the need to realise the potential of the single market by improving consumer confidence in cross-border online shopping and enabling consumers to make informed choices, and it affirms the importance of integrating consumer interests into all relevant EU policies. In particular, the Consumer Agenda identifies existing or emerging challenges in the areas of product, service and food safety; adapting rights and policies to economic and social change (including the digital revolution, sustainable consumption and social exclusion/vulnerability); consumer knowledge; and redress and enforcement.²¹

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020²² was adopted in February 2014 to support the implementation of the 2012 European Consumer Agenda and contribute toward achieving the goals of the **Europe 2020** strategy. The Consumer Programme focuses on the following four key areas, which generally correspond to the priorities of the Consumer Agenda:

- A single market of **safe products** for the benefit of citizens and a single market as a key component of a competitive environment for businesses and traders;
- A single market where citizens are **well represented by professional consumer organisations** whose capacity is built to meet the challenges of today's economic environment;
- A market where citizens are **aware and exercise their rights** as consumers so that they contribute to the growth of competitive markets;
- A market where citizens enjoy **access to redress mechanisms** in case of problems without needing to resort to court procedures which are lengthy and costly for them and for the governments; a concrete and effective

¹⁹ European Commission, 2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions - A European Consumer Agenda (2014-2020).

²⁰ Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

²¹ European Commission, 2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions - A European Consumer Agenda (2014-2020)

²² Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

collaboration between national bodies to support the **enforcement** of consumer rights and to support the consumers with advice.

5.1.2. Baseline

The topical areas and related objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 arose out of problems that were identified in the 2011 impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020,²³ drawing on the results of the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme 2007-2013 from the same year.²⁴ Together with the results of the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 in Part 2 of this study and the specific evidence collected for this evaluation, these sources form the basis of the evaluation baseline, i.e. the state of affairs before the Programme began.²⁵

The baseline for this mid-term evaluation is described in general terms below and presented quantitatively in further detail in the answers to the evaluation questions in section 6.1, based on the indicators set out in the Regulation, other output/result indicators, stakeholder assessments, and indicators for potential wider effects of activities.

Product safety

The 2012 Consumer Agenda noted that the EU already has an overarching product safety policy and legislation in place to protect consumers from unsafe products. Nevertheless, the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and the impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 highlighted the continued existence of problems in the area of product safety.²⁶

In particular, the impact assessment of the current Consumer Programme indicated that differences in the enforcement of product safety legislation between Member States was causing problems for economic operators and consumers, citing the results of the 2010-2011 public consultation on the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD). It also reported that Member States have difficulties working together in the absence of a clear pan-European enforcement framework.²⁷

The impact assessment for the current Consumer Programme also noted that unsafe products continue to be present in the single market.²⁸ This is evidenced by the more **than 2000 notifications, including more than 1600 'serious risk' notifications, that have** been posted to the Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX) each year since 2012.²⁹ More than 70% of these notifications concerned products originating from outside the EU, with about 60% originating each year from China

²³ European Commission, Impact assessment accompanying the document 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Consumer Programme 2014-2020', SEC(2011) 1320 final

²⁴ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011)

²⁵ See section 4.3 on the methodology for defining the evaluation baseline

²⁶ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 168-177; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 11-12

²⁷ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 11

²⁸ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 11

²⁹ European Commission, Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2016 Annual Report

alone.³⁰ The risks emerging from the increasing globalisation of production chains were therefore considered by the impact assessment and by the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme to require better cooperation between national authorities, including with third countries such as China and the US.³¹

The continued relevance of these problems in the period before the start of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 was further confirmed in the conclusions of the ex-post evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme in Part 2 of this study, which found in particular that there was still a need for improved cooperation with international partners on product safety.³² See section 6.1.1. in this report for a quantification of the baseline regarding product safety and an assessment of progress made under the current Programme.

Consumer information, education and support to consumer organisations

The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concluded that problems continued to exist in the area of consumer information, education and support to consumer organisations.

The mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme highlighted the importance of developing an evidence base for consumer policy as well as the achievements that had been reached so far. Nevertheless, the impact assessment of the current Programme noted that consumer markets monitoring was still relatively undeveloped, in particular **with respect to understanding 'actual' consumer behaviour and decision-making processes.**³³ This was also recommended by the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme, which concluded that in-depth market studies should pay attention to how consumption patterns and behaviour could be changed rather than focusing on gathering evidence on problems alone.³⁴

The mid-term evaluation and impact assessment reported that national consumer organisations often have insufficient capacity, including challenges in obtaining the necessary resources and expertise. Uneven capacity between consumer organisations in different Member States was also noted as a problem in the impact assessment for the current Programme, which reported that national public funding to consumer organisations ranged from EUR 2 to EUR 2 112 per 1000 inhabitants, with the newer Member States more often on the lower end.³⁵

The impact assessment also noted a lack of transparent, comparable, reliable and user-friendly information for consumers, especially in a cross-border context, as well as a lack of knowledge regarding consumer rights.³⁶ It reported that less than half of

³⁰ European Commission, Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2016 Annual Report

³¹ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 168-177; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 11-12

³² See section

7 and the conclusions of Part 2 of this study.

³³ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 13

³⁴ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 173-175

³⁵ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 13

³⁶ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 176-177; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 14-15

EU consumers (44%) felt 'confident, knowledgeable, and protected' as consumers.³⁷ The 2013 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard found that the average proportion of correct answers to three questions about consumer rights (receiving unsolicited products, cooling-off period, faulty product guarantee) was 52% across the EU;³⁸ similarly, a Consumer Empowerment survey published in 2011 found relatively low awareness of consumer rights as well as other essential consumer skills (e.g. numerical skills, understanding of logos).³⁹

The consumer information tools funded under the previous Consumer Programme were also considered to be inadequate. This was the conclusion not just of the mid-term evaluation and impact assessment but also of a specific evaluation on the consumer education tools, which found that the existing tools (DOLCETA and the Europa Diary) were out of date.⁴⁰

The existence of the problems above at the start of the current Programme was also confirmed in the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, although the ex-post evaluation did find that further progress had been made on improving consumer markets monitoring between 2011 and 2013.⁴¹ See section 6.1.2. for more detail on the baseline values for 2011-2013 and progress made during the current Programme.

Rights and redress

The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and the impact assessment for the current Consumer Programme identified a number of continuing problems related to consumer rights and redress. Both noted that consumer rights were still inadequately protected, especially in a cross-border context, with the result that consumers feel less confident shopping cross-border than domestically.⁴² Only 36% of EU consumers indicated that they felt confident shopping online from another EU country in 2012, compared to 59% who felt confident shopping online in their own country.⁴³ Accordingly, as of 2013, only 12% of EU consumers indicated that they had made a cross-border online purchase within the last year, compared to 42% domestically.⁴⁴

Access to redress was highlighted in the mid-term evaluation as a key area where essential tools were still missing.⁴⁵ Redress was the main concern identified by

³⁷ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 14

³⁸ European Commission, Consumer conditions scoreboard 9th edition (2013)

³⁹ European Commission/TNS Opinion & Social, Special Eurobarometer 342: Consumer Empowerment (2011)

⁴⁰ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 173; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 15; European Commission/Ecorys UK, Evaluation of Consumer Education, Information and Capacity Building Actions: Final Report (2011)

⁴¹ See section 7 and the conclusions of Part 2 of this study.

⁴² European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 171-172; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 15

⁴³ European Commission, Flash Eurobarometer 358 - Consumer Attitudes Towards Cross-Border Trade and Consumer Protection (2013)

⁴⁴ Eurostat, Internet purchases by individuals [isoc_ec_ibuy], retrieved 5 March 2018

⁴⁵ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 162-169

stakeholders during the mid-term evaluation, with the majority of interviewees (slightly more than 50% of national authorities and 79% of consumer organisations) indicating that there had been only limited success of the previous Consumer Programme 2007-2013 in addressing this need.⁴⁶ The impact assessment for the current Programme noted that consumer awareness about means of redress was insufficient, and that vulnerable consumers (especially the less educated and the elderly) were particularly reluctant to seek redress, even though they are no less likely than the general population to experience problems.⁴⁷

The mid-term evaluation found that the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 had been increasingly successful at encouraging the integration of consumer interests into other EU policy areas, but more actions were needed. Digitalisation and sustainable consumption were identified by the mid-term evaluation as areas where further integration of consumer interests was needed.⁴⁸ Energy, transport, and telecommunications were also identified by the impact assessment of the current Programme as areas with emerging challenges for consumers where integration of consumer interests into EU policy would be needed.⁴⁹

The ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 concluded that additional steps had been taken between 2011 and 2013 to address these problems, i.e. the development of the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform and the funding of a study on consumer vulnerability, but that the problems identified above remained relevant at the start of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.⁵⁰ See section 6.1.3. for more detail on the baseline values and progress made on consumer rights and redress during the current Programme.

Enforcement

The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 and the impact assessment for the current Programme concluded that problems continued to exist in the area of enforcement of consumer rights, particularly in a cross-border context.

Although the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 generally considered the CPC Regulation to be a success, it nonetheless identified gaps in cross-border enforcement. These gaps were considered to emerge from the large number of bodies (300+)⁵¹ responsible for the implementation and enforcement of consumer legislation at the national level, leading to uncertainty about which enforcement authority is the right one for a specific issue in a given country. The mid-term evaluation also noted differences in legal systems and legal cultures between Member States, including differences in how the CPC Regulation is applied, with the result that EU consumers are still less effectively protected when shopping cross-border than domestically, especially with respect to online sales.⁵²

⁴⁶ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 159

⁴⁷ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 16

⁴⁸ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 161-169; Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 16

⁴⁹ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 16

⁵⁰ See section 7 and the conclusions of Part 2 of this study.

⁵¹ European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 116

⁵² European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 115-116, 171-172

The mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme and impact assessment of the current Programme also considered that the ECC-Net was not reaching its full potential in cross-border enforcement, which they attributed principally to low awareness among consumers. For example, the impact assessment reported that only 11% of EU consumers were aware of the network in 2011.⁵³ Another factor limiting the effectiveness of the ECC-Net were the reported challenges in ensuring compliance **among traders given the ECCs' lack of enforcement powers,**⁵⁴ with about 25% of closed cases in 2013 indicating a lack of agreement from the trader.⁵⁵

The ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 found that while steps had been taken between 2011 and 2013 to improve cross-border enforcement (particularly with respect to increasing the efficiency of the CPC Network), these problems continued to exist at the start of the current Programme.⁵⁶ See section 6.1.4. for more detail on the baseline values with respect to enforcement as well as progress made during the evaluation period (2014 to 2017).

5.1.3. Intervention logic

The rationale of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 as indicated in the preamble to the implementing Regulation⁵⁷ and in the impact assessment of the Consumer Programme⁵⁸ is to contribute to ensuring a high level of consumer protection and to place consumers at the heart of the internal market by supporting and complementing **Member States' policies in seeking to ensure that citizens can fully reap the benefits of the internal market.** The EU dimension of this rationale implies the need for action at EU level and thus for support through a financial instrument, with the added value of the Consumer Programme lying in its capacity to tackle issues that cannot be effectively addressed at the national level.⁵⁹

The intervention logic of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (shown below) **describes the underlying 'theory' of the intervention, taking as its starting point the problem areas that have been identified above as part of the baseline.** Based on the identification of the needs and problems, the general objective of the Consumer Programme (briefly: to ensure a high level of consumer protection, to empower consumers, and to place them at the heart of the internal market)⁶⁰ is pursued through four specific objectives which are each aimed to directly address the four main problem areas identified. These specific objectives are intended to be achieved through a set of actions, which are implemented using inputs that are delivered through different financing mechanisms (see section 5.8 for more detail on implementation). On this basis, the actions are expected to generate concrete outputs.

⁵³ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 16 (fn 13)

⁵⁴ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 16

⁵⁵ European Commission, Single Market Scoreboard - European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2013 - 12/2013), p. 4

⁵⁶ See section 7 and the conclusions of Part 2 of this study.

⁵⁷ Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20, para (2)

⁵⁸ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 10-11, 23

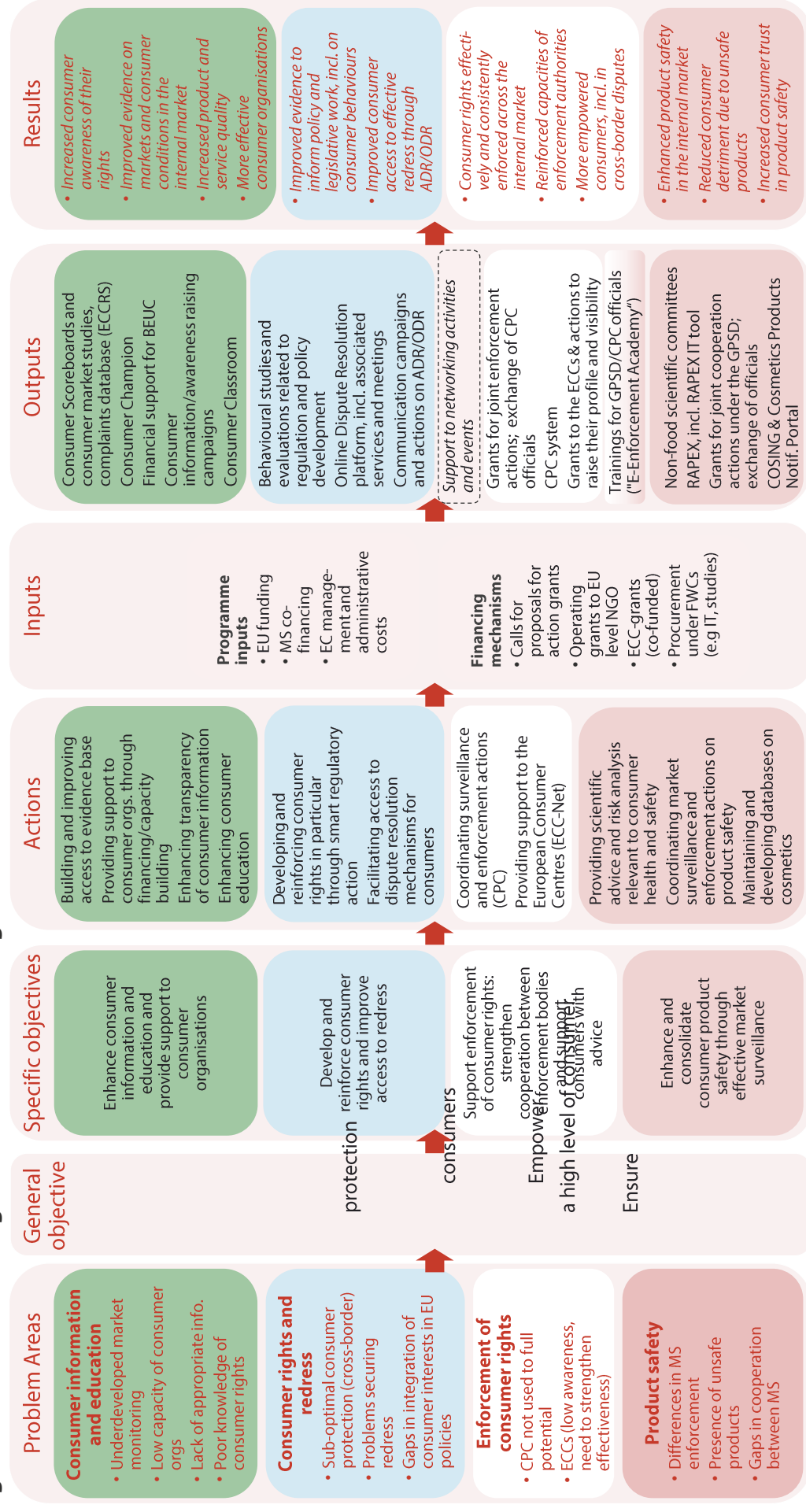
⁵⁹ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 10

⁶⁰ Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20, article 2

These are in turn expected to produce the desired results, which relate back to the specific objectives and address the original problems and needs identified.

The intervention logic of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 had been presented in the roadmap accompanying this evaluation, and was further refined in light of the results of the research conducted. The refined intervention logic is presented in the figure below.

Figure 2: Intervention logic of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020



Source: Civic Consulting, based on the intervention logic provided in the Roadmap: Evaluation of Consumers programmes: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, Ref. Ares(2017)1716138 - 30/03/2017.

5.2. Objectives and scope of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

The general objective of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is 'to ensure a high level of consumer protection, to empower consumers and to place the consumer at the heart of the internal market, within the framework of an overall strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Programme will do so by contributing to protecting the health, safety and the legal and economic interests of consumers, as well as to promoting their right to information, education and to organise themselves in order to safeguard their interests, and supporting the integration of consumer interests into other policy areas. The Programme shall complement, support and monitor the policies of Member States.'⁶¹

In order to support the general objective, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme set out the following four specific objectives:

- **Objective I — Safety:** to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union.
- **Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations:** to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.
- **Objective III — Rights and redress:** to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution.
- **Objective IV — Enforcement:** to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice.

Each of the four specific objectives were assigned a set of action types in the Annex of the implementing Regulation, with 11 action types in total. These actions are listed by objective in the following subsections and summarised in Annex III.

The actions funded under the Consumer Programme are of three kinds:

1. Actions corresponding to legal obligations imposed by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the existing EU acquis in the area of consumer protection (e.g. implementation of the GPSD or the CPC Regulation);
2. Actions which are not or could not be undertaken at the national level because of their EU-level character (e.g. ECC-Net, support to a European level consumer organisation); and
3. Actions complementing and enhancing the efficiency of measures undertaken at the national level (e.g. capacity building for national consumer organisations, joint enforcement actions, networking and events).

For the implementation of the Programme, funds of EUR 188.8 million were earmarked for the seven-year period between 2014-2020. Based on budget data provided by DG

⁶¹ Article 2, Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

Justice and Consumers, as of the end of 2017, a total of EUR 95.4 million has been committed under the Consumer Programme. The state of play with respect to the funds committed is discussed by objective in the following sections.

5.3. Objective I

Objective I of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concerns product safety. It aims to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union. Objective I is carried out under the first three eligible actions of the Consumer Programme:

- Action 1: Scientific advice and risk analysis relevant to consumer health and safety regarding non-food products and services including support for the tasks of the independent scientific committees established by Decision 2008/721/EC;
- Action 2: Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC, and actions to improve consumer services safety; and
- Action 3: Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics.

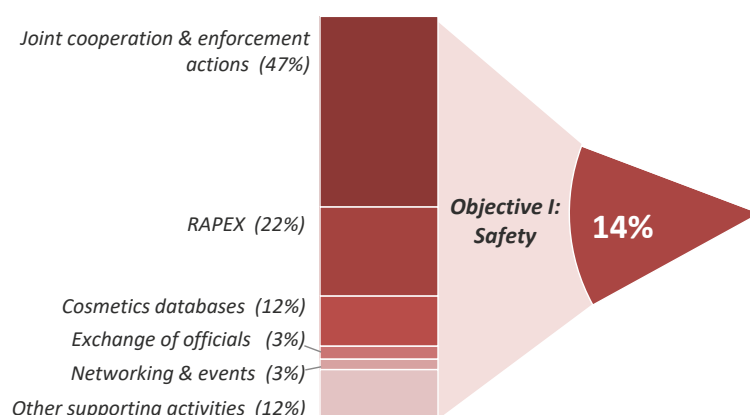
Each of the actions above is carried out through specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activities funded under Objective I are:

- The Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX);
- Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety;
- Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD); and
- EU databases on cosmetics (Cosmetic ingredient database, Cosmetic Product Notification Portal).

Each main activity comprises one or more specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activity and specific activities for each action under Objective I are summarised in Annex III and discussed in more detail in the fact sheets for Actions 1-3 in Annex II.

EUR 13.1 million, or 14% of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, were spent on activities related to Objective I. The following figure shows a detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective I of the Consumer Programme between 2014-2017 by main activity.

Figure 3: Breakdown of funds committed under Objective I by type of activity, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As the figure above shows, the largest activity in terms of funds committed is joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food safety (EUR 6.2 million, or 47% of the funds committed under Objective I). Approximately EUR 2.9 million (22% of the funds committed under Objective I) has been committed to RAPEX. The smallest activity by budget size (not including networking and events or other supporting activities) is the exchange of officials in the area of product safety (3% of the funds committed under Objective I).

5.4. Objective II

Objective II of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concerns consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations. It aims to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers. Objective II comprises the following eligible actions of the Consumer Programme:

- Action 4: Building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in **consumers' needs, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy**, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies;
- Action 5: Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise;
- Action 6: Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services; and
- Action 7: Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers.

Each of the actions above is carried out through specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activities funded under Objective II are:

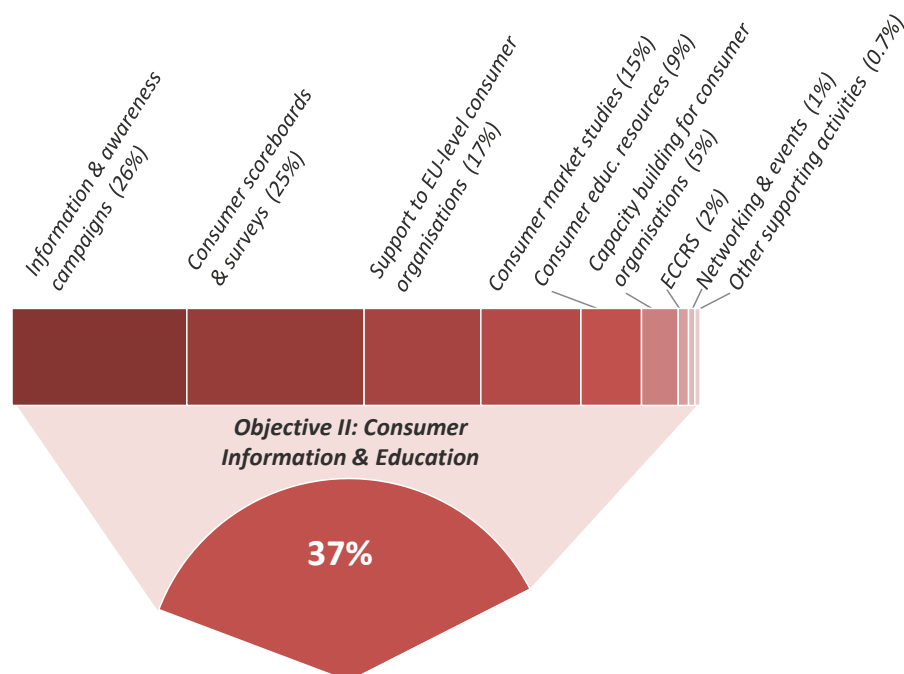
- Consumer scoreboards and surveys (the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and Consumer Markets Scoreboard);
- Consumer market studies (e.g. on the sharing economy, on geo-blocking, **on measuring consumer detriment...**);
- Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion);
- Support to EU-level consumer organisations (ANEC, BEUC);⁶²
- EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out **credit, on energy efficiency...**)
- The European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures (ECCRS); and
- EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom).

Each main activity comprises one or more specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activity and specific activities for each action under Objective II are summarised in Annex III and discussed in more detail in the fact sheets for Actions 4-7 in Annex II.

EUR 35.1 million (37%) of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017 were spent on activities related to Objective II, which aims to **improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their** rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers. The following figure shows a detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective II of the Consumer Programme between 2014-2017 by main activity.

⁶² Support to ANEC is since 2013 no longer financed from the Consumer Programme, but through other EU funds.

Figure 4: Breakdown of funds committed under Objective II by type of activity, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As the figure above shows, the largest activity in terms of funds committed between 2014 and 2017 is EU consumer information and awareness-raising campaigns (EUR 9.0 million), which make up 26% of the funds committed under Objective II. Consumer scoreboards and surveys (EUR 8.9 million) and support to EU-level consumer organisations (EUR 6.0 million) are the second and third largest activity, respectively. The smallest activity by funds committed (not including networking and events or other supporting activities) is the European Consumer Complaints Registration System (2% of the funds committed under Objective II).

5.5. Objective III

Objective III of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concerns consumer rights and redress. It aims to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution. Objective III is carried out under the following eligible actions of the Consumer Programme:

- Action 8: Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets; and
- Action 9: Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national

alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers’ **needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning** and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and maintenance of relevant IT tools and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States.

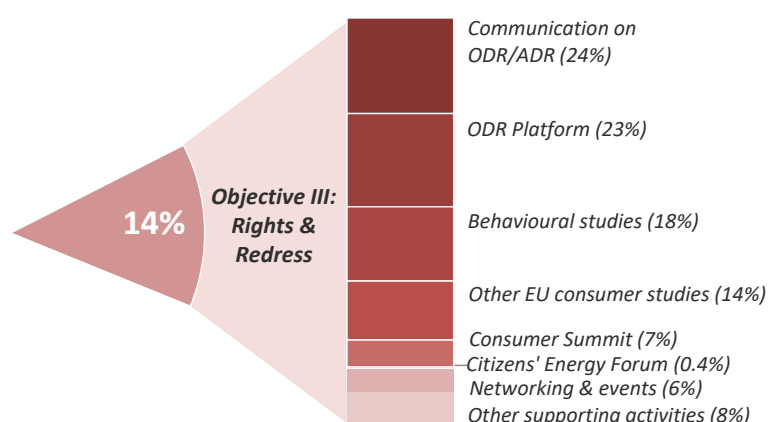
Each of the actions above is carried out through specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activities funded under Objective III are:

- Behavioural studies (e.g. on consumer decision making in insurance services, on **advertising market practices in online social media...**);
- Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations, study on enforcement **authorities’ powers in the application of CPC Regulation...**);
- The Consumer Summit;
- The Citizens' Energy Forum;
- The Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform; and
- Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR.

Each main activity comprises one or more specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activity and specific activities for each action under Objective III are summarised in Annex III and discussed in more detail in the fact sheets for Actions 8 and 9 in Annex II.

Of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, EUR 13.0 million, or 14%, were spent on activities related to Objective III. The following figure shows a breakdown of the funds committed under Objective III of the Consumer Programme between 2014-2017 by main activity.

Figure 5: Breakdown of funds committed under Objective III by type of activity, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As seen in the figure above, 47% of the funds committed under Objective III relate specifically to ODR/ADR: the two largest activities funded under this objective are the ODR Platform (approximately EUR 3.0 million) and communication campaigns and actions on ODR/ADR (approximately EUR 3.1 million). Behavioural studies (EUR 2.4 million) and other EU consumer studies (EUR 1.9 million) also make up a substantial part of the funds committed under Objective III. The smallest activities funded between 2014 and 2017 are the Consumer Summit (7% of the funds committed under Objective III) and the Citizens’ Energy Forum (0.4%).

5.6. Objective IV

Objective IV of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concerns enforcement. It aims to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice. Objective IV is carried out under the following two eligible actions of the Consumer Programme:

- Action 10: Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004; and
- Action 11: Financial contributions for joint actions with public or non-profit bodies constituting Union networks which provide information and assistance to consumers to help them exercise their rights and obtain access to appropriate dispute resolution, including out of court online resolution schemes (European Consumer Centres Network).

Each of the actions above is carried out through specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activities funded under Objective IV are:

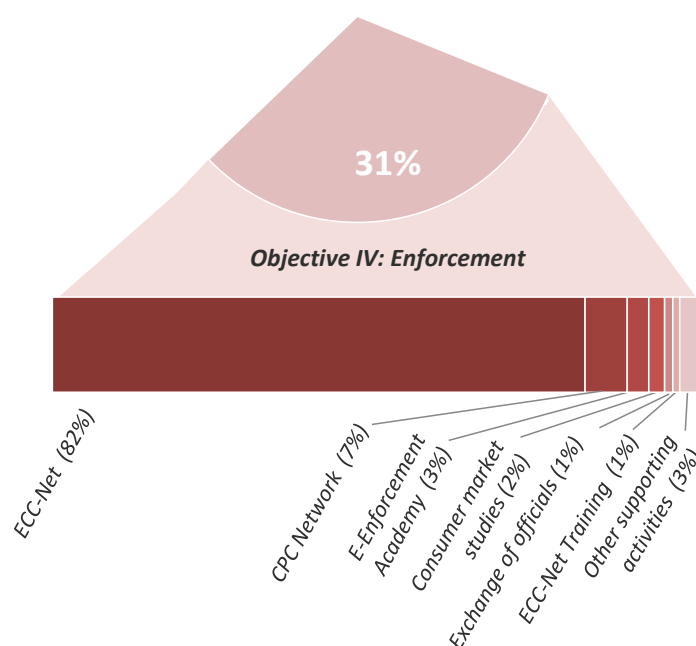
- The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network, including the CPC system and joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws;
- Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC);
- Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy);⁶³
- European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net); and
- Trainings for ECC-Net.

Each main activity comprises one or more specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. The main activity and specific activities for each action under Objective IV are summarised in Annex III and discussed in more detail in the fact sheets for Actions 10 and 11 in Annex II.

EUR 30.2 million, or 31% of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, were spent on activities related to Objective IV. The following figure shows a detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective IV of the Consumer Programme between 2014-2017 by main activity.

⁶³ The E-Enforcement Academy targets both the CPC Network and the Consumer Product Safety Network (CSN) and therefore falls under both Objective I and IV. However, the activity is funded under Action 10 of Objective IV and is therefore reported here.

Figure 6: Breakdown of funds committed under Objective IV by type of activity, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As shown in the figure above, the largest activity in terms of funding is by far the ECC-Net. With approximately EUR 24.8 million in funds committed, the ECC-Net accounts for 82% of the spending under Objective IV of the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017. The next largest activities are the CPC network (7% of the funds committed under Objective IV) and training for enforcement officials in the framework of the E-Enforcement Academy (5% of the funds committed under Objective IV). The smallest activity (not including other supporting activities) relates to the exchange of enforcement officials (1% of the funds committed under Objective IV).

5.7. Continuity with the previous Consumer Programme

Almost all of the action types that are eligible under the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme are a continuation of similar actions in the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, often regrouped or expanded, with the following two notable exceptions:

- Action 6 (2007-2013): *Financial contributions to the functioning of European consumer organisations representing consumer interests in the development of standards for products and services at Community level.* The legal basis for these financial contributions to ANEC, which represents consumer interests in standardisation, was transferred to Regulation (EU)

No. 2015/2012⁶⁴ at the end of the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme and is now under the administration of DG GROW.

- Action 11.2 (2007-2013): *Financial contributions for the development of integrated European Master Degree courses in consumer issues*. These financial contributions were intended to provide initial support for the selected academic consortia and were explicitly non-renewable grants.⁶⁵

Compared to the previous Programme, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme shows a large degree of continuity in terms of market surveillance activities under Objective I. However, there are also new elements, i.e. the E-Enforcement Academy (which was set up in the course of this Programme) and the EU databases on cosmetics (which previously were funded from a different budget). The database on cosmetics as added to the Consumer Programme following a structural reorganisation whereby the cosmetics unit was moved from DG Enterprise (now: GROW) to **DG JUST's product safety unit, but with the Juncker Commission's reorganisation, the cosmetics unit has now moved back to DG GROW.**

Under Objective II, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme also no longer includes a particular focus on capacity building and consumer information actions in the Member States that acceded in 2004 or later. Instead, capacity building in the 2014-2020 Programme is supported "in particular for consumer organisations in Member States where they are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness as evidenced by monitoring of consumer markets and the consumer environment in the Member States".⁶⁶ The results of the 2017 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard suggest that this revision would encompass consumer organisations in a more diverse range of Member States depending on the choice of indicator.⁶⁷

Consumer information and education were also substantially expanded in the current Programme compared to the previous Programme, and actions relating to the latter also include a requirement to make greater use of resources produced at the Member State level and an emphasis on developing education measures in collaboration with stakeholders. The education activity of the current Programme takes the form of EU-level education resources known as the **Consumer Classroom**. It started in 2013, replacing the DOLCETA and Europa Diary activities under the previous Consumer Programme, which were found in the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013⁶⁸ as well as in an external evaluation⁶⁹ to be outdated.

⁶⁴ Regulation (EU) No 2015/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation, amending Council Directives 89/686/EEC and 93/15/EEC and Directives 94/9/EC, 94/25/EC, 95/16/EC, 97/23/EC, 98/34/EC, 2004/22/EC, 2007/23/EC, 2009/23/EC and 2009/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Decision 87/95/EEC and Decision No 1673/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

⁶⁵ European Commission/Ecorys UK, Evaluation of consumer education, information and capacity building actions: Final report (2011) (p.104)

⁶⁶ Action 5(b), Annex I, Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

⁶⁷ For example, with respect to consumer knowledge of relevant consumer legislation, the highest scores were achieved in Slovakia, which acceded to the EU in 2004, while the lowest scores were found in Greece, which acceded to the EU in 1981. Source: European Commission, Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 (p. 21).

⁶⁸ European Commission/RPA, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011) (p.173)

⁶⁹ European Commission/Ecorys UK, Evaluation of consumer education, information and capacity building actions: Final report (2011)

Increased attention was also given to the goal of enhancing transparency in consumer markets, reflecting another recommendation of the mid-term evaluation.⁷⁰

Activities related to dispute resolution (especially alternative/online dispute resolution) under Objective III of the new Programme as well as the CPC network and the ECC net under Objective IV were also substantially expanded on in the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme compared to the 2007-2013 Programme, in line with the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 which recommended activities to strengthen (cross-border) enforcement and improve access to redress.⁷¹ Consumer redress in particular was given a greater focus in 2014-2020, with increased attention on facilitating access to ADR/ODR.

5.8. Implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is managed by the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA)⁷² which implements the main part of the Consumer Programme, mainly through grants and contracts.

The key inputs to the Consumer Programme are EU funding, co-financing contributions **from Member States' governments, and the management and administrative costs** of the European Commission. The Programme uses different financial mechanisms as a **means to better respond to Member States' and stakeholders' needs:**

- Grants for joint cooperation actions between national authorities and with public and non-public bodies;
- Operating grants for Union-level consumer organisations;
- Grants/special indemnities awarded in support of the exchange of enforcement officials in the areas of consumer safety and consumer protection cooperation;
- Grants for actions to the European Consumer Centres Network or to the complaint handling bodies;
- Grants to the EU Presidency events; and
- Procurement procedures for covering specific needs related to the support of the EU consumer policy (e.g. for studies, surveys and other means of data collection, development, maintenance and hosting of IT tools, including interactive on-line platforms in support of consumer policy issues, training and consumer education, awareness-raising actions on consumer issues etc.).⁷³

⁷⁰ European Commission/RPA, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011) (p.174)

⁷¹ European Commission/RPA, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011) (p.171-7)

⁷² Commission Implementing Decision of 17 December 2014 amending Implementing Decision 2013/770/EU in order to transform the 'Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency' into the 'Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency', 2014/927/EU

⁷³ Roadmap: Evaluation of Consumers programmes: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, Ref. Ares(2017)1716138 - 30/03/2017

In line with the underlying rationale of the Consumer Programme (see section 5.1.3 above) as well as the general objective of the Programme, which states that the Programme “shall complement, support and monitor the policies of Member States”,⁷⁴ most actions of the Consumer Programme aim at helping national authorities, policymakers and similar actors better assist consumers and fulfill their mandate with respect to ensuring a high level of consumer protection. The main direct beneficiaries of the Programme are therefore:

- Member States' authorities, including individual enforcement officials (e.g. by facilitating enforcement cooperation and through training measures);
- The European Commission (through procurement activities);
- BEUC (which receives a direct operating grant); and
- European Consumer Centres.

National consumer organisations are generally indirect beneficiaries of the Consumer Programme, with limited exceptions (e.g. receiving grants as complaint-handling bodies or travel reimbursements for certain networking activities and other events). Individual experts may also receive reimbursements to participate in expert groups, workshops and other meetings.

Consumers themselves are only indirect beneficiaries of the Consumer Programme, benefiting from a higher level of consumer protection in general, including in a cross-border context, as well as from specific activities (e.g. consumer education resources, advice from ECCs). This is also true to a more limited extent for businesses, which benefit e.g. from a better functioning internal market through the harmonised enforcement of consumer protection rules.

5.9. Summary of the state of implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

The following table summarises the state of implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 as of the end of 2017 by objective with respect to funds committed, actions, direct beneficiaries, and key outputs. A full list of outputs (e.g. individual activities and studies funded) can be found in Annex III.

⁷⁴ Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20, article 2

Table 5: Summary of the state of implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (2014-2017)

Objective	Budget committed (EUR)	Actions	Direct beneficiaries	Key outputs and results
Objective I — Safety	12.1 million	Action 1: Scientific advice and risk analysis relevant to consumer health and safety regarding non-food products and services	Experts	306 meetings of the non-food scientific committees
		Action 2: Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety, and actions to improve consumer services safety	Procurement (EC) National market surveillance authorities Enforcement officials	Development and maintenance of the RAPEX system 5 joint actions on product safety 126 exchanges of product safety officials Other networking and events, including 13 meetings of the Consumer Safety Network, 4 meetings of RAPEX contact points and the International Product Safety Week 2016
		Action 3: Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics	Procurement (EC)	Development and maintenance of the COSING and CPNP cosmetics databases
		Action 4: Building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making	Procurement (EC)	10 consumer market studies 7 consumer surveys and 3 scoreboards (Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and Consumer Markets Scoreboard)
Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations	35.1 million	Action 5: Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations	Procurement (EC) BEUC	Operating grant to BEUC Support for development and maintenance of the Consumer Champion online platform (6 modules) as well as 21 local courses in 9 Member States Other networking and events, including 8 meetings of the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG)
		Action 6: Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information	Procurement (EC) Complaint-handling bodies National consumer authorities	Maintenance of the European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) Grants provided to complaint-handling bodies to implement the Commission recommendation on the harmonised registration of consumer complaints 3 consumer awareness/information campaigns conducted in at least 7 countries 6 EU Presidency consumer events

		Action 7: Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers	Procurement (EC)	Development and maintenance of the Consumer Classroom platform
Objective III — Rights and redress	13.0 million	Action 8: Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives,	Procurement (EC)	6 behavioural studies and 5 other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations) 3 European Consumer Summits Support for consumer organisations to attend the Citizens' Energy Forum
				12 meetings of the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group and 2 meetings per year of the Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors 25 meetings of the Financial Services User Group Other networking and events, e.g. meetings of the Multi-Stakeholder Groups on Environmental Claims and Comparison Tools
		Action 9: Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities	Procurement (EC)	Development and maintenance of the ODR platform 2 social media campaigns on ODR in 2016; an ex-ante evaluation for the awareness campaign and 2017 web-scraping study of traders' websites 2 meetings of the expert group on ADR, 4 meetings of the technical group on ODR and 2 meetings per year of ODR contact points
Objective IV — Enforcement	30.2 million	Action 10: Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004	National enforcement authorities Enforcement officials Procurement (EC)	Maintenance of the CPC Network IT tool (CPCS) 4 sweeps and 2 coordinated enforcement actions 196 exchanges of enforcement officials Development of the E-Enforcement Academy Other networking and events including 6 workshops per year for the CPC Network
			European Consumer Centres Procurement (EC)	Support for the ECC-Net, including the IT tool Training activities for the ECC-Net
		Action 11: Financial contributions for joint actions with public or non-profit bodies constituting Union networks which provide information and assistance to consumers (European Consumer Centres Network).		

Source: Own compilation.

6. Answers to the evaluation questions

In this section we present the results of the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. It combines evidence collected from all methodological tools and provides detailed answers to the evaluation questions concerning effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value, as well as other criteria.

6.1. Effectiveness

To what extent have the objectives of the Consumer Programmes been achieved by the choice and implementation of their actions? To what extent have different factors influenced the level of the achievements observed? To what extent can the effects be credited to the Commission interventions?

6.1.1. Product safety

The key findings of the evaluation regarding effectiveness in the area of product safety are that:

- ▶ The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 has made substantial progress in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the EU compared to the situation before its start. Activities have so far been largely effective in contributing to the achievement of the objective and have improved information exchange and cooperation between Member States, thereby reducing differences in enforcement across the EU.
- ▶ Limited data is available concerning the wider effects of the Consumer Programme on product safety. While specific activities such as RAPEX and joint actions have clearly contributed to identifying and removing unsafe products, they also illustrate the continued presence of such products on the market. Interviewed stakeholders consider that a reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products in their country was achieved to a moderate extent through the Programme. No data exists to establish EU wide trends in product safety, other than through EU-wide surveys. Consumer trust in product safety has increased during the Programme period, in parallel to the efforts in enforcing product safety in recent years, both at national and EU levels. Also, roughly three quarters of retailers agree that public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector.
- ▶ Key factors that influence level of achievements related to the objective are limited staff and financial resources for market surveillance and enforcement in Member States. Stakeholders also cited emerging risks, e.g. from new, technically complex products or from e-commerce with third countries as factors that make effective market surveillance challenging.

Actions in the area of product safety funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are aimed at consolidating and enhancing product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the EU (Objective I). Already the 2011 mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme concluded that while there had been significant success in the area of cooperation among market surveillance authorities, it was recommended to further strengthen surveillance and enforcement through the Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX), and to pursue the

efforts aimed at addressing the international dimensions of the safety of products.⁷⁵ The impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 from the same year therefore reiterated that differences between Member States in enforcing product safety legislation, the presence of unsafe products on the Single Market, and risks linked to the globalisation of the production chain required authorities to cooperate more effectively in order to stop dangerous products from entering the Single Market and ensure adequate action whenever such products appear on the market.⁷⁶ Thus, product safety became an objective in its own right in the current Consumer Programme. In contrast, in the 2007-2013 Programme product safety had been covered by a broadly defined objective aiming at ensuring effective application of consumer protection rules.

Objective I is to be achieved through activities funded under Actions 1 to 3 of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, which focus on the coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions, scientific advice and risk analysis, as well as the Commission's cosmetics databases. Of these actions, coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions accounts for three quarters of the Programme resources spent under this objective. This includes funding of RAPEX,⁷⁷ joint cooperation and enforcement actions of market surveillance authorities across Europe, as well as related training and networking activities (for more details, see section 5 and the detailed fact sheets on the actions financed in Annex II).

The level of achievement of Objective I during the first half of the Programme period – 2013 to 2017 – will in the following be evaluated in comparison to the situation before the implementation of the Programme started, based on key indicators for the progress made. As mentioned before, the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 defines for the first time indicators that relate to particular activities, as well as associated baselines and targets to measure progress for each of its objectives.⁷⁸ For Objective I, the two indicators provided relate to RAPEX, and concern the percentage of notifications entailing at least one reaction by other Member States, as well as the ratio of the number of reactions to the number of RAPEX notifications for serious risks. In the following table we present both indicators for the baseline period 2011-2013,⁷⁹ the evaluation period 2014-2017, the targets set and an assessment of the progress made.

⁷⁵ See European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), and COM(2011) 1320 final, Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council on a consumer programme 2014-2020.

⁷⁶ COM(2011) 1320 final, Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council on a consumer programme 2014-2020.

⁷⁷ **RAPEX** is a tool for competent authorities of the participating countries and the EU institutions to facilitate rapid information exchange on unsafe products and to implement market surveillance. In addition, RAPEX serves through its website as a source of information on unsafe products for businesses and the wider public, with notifications published since 2008 on a daily basis. For more details, see case study on RAPEX in Annex I of this report.

⁷⁸ Annex II, Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multinational consumer programme for the years 2014-20.

⁷⁹ Note that the baseline for the indicators in the Regulation is the 2010 value, but the impact assessment of the Regulation already suggested adapting this baseline to a later year. To avoid a distortion by outliers, and to be consistent with subsequent tables with complementary indicators, in this assessment we have used the 2011-2013 average as baseline.

Table 6: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators set in the Regulation - Objective I)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-2013)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Targets in Regulation (by 2020)	Progress made
% of RAPEX notifications entailing at least one reaction by other MS	39%	44% (Year 2017: 46%)	Increase of 10% [47.5%]	+ (on track to reach target)
Ratio number of reactions/number of RAPEX notifications (serious risks) ^{a)}	1.03	1.58 (Year 2017: 1.66)	Increase of 15% [1.23]	++ (target already achieved)

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: RAPEX annual reports 2014 to 2016; DG JUST/DG SANCO annual activity reports 2014 to 2016; correspondence with DG JUST (2018). Notes: Regulation targets from Annex II of the Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual Consumer Programme for the years 2014-20. Further data on indicators provided in fact sheet CP2014-20 Action 2. a) A notification can trigger several reactions from authorities of other Member States.

The table above shows that both indicators show a positive trend in the first half of the Programme period (2014-2017). On the one hand, the percentage of RAPEX notifications entailing at least one reaction by other Member States amounted on average to 44% in the 2014-2017 period (46% in 2017), thereby in the last year almost reaching the target set for 2020. On the other hand, the ratio of the number of reactions to the number of serious risk notifications already reached the envisaged target, with an average of 1.58 in the 2014-2017 period (1.66 in 2017).⁸⁰ It can be concluded that the targets set for both indicators concerning RAPEX are on track to be reached, or have already been reached. The contribution of RAPEX to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance is also evidenced by:

- The measures taken in response to notifications under the RAPEX system by economic operators or authorities – such as withdrawal of products, sales bans, corrective actions, rejection of imports – to remove dangerous products from the market or prevent their import into the EU. More than 2 000 voluntary and compulsory measures were reported in 2016 alone. In the same year, the number of reactions was almost double the number of notifications. This means that national authorities are systematically following-up notifications that are circulated in the system. Most of the reactions in 2016 concerned follow-up actions to voluntary measures, indicating that distributors, manufacturers or importers in Europe follow each other by recalling the dangerous products notified in the system.⁸¹
- The important role of RAPEX in bilateral and multilateral collaboration of the EU with respect to product safety. Based on RAPEX data the European Commission shares information on dangerous products with the OECD GlobalRecalls portal.⁸² Also, as China is the main country of origin for products that are subject to notification, a specific module (RAPEX China) allows for the

⁸⁰ For more details, please refer to the Fact Sheets in the Annex of this report.

⁸¹ RAPEX Annual Report 2016.

⁸² <https://globalrecalls.oecd.org/front/index.html#/recalls?scrollTop=129432>

swift flagging of notifications concerning unsafe products from China. The Chinese authorities investigate these cases in order to trace back the manufacturers, exporters and businesses concerned with the aim of making them aware of product safety rules in Europe. Where necessary, they take further measures to ensure that those products are no longer produced and shipped to Europe. Since 2013, the number of notifications involving China as the country of origin is declining.⁸³

It can be concluded that during the evaluation period RAPEX continued to be a central element of the EU market surveillance and product safety framework that is crucially contributing to achieving Objective I. This is evidenced by its outputs and results, and confirmed by the assessments of the interviewed stakeholders at EU and Member State levels. EU officials from different DGs (DG Justice and Consumers and DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) emphasised in our interviews that RAPEX is a vital tool of market surveillance both in the European and international context, generating genuine added-value for Member States and for the EU. In the country level interviews, nearly two in three of the interviewed stakeholders that had an opinion (61%) considered RAPEX to be effective or very effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance, a view especially voiced by ministries and national authorities (that are the direct users of the system).

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 does not include indicators and targets for the performance of activities funded under Objective I other than RAPEX. The table below therefore provides the number of joint actions in the area of product safety and the number of exchanges of product safety officials as additional indicators. Both the number of exchanges and the number of joint actions have increased compared to the baseline period.

Table 7: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (additional indicators for outputs and results - Objective I)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Number of joint actions in the area of product safety	4 (number of countries n.a.)	5 (involving on average 11 countries)	+
Number of exchanges of product safety officials	28	32 2017: 56	+

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: RAPEX annual reports 2014 to 2016; data provided by CHAFAA on exchange of officials 2014-2017. Notes:

Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. See the fact sheets in Annex II of this report for more detailed data. a) Increase in the number of notifications could be caused by various factors, such as more market surveillance, more unsafe products on the market etc.

As the table shows, in the evaluation period five joint cooperation and enforcement actions of market surveillance authorities have been undertaken each year. The

⁸³ In 2016, the percentage of notifications with China as the country of origin dropped by 9% from the previous year (2015) to a total of 53% out of all notifications. In 2017, this percentage remained stable. As the absolute number of notifications involving products from China also dropped considerably, this could indicate that the cooperation with China (which also involves exchange of good practices and Trilateral Summits together with the US and Chinese authorities to address common challenges) has been effective in reducing the importance of China as a source of unsafe products on the EU market. Note, however, that the available evidence does not allow to draw a causal link between RAPEX China and the decline in Chinese product notifications. This could also reflect e.g. Chinese investment in moving up the global value chain, or improvements in product safety for other reasons.

selected topics ranged from toys to power tools and - like in RAPEX - concerned mainly classical product groups. The number of participating countries varied between 7 and 19 countries. As an example, in the 2014 joint action on acoustic toys, around 2 190 different models of acoustic toys were inspected. 10% of the tested acoustic toys were found to be non-compliant. The acoustic toy group with the highest non-compliance rate was cap-firing toys (28%), followed by close-to-the-ear toys (20%) and wind toys (14%). Market surveillance authorities issued 3 recalls, 30 sales bans and/or withdrawals from the market, and 26 RAPEX alerts were notified or in the process of notification (at the time of delivering the report on the action in 2017). These figures illustrate that joint actions directly contribute to consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance across EU borders, and that their effectiveness is enhanced through the availability of RAPEX as a notification system, so that even non-participating countries benefit from the actions. This was confirmed during our stakeholder interviews, in which joint actions were considered to be largely effective. Ministries and national authorities noted that they appreciated the coordinated approach to common problems, the opportunity to join forces and to establish direct contacts with surveillance authorities from different countries, and the exchange of knowledge.

Other key activities funded under Objective I, such as training and networking measures (including the E-Enforcement Academy, which started its activities in 2017), the databases on cosmetics (COSING and CPNP), and the two non-food scientific committees (SCCS and SCHEER) were also implemented as envisaged and supported the achievement of the Programme objective.⁸⁴

When considering the overall assessment of the interviewed stakeholders, slight positive trends can be observed regarding the assessment of the effectiveness of the activities in achieving Objective I and related benefits during the first four years of the current Consumer Programme, compared to their assessment of the 2007-2013 Programme. In both Programs largely the same activities were funded (except the E-Enforcement Academy, and the databases on cosmetics, which were only funded under the current Programme).

The table below provides the average rating across all product safety related activities for both periods.

⁸⁴ For details regarding outputs and results of individual actions/activities, refer to the fact sheets in Annex II. Note that the E-Enforcement Academy had a limited number of participants in its first year of operation (2017), which is possibly to its early stage of implementation. However, it was the most positively assessed activity in terms of effectiveness in this Programme area by the interviewed stakeholders, mostly ministries and national authorities.

Table 8: Stakeholder assessment of activities – progress made during evaluation period (Objective I)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Effectiveness of activities funded under Objective I (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Largely effective (3.8) ^{a)}	Largely effective (3.9)	0 / + (slight positive trend)
Benefits achieved (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Moderately achieved (3.1) ^{a)}	Moderately achieved (3.3)	0 / + (slight positive trend)

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

a) Baseline value for whole Programme period CP 2007-2013

It is notable that all activities funded under Objective I were considered without exception to be largely effective by the stakeholders interviewed, supporting a consistently positive picture in this respect (see Annex VII for details).

The interviewed stakeholders also assessed the extent to which the activities funded under the Consumer Programme have achieved specific benefits in their country. Overall, benefits achieved increased slightly under the current Programme, compared to the previous Programme (see table above). Interviewees considered that the activities funded under the current Programme largely achieved three specific benefits, namely:

- *Better information on unsafe products for enforcement authorities;*
- *Better trained enforcement officials;* and
- *Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States.*

At the same time, interviewees emphasised that several factors influenced (negatively) the level of achievement. They were mostly external in nature, i.e. independent from the implementation of the Consumer Programme. The most often mentioned factor concerned *limited staff/financial resources for market surveillance and enforcement*.

Other factors indicated by a large number of interviewees were:

- *New distribution channels and rapid product innovation making effective market surveillance more difficult;* and
- *Increased trade and direct B2C e-commerce with third countries leading to purchase of unsafe products.*⁸⁵

Due to these external factors, the interviewed stakeholders considered that the activities funded under the Programme contributed to a *reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products* in their country to a moderate extent. While it would be of interest for this evaluation to validate this assessment of key stakeholders with objective data on product safety related trends, such data is unfortunately not consistently available. For example, the current European Injury Database (IDB) does not provide comparable data to support the analysis of product-related injuries and

⁸⁵ See Annex VII for more details.

accidents in the EU.⁸⁶ Already in 2013, a coalition of stakeholders therefore called on the European Commission to set up a Pan-European Accident and Injury Data System.⁸⁷ The aim of this system would be to record the cause of such accidents, modelled on the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) operated by the US-Consumer Product Safety Commission.⁸⁸ No other indicators are available that could provide insights into product safety related trends in the EU.⁸⁹

However, EU data series exist concerning both the consumer perception of the level of product safety in the EU and the retailer perception of enforcement of product safety legislation. As the following table indicates, these two indicators show diverging trends.

Table 9: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators for potential wider effects - Objective I)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Percentage of EU consumers who agree either that essentially all non-food products are safe or that a small number of non-food products are unsafe	68%	73%	+
Percentage of retailers who agree that public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector	81%	74%	–

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 surveys of consumers' and retailers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection as well as Flash Eurobarometer

⁸⁶ The IDB is accessible under https://ec.europa.eu/health/data_collection/databases/idb_en. IDB data currently available are produced voluntarily by Member States and do not clearly mention if notified injuries are caused by product non-compliance or by improper consumer use. See European Commission, Ex-post evaluation of the application of the market surveillance provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, Final Report, May 2017

⁸⁷ ANEC, BEUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, CEN & CENELEC, EuroCommerce, EuroSafe, Orgalime, see ANEC-PR-2013-PRL-001.

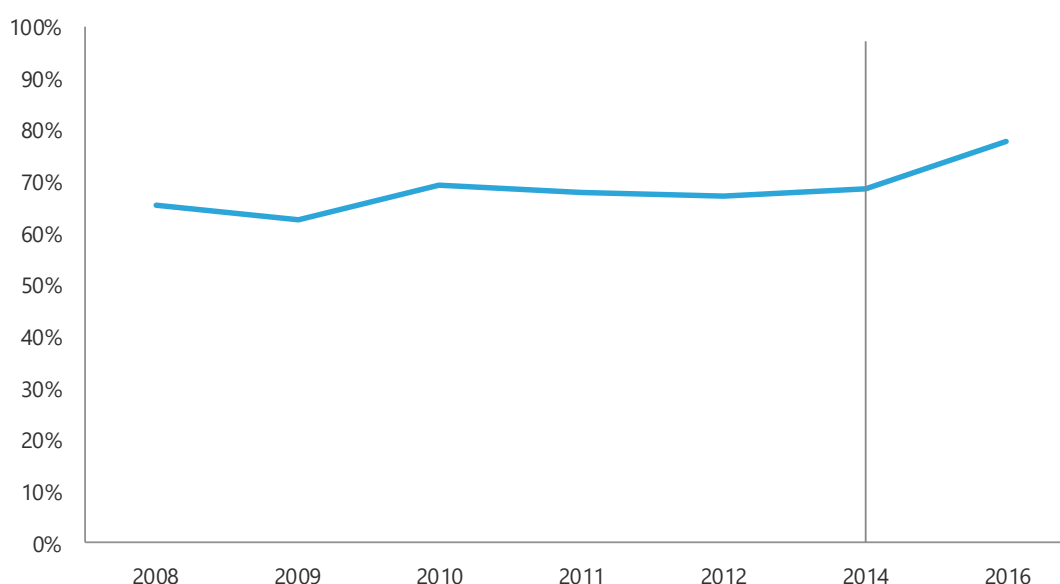
⁸⁸ CPSC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) collects current injury data associated with consumer products from U.S. hospital emergency departments across the country. Consisting of a national probability sample of hospitals of differing sizes and locations, NEISS provides national estimates of the number and types of consumer product-related injuries. The 2015 NEISS estimates have been produced from a sample of 96 hospitals, including children's hospitals. See <https://www.cpsc.gov/Research--Statistics/NEISS-Injury-Data/>

⁸⁹ A recent evaluation of the application of the market surveillance provisions of Regulation (EC) 765/2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products interpreted a nearly 60% increase in the average number of RAPEX notifications from 2006-2009 to 2010-2015 as supporting evidence for the conclusion that "overall, product non-compliance is increasing in Europe". On the other hand, the same report conceded that the "increase in the number of notifications may not only represent more products posing a safety risk, but also an increase in the effectiveness of MSAs [Market Surveillance Authorities] in identifying these products, thereby increasing the level of consumers' and users' protection. Similarly, the rising number of RAPEX notifications may also be due to various external factors." A survey conducted in the framework of the above mentioned study remained inconclusive. See European Commission, Ex-post evaluation of the application of the market surveillance provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, Final Report, May 2017, pp. 18, 77-80.

surveys 396 (2014), 359 (2012), 331 (2011), see notes to the figures below for question wording. Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

The first indicator (consumer trust) has been consistently measured by the Commission's regular surveys on consumer attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection since 2008. The following figure shows the development of consumer trust in product safety in more detail.

Figure 7: Percentage of consumers who agree that essentially all non-food products are safe or that a small number of non-food products are unsafe (EU average), 2008-2016



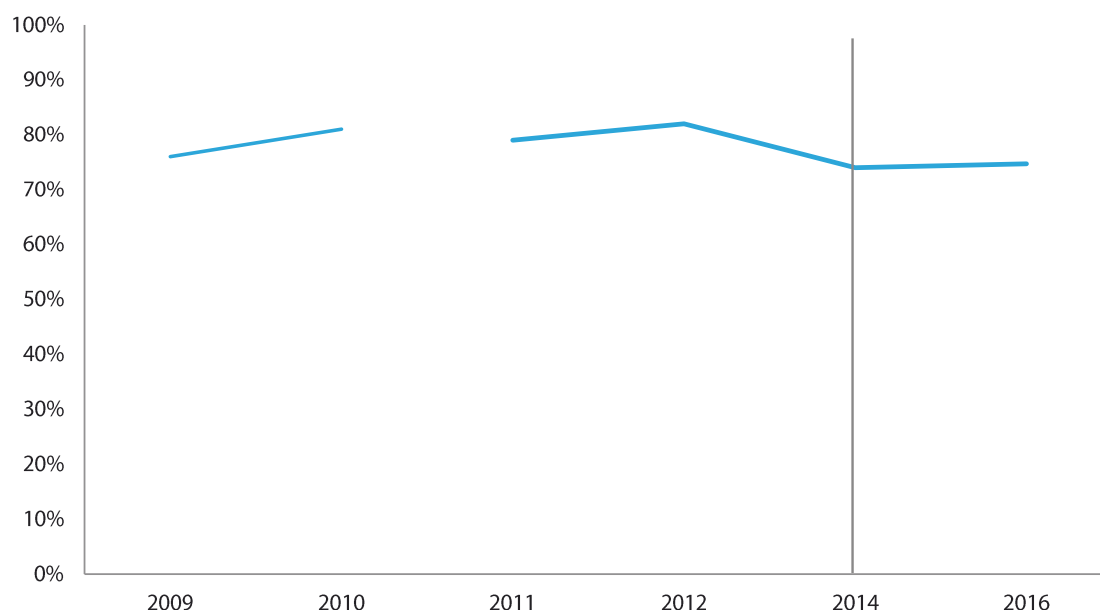
Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. Question text: Thinking about all non-food products currently on the market in (our country), do you think that...? / How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... (Essentially all non-food products are safe / A small number of non-food products are unsafe). The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with these statements. Note that the vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

The figure above indicates that consumer trust in product safety has generally increased over time. In the EU, the proportion of consumers agreeing that essentially all non-food products in their country are safe (or that only a small number are unsafe) increased from 68% in 2008 to 78% in 2016, i.e. an increase of 13 percentage points. The largest increase (9 percentage points) occurred between the 2014 and 2016 surveys after a period of relative stagnation between 2010 and 2014.

Although it is not possible to establish a direct causal link between the implementation of the Consumer Programme and the level of consumer trust in product safety, and also acknowledging that specific events (such as broadly published product safety related problems or 'scandals') may have a disproportionate influence on this trust, it nonetheless appears to indicate a positive trend in parallel to the efforts in enforcing product safety over the last decade, both at national and EU levels.

These results contrast with the second indicator of wider effects considered here, the assessment of retailers concerning market surveillance activities in their sector. The following figure shows the detailed data concerning the percentage of retailers in the EU who agree that the public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector.

Figure 8: Percentage of retailers who agree that the public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector (EU average), 2009-2016



Sources: Flash Eurobarometer surveys 396 (2014), 359 (2012), 331 (2011), 300 (2010), 278 (2009) and Retailers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2016. Question text: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements... "The public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in your sector". The figure above reports the proportion of retailers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with the statement. Base: All retailers (2009-2010), and retailers who sell non-food products (2011-2016). Note that the vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

The figure indicates that retailers' assessment of enforcement fell around the time of the start of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and has remained stable since then. Still, a large majority of roughly three quarters of surveyed EU retailers agree that public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector.

It can therefore be concluded that the Consumer Programme has made substantial progress in achieving Objective I compared to the baseline period (before the start of the Programme), as is evidenced by a significant progress made in reaching or even achieving the targets provided in the Regulation, as well as other data on outputs and results of the activities funded. In parallel to the efforts in enforcing product safety in recent years, both at national and EU levels, and the implementation of related activities under the Consumer Programme, consumer trust in product safety has increased. Also, a large majority of surveyed retailers agree that public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with product safety legislation in their sector.

6.1.2. Consumer information and education, developing the evidence base and support to consumer organisations

The key findings of the evaluation regarding effectiveness are that:

- ▶ **The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 shows so far mixed results in improving consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations.**
- ▶ **The Programme has so far been effective in developing the evidence base for consumer policy. Consumer scoreboards and market studies have led to policy uptake at EU and national levels, and are considered to be useful for benchmarking purpose in Member States.**
- ▶ **The Programme is also effectively contributing to achievement of the objective in its support to consumer organisations, especially at the EU level. Due to the Programme's support, the EU-level consumer organisation BEUC makes an important and consistent contribution to representing consumer interests at the EU level. Trust in consumer organisations is increasing in the more recently acceded Member States, on which the Programme's activities to improve competencies of consumer organisations have focused. However, this increase is only notable in the long run, and is in contrast to the continued, limited capacity of consumer organisation in some countries, in spite of the training measures funded.**
- ▶ **The Programme's consumer information and education measures have so far been less effective in achieving the objective than other measures. Awareness campaigns funded under the Programme have had mixed results, with the campaigns' targets in terms of hits or impression typically achieved, but little long term impacts on consumers' awareness of their rights being discernible. Also, little evidence is available regarding the impact of consumer education measures funded.**
- ▶ **Key factors that influence level of achievements related to the Programme objective are often external in nature: in the area of consumer information and education they include limited staff and financial resources available for this purpose in Member States, but also the limited integration of consumer education into national curricula; in the area of capacity building of consumer organisations they include resource constraints of the target organisations, which cannot appropriately be addressed by the provision of training alone.**

Objective II of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 aims at improving consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and and providing support to consumer organisations. The actions funded under this objective are targeted to address problems such as underdeveloped consumer markets monitoring, insufficient capacity of consumer organisations, and poor knowledge and understanding of key consumer rights.⁹⁰

Again, several of the actions funded had already been implemented during the 2007-2013 Programme, with mixed results. The 2011 Mid-term evaluation had concluded that the Programme had been successful in gathering evidence to support the development of policy, and training of national consumer organisations had been effective, but that there had been more limited progress on consumer education for various reasons, such as the lack of a clear target audience, clarity of education modules, cultural differences and variations in knowledge about rights at the national level. The evaluation recommended to develop and focus the evidence base, to

⁹⁰ See baseline in section 5.1 and the 2011 impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, COM(2011) 1320 final, Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council on a consumer programme 2014-2020, p 13-15.

continue funding of training of consumer organisations (with a possible need for training measures held at national level), to improve information dissemination, and to consolidate information and education tools.⁹¹ As described in Part 2 of this report, these recommendations led to subsequent changes in the Programme, including replacing the DOLCETA and Europa Diary activities with the Consumer Classroom, and replacing the training Programme TRACE with the Consumer Champion.

Activities funded under Objective II therefore aim to solve these identified and continued problem areas, and are described in more detail in section 5 and the fact sheets in Annex II.

The extent to which Objective II is on track to be achieved halfway through the Programme period can be evaluated in comparison to the situation before the implementation of the Programme started, based on key indicators for the progress made. With respect to this objective, the Regulation defines as indicators the number of complaint bodies and the number of countries submitting complaints to the European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS),⁹² i.e. the indicators relate to one of the several activities funded. In the following table we present related data for the evaluation period 2014-2017. As explained in the previous section, for consistency reasons we use the 2011-2013 average as baseline, and also provide the targets in the Regulation and an assessment of the progress made.

Table 10: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators set in the Regulation - Objective II)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Targets in Regulation (by 2020)	Progress made
Number of complaint bodies submitting complaints to the ECCRS	38	55 ^{a)} (Year 2015: 73)	70	++ (target already achieved)
Number of countries submitting complaints to the ECCRS	9	17 ^{a)} (Year 2015: 20)	20	++ (target already achieved)

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: DG JUST/DG SANCO annual activity reports 2014 to 2015. Notes: Indicators from Annex II of the Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual Consumer Programme for the years 2014-20. a) Data is only available for 2014 to 2015.

The table shows that the targets set in the Regulation on the number of complaints bodies and countries submitting complaints to the ECCRS have already been met.

⁹¹ See European Commission, Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report (2011), p. 169-177.

⁹² In 2010, the European Commission issued a recommendation on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries. The aim was to collect complaints data in such a way as to enable comparisons on problems across the Member States and so reinforce the evidence base on detriment and/or other consumer-related problems. Complaint bodies (e.g. consumer organisations or advice centres) were encouraged to report complaints data using the classification to the Commission. The data was collected in the ECCRS. The IT tool is provided free of charge to complaint bodies willing to provide data to the Commission.

indicating the achievement of the indicators provided for Objective II. Also, the number of complaints submitted to the system has increased substantially during the evaluation period, and ECCRS data has fed into the preparatory work for several initiatives and studies, often for triangulation purposes.⁹³ It is notable that this evidence concerning the effects of the ECCRS contrasts with the views of stakeholder, which considered the ECCRS on average to be less than moderately effective in reaching the objective, the lowest assessment for any of the activities funded.⁹⁴

The fact sheets in Annex II of this report provide complementary indicators for output and results of the actions funded, a selection of which are provided in the following table, which relate to the evidence base and the support to BEUC.

Table 11: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (additional indicators for outputs and results - Objective II)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Number of market studies / surveys published	2 ^{a)} Publication of CMS and CCS in alternate years	2.5	O / + (slight positive trend)
BEUC press releases / press quotations	36 / 1 021	43 / 3 583	++

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; O = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: Budget data provided by DG JUST; BEUC final activity reports 2011 to 2016. Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. a) Baseline value for Programme period CP 2007-2013

The first indicator in the table above relates to building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers. It accounts for the largest share of the Programme resources spent under this objective (about 40%), and includes the funding of consumer scoreboards and related surveys, as well as the funding of market studies. The number of studies and surveys published has increased slightly, compared to the baseline period. Developing the evidence base for consumer policy has mostly continued on a similar trajectory as during the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme, which was considered to be successful in this respect (according to the mid-term and final evaluations of the previous Programme). The present evaluation also found a notable policy uptake of the results of the scoreboards and market studies at the EU and national levels. Our case study on the evidence base for EU consumer policy in Annex I summarises the evaluation results in this respect:

- Findings of the Consumer Markets Scoreboards have helped national policymakers to benchmark their national situation against other countries;⁹⁵

⁹³ E.g. for the Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU, the Evaluation of the Consumer Rights Directive and the Consumer Scoreboards (since 2012). See fact sheets in Annex II.

⁹⁴ Also, the ECCRS was assessed lowest in terms of affordability of the costs borne by each organisation relative to the benefits it received. This points to a lack of balance between efforts by the organisations for providing complaints data (which accrue at the national level) and the benefits of a better evidence base regarding consumer complaints for policy making (which first accrue at the EU level).

⁹⁵ Authorities from a number of countries outlined in the interviews how they use the evidence base of both the market studies and the scoreboards on national level, e.g. for publications and as a basis to further monitor their own markets when the results are poor (e.g. Norway), for development of national policy (e.g. Lithuania), or for impact assessments (Finland).

- Scoreboards have informed the European Semester exercise and provide key evidence for various other purposes such as evaluations and impact assessments. Results of the Scoreboards are also used as indicators in the strategic planning of DG Justice and Consumers;
- The findings of market studies fed into policy and other Commission initiatives.⁹⁶

The available evidence therefore indicates that the Consumer Programme has so far been effective in developing the evidence base for consumer policy. This assessment is in line with the view of the majority of interviewees, which considered both scoreboards and market studies to be effective and useful also at the national level.⁹⁷ EU level officials, national ministries/authorities and consumer groups emphasised the benefits of an independent and unbiased evidence source, having facts and figures available which make a significant difference in policy discussions across business and the different EU policy areas. On the other hand, several stakeholders pointed out that in some cases the impact of these studies and surveys could have been higher if their results were better taken into account by EU and national level policymakers when making consumer policy decisions.

A further key element of the Programme's objective concerns the support to consumer organisations. Under the Consumer Programme, the EU level consumer organisation BEUC receives a yearly core grant that constitutes just over a third of its total operational budget.⁹⁸ The financial support to BEUC was last independently evaluated in 2013 for the 2007-13 contributions.⁹⁹ The findings of the evaluation, inter alia, emphasise **the organisation's significant contribution to EU policy-making** and representing consumer interests, found it to be reasonably efficient and well-functioning, and recommended improvements in its performance monitoring system (key performance indicators are now in place). In our interviews, support to BEUC was considered to be very effective in contributing to achievement of Objective II. In particular, national consumer organisations considered the support to European-level consumer organisations to be highly effective. Several consumer organisations mentioned that BEUC played a crucial role in the European consumer protection framework and acted as an essential information, education and networking hub for national consumer organisations. Without BEUC (the obvious situation in the absence of EU contributions), few national organisations would have the resources or expertise to contribute directly at the EU level.¹⁰⁰ The table above shows the average number of press releases by BEUC and the resulting press quotations. While the number of press

⁹⁶ For example, the 2017 Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU fed into the REFIT (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme, i.e. Better Regulation Agenda) of consumer and marketing law; the study on the sharing economy is expected to provide policy options for issues in C2C transactions; and the study on online market segmentation will provide the evidence base for enforcement of existing competition and consumer protection rules. The Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market provided key **evidence for the Commission's proposed Regulation** on addressing geo-blocking. See fact sheet CP2014-20 Action.

⁹⁷ "Better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member **States**" **received average assessments of 3.6 from ministries** and national authorities, second highest in terms of benefit. See also the detailed interview results for more details, in Annex VI of this report.

⁹⁸ www.beuc.eu. In 2016, the EU operational grant represented 38% of the operational BEUC budget and 32% of its total budget. For more details see fact sheet action 5.

⁹⁹ Evaluation of EU financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) 2007-2011, prepared by Van Dijk Management Consultants, 16 October 2013; see fact sheet action 5 (source n)

¹⁰⁰ For more details, please refer to the detailed interview results in the Annex VI of this report.

releases increased by 20% during the evaluation period, the number of press quotations more than tripled, indicating increasing impact of BEUC's work.

Support to consumer organisations is further provided through the Consumer Champion, a training programme for consumer professionals.¹⁰¹ It consists of courses at the local level in the Member States as well as e-learning courses and an online networking platform, and was overall considered to be largely effective by stakeholders.¹⁰² However, the training programme only had limited success in leading to an improved capacity of national consumer organisations (see below). The likely most significant factor is the lack of resources of consumer organisations. To paraphrase one of the representatives interviewed, well-trained staff are essential, but it is an effective investment only when there are resources not only to train staff, but also to keep them, which is not the case for many national consumer organisations. **Other reasons/factors mentioned by interviewees included lack of national authorities' support to consumer organisations and unstable development of projects.**¹⁰³

The remaining area of activities funded under this Programme objective concerns consumer information and education. In our interviews, the related activities were assessed as being less effective in contributing to achievement of the objective than other activities. The consumer rights information activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-20 have been focused either on Member States that have joined the EU recently, or for new consumer rights that are subject to harmonised rules, or sectors with significant cross-border trade or high consumer detriment. Specific activities funded have included an information campaign on raising consumer awareness when they take out credit, awareness raising on energy efficiency (communication campaign targeting energy poor households), and consumer rights awareness activities in the newest Member State, Croatia (consumer advice services in support of an EU information campaign). Specific evaluations are available for the campaign on consumer credit rights, which has been executed in two waves (2013/2014 and 2015) in a total of 6 Member States.¹⁰⁴ The specific evaluation of the 2014 campaigns pointed out that, while their messages were considered easy and informative, the increase in awareness after the campaign was relatively small overall (2% to 5%). **It concluded that "the impact of the campaign has been moderate with some positive aspects".**¹⁰⁵ The evaluation of the second wave reported that "stakeholders perceived that the budget was quite limited and that it would therefore have been challenging to make a lasting impact on large numbers of the target group". **The study further concluded that "the target audience's knowledge of their credit rights remains low even following the campaign, especially among the Czechs".**¹⁰⁶ For the campaigns for which specific evaluations were available this leads to the conclusion (which is also confirmed by stakeholder interviews) that consumer

¹⁰¹ The Consumer Champion continues and builds on the work of the previous TRACE programme, and is managed by BEUC as leader of a consortium of contractors.

¹⁰² Note that assessments and complementary evaluation results diverged between the online component of the Consumer Champion (which is less used) and the local training courses, which are most appreciated, as they provide space for networking with other consumer stakeholders in the country, are in the national language and **focus on country's specificities**. See related fact sheet in Annex II.

¹⁰³ For more details, please refer to the detailed interview results in the Annex VI of this report.

¹⁰⁴ Ireland, Malta, Spain and Cyprus in 2014 and Austria and Czech Republic in 2015.

¹⁰⁵ ICF, Evaluation of the information campaign "Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit" (2014); see fact sheet CP 2014-20 Action 6 (source m)

¹⁰⁶ Evaluation of the information campaign "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit", 2016.

information campaigns funded under the Consumer Programme have shown mixed results in terms of their contribution to achieving the Programme's objective. While the campaigns' targets in terms of hits or impression were typically achieved, little long term impacts are being discernible (see also the discussion of evidence from EU consumer research below).

The consumer education web-platform Consumer Classroom started its operation in 2013, replacing the DOLCETA and Europa Diary activities under the previous Consumer Programme. In spite of a considerable number of users (more than 25 000 registered users at the end of 2017), stakeholders were divided regarding the effectiveness of the activity, with a clear majority considering it at best to have so far been moderately effective in contributing to achievement of Objective II. Some of the ministries/national authorities in particular criticised it for not having enough local content or resources in the local language, although a much larger number of interviewees noted that the problem was rather a lack of integration of consumer education in the national curriculum. It is therefore likely that the effectiveness of the consumer education measures under the Consumer Programme depends on the national situation that determines its uptake in the education system. However, detailed data to assess the contribution of the Consumer Classroom to achieving the Programme objective and possible limiting factors was not available for this evaluation.¹⁰⁷

No clear trend can be observed regarding the overall assessment of the interviewed stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the activities in achieving Objective II and related benefits. Again, we compare the assessment for the first four years of the current Consumer Programme with the assessment of the 2007-2013 Programme.

Table 12: Stakeholder assessment of activities – progress made during evaluation period (Objective II)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2007-13) ^{a)}	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Effectiveness of activities funded under Objective II (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Largely effective (3.8)	Largely effective (3.7)	– / 0 (slight negative trend)
Benefits achieved (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Moderately achieved (3.2)	Moderately achieved (3.2)	0

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

a) Assessment concerns the whole Programme period 2007-2013

Interviewees considered the activities of the current Programme to have been overall largely effective in contributing to Objective II (as in the previous Programme), with the exceptions mentioned already above: Assessments for consumer information and education activities, as well as the ECCRS were lower than for the rest of the activities.

Interviewed stakeholders were also asked to assess the benefits of the specific activities funded under Objective II in their own countries. Overall, benefits were

¹⁰⁷ A definite assessment of effectiveness of the Consumer Classroom would require a specific evaluation of the platform, or at least additional data, particularly on the portal's penetration in particular countries, and how the materials are actually used by the teachers themselves.

considered to have been moderately achieved, a similar assessment as for the previous Programme period. Benefits considered to have the highest level of achievement were:

- *Improved representation of consumer interests at EU level; and*
- *Better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States.*

As discussed above, *improved capacity of national consumer organisations* was ranked the lowest in terms of level of achievement.

Two relevant data series could be identified that provide more insights regarding the progress made during the evaluation period in achieving Objective II. They are presented in the following table, and relate to the level of awareness of EU consumers of their rights (as indicator for the wider effects of consumer education and information activities), and to the trust in consumer organisations (as indicator for the wider effects of support to consumer organisations). For both indicators the trend appears to be negative, although the more detailed discussion of the data series below shows that these average values have to be interpreted with care.

Table 13: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators for potential wider effects - Objective II)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Average proportion of correct responses to three knowledge questions about EU consumer rights ^{a)}	52%	46%	— (largely due to drop in 2014 with upward trend between 2014 and 2016)
Percentage of consumers who agree that they trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect consumer rights	74%	67%	—

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; — = negative trend.

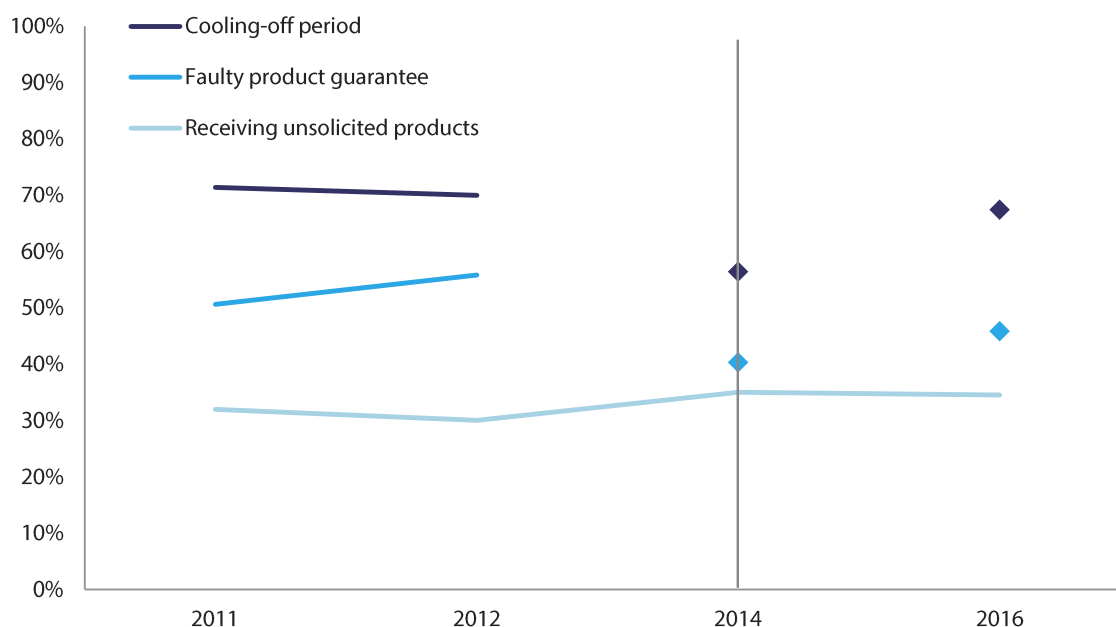
Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection, see notes to the figures below for question wording.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. a) The three knowledge questions relate to receiving unsolicited products, cooling off period, and faulty product guarantee. Note that there were changes in question wording and answer items in 2014 and 2016.

The annual activity reports of DG Justice and Consumers define a target indicator from the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard which measures the average proportion of **correct answers to three knowledge questions used in the Commission's regular surveys on consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection**. The three questions relate to faulty product guarantees, cooling off periods and receiving unsolicited products. While these results show that the milestone target of a 55% average proportion of correct responses to the three questions by 2017 has not been achieved, a detailed look at the data indicates that this is due to a major drop in 2014, possibly an outlier in the data (see below).

The following figure presents the results in more detail. It shows the evolution in the percentage of correct responses to each of the individual knowledge questions at the EU level separately.

Figure 9: Percentage of consumers answering correctly to particular knowledge questions about EU consumer rights (EU average), 2011-2016



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Breaks in the series indicate changes in question wording or response items.

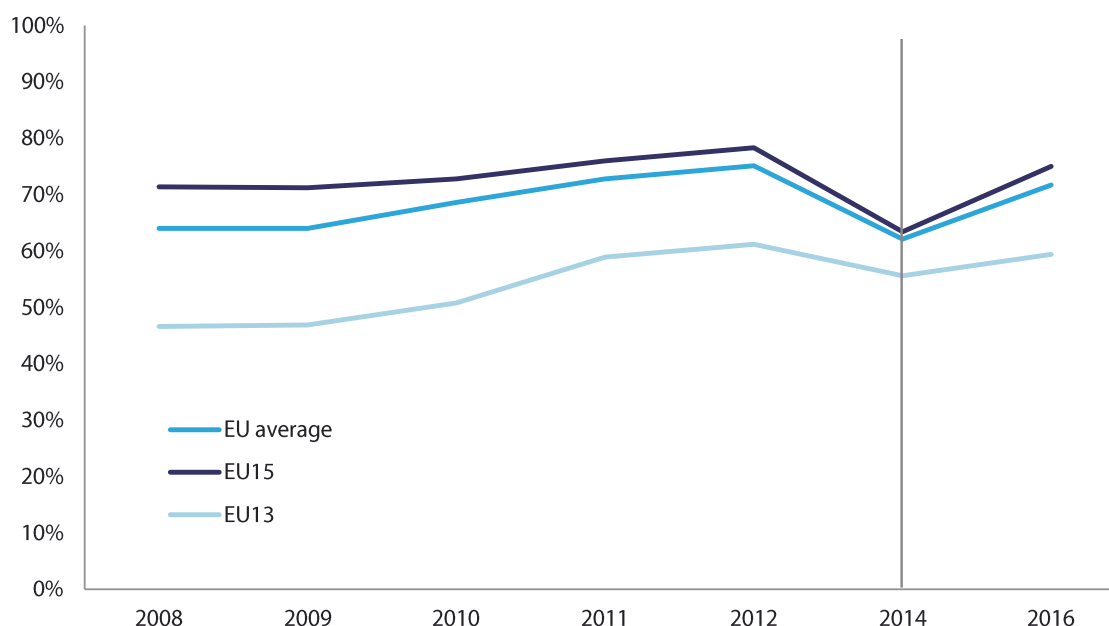
The figure above shows that the largest decreases in average consumer knowledge between 2011 and 2014 are attributable to the questions regarding the cooling-off period and guarantees for faulty products, while consumers' knowledge about their rights when receiving unsolicited products has slightly increased over this period. According to the survey results, the average proportion of correct answers regarding the cooling-off period and faulty product guarantees decreased between 2011 and 2014, and increased again between 2014 and 2016 by 9 and 6 percentage points, respectively. However, it is very much possible that a change in question wording and response item options for these two questions led to the outlier value in the 2014 survey. More specifically, the two survey questions that showed the drop in 2014 included an additional answer item, which was not included in previous years, and was dropped again in the 2016 survey.¹⁰⁸ Ignoring the 2014 outlier, the average proportion of correct answers to the three knowledge questions concerning consumer rights are roughly stable.

¹⁰⁸ While the knowledge questions typically only had three answer items (Yes / No / Don't know), in 2014 the answer items for the two questions on cooling-off period and guarantees for faulty products also included the option 'It depends on the product'. This highlights that measuring progress towards legal rights awareness by consumers through surveys depends significantly on how questions are framed and which answer items are provided. This is also illustrated by the results of the 2017 Consumer Market Study informing the Fitness check of EU consumer and marketing law: In this survey, proportions of consumers able to answer correctly to a series of knowledge questions ranged between 38% and 73%, depending on the question.

The second indicator considered is the level of trust of consumers that consumer organisations protect their rights, as measures by EU surveys (see table above). It could be expected that trust in these organisations increases in parallel to their degree of professionalisation. Data from the Commission's regular survey of consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection shows that the percentage of consumers agreeing that they trust consumer organisations to protect their rights has increased between 2008 and 2016 across the EU, from 64% to 72%. Due to a strong drop in 2014, this average percentage was lower under the current Consumer Programme than in the period directly preceding it.

More relevant for the purposes of this Programme evaluation are the detailed results concerning the levels of trust in consumer organisations in the more recently acceded Member States. Trust in consumer organisations in these countries has increased even more (but starting from a relatively lower level), from 47% in 2008 to 59% in 2016. The gap in trust between the EU15 ("old" Member States) and the EU13 (more recently acceded Member States) has also reduced, down to 16 percentage points in 2016 from a 25 percentage point gap in 2008. Since capacity-building programmes have been focused on the more recently acceded Member States, this could be a relevant development. Below is the figure representation of these results:

Figure 10: Percentage of consumers who agree that they trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect consumer rights (EU average)



Source: Own compilation based on Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... You trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with this statement. Note that between 2012 and 2014 the question wording changed slightly to refer to 'non-governmental' consumer organisations (new wording) instead of 'independent' consumer organisations (old wording).

Of course, trust in institutions is affected by multiple factors, and this is possibly also the case for the reduction in trust in consumer organisations after 2012, which could be a late consequence of the Euro crisis affecting trust in institutions in general or an outlier caused by other factors (including a minor change in question wording in 2014, which, however, was continued in the 2016 survey).

It can be concluded that the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 shows so far mixed results in achieving Objective II: While both targets set in the Regulation for the ECCRS are already achieved, this indicator only represents one of the activities funded under this objective, and stakeholders see only limited associated benefits. Other indicators show that strengthened consumer representation at EU level has been achieved, and the production of evidence to support the policy process has continued under the current Programme and led to related policy uptake. Also positive is an increased trust in consumer organisations in the more recently acceded Member States, on which the Consumer Programme's activities to improve competencies of consumer organisations have focused. However, this increase is only notable in the long run, and is in contrast to the limited capacity of consumer organisation in some countries. Finally, consumer awareness of their rights seems to have been only marginally affected by the (limited number) of consumer information and awareness campaigns conducted.

6.1.3. Consumer rights and redress

The key findings of the evaluation regarding effectiveness are that:

- ▶ **The Programme has so far made limited progress in achieving Objective III with respect to improving access to simple and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution. Activities funded in this respect – mainly the ODR platform, the awareness campaigns on ADR/ODR and related networking and events – have only partly been successful to improve access to ADR. In contrast, behavioural studies and other consumer policy studies contributed in varying degrees to smart regulatory action and evidence-based policymaking.**
- ▶ **Possible factors that limit achievements in the area of redress so far are the early stage of implementation of the ODR platform, a limited awareness of consumers and traders of the platform, and the reluctance of traders to settle their disputes via ADR. Still, positive trends with respect to accessibility of and consumer satisfaction with ADR can be observed based on EU survey data, which possibly reflect ongoing efforts in Member States to improve ADR systems in response to relevant EU legislation and a broader recognition of ADR as an efficient means of redress.**

Actions 8 and 9 of the Consumer Programme aim to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution (Objective III). The actions are targeted to address problems such as the sub-optimal protection of consumer rights, in particular in cross-border situations, and problems faced by consumers when trying to secure redress.¹⁰⁹ These problems were also emphasised in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme, which concluded that the 2004-2007 and 2007-2013 Programmes had been increasingly successful in the integration of consumer policy into relevant EU policies, and suggested pursuing efforts in this field, while addressing emerging challenges such as digitalisation. The report also referred to the need to make progress regarding access to redress, and consumer awareness about the means of redress. Under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, few activities were funded in this respect, other than studies. The 2014-2020 Programme therefore placed increased attention on facilitating access to ADR/ODR, and the new European ODR platform (which was opened to the public in February 2016) is one of the key activities funded. Other activities funded include

¹⁰⁹ See baseline (section 5.1) and the 2011 impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, COM(2011) 1320 final, Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council on a consumer programme 2014-2020, p 13-15.

behavioural studies and other EU consumer policy studies to support the better regulation agenda. Activities are described in more detail in section 5 and in the fact sheets in Annex II.

The extent to which Objective III of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 has so far been achieved can be evaluated in comparison to the situation before the implementation of the Programme started, based on key indicators for the progress made. With respect to Objective III, the Regulation defines three indicators, which relate to the ODR platform, the ECC's referral of cases to ADR and the percentage of consumers complaining in response to a problem encountered, based on EU survey data. In the following table we present these indicators for the baseline year (either 2010 or 2012),¹¹⁰ the evaluation period 2014-2017, as well as the targets set in the Regulation and an assessment of the progress made.

Table 14: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators set in the Regulation – Objective III)

Indicator	Baseline	Evaluation period (Annual average 2014-2017)	Target in Regulation (by 2020):	Progress made
Number of complaints registered on the ODR platform	2010: 17 500 complaints received by ECCs related to e-commerce transactions	55 002 (cumulative as of 2017)	100 000	+
% of those cases dealt with by the ECCs and not resolved directly with traders which were subsequently referred to alternative dispute resolution (ADR)	2010: 9%	17% ^{a)}	75%	o / + (slight positive trend)
% of consumers who complained in response to a problem encountered in the past 12 months (Consumer scoreboard)	2012: 83%	73% ^{b)} (2016: 68%)	90%	–
% of consumers who complained in response to a problem encountered in the past 12 months (MMS data) ^{c)}	2012: 76%	79% ^{d)}	n.a.	o / + (slight positive trend)

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; o = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) digital monitoring dashboard; DG JUST/DG SANCO annual activity reports 2014 to 2016; Deloitte, European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report (2017);

¹¹⁰ Due to the absence of consistent data for the 2011-2013 period, we use the most appropriate year as baseline (which is either 2010, the baseline year provided in the Regulation, or 2012).

Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017; EU Market Monitoring Survey 2012 to 2015. Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. a) Average 2015-2016 b) Average 2014-2016 c) While the Regulation list the Consumer [Conditions] Scoreboard as the source for the complaints indicator, data on consumer complaints in response to problems encountered are also measured in the EU's Market Monitoring Survey (MMS). Note that the wording of the questions is slightly different: Consumer Scoreboard: "In the past 12 months, have you experienced any problem when buying or using any goods or services in (our country) where you thought you had a legitimate cause for complaint?" Indicated is the percentage of those who replied 'Yes, and you took action to solve the problem'; MMS: [For those who encountered a problem that was legitimate to complain about] Have you complained about any of these problems? Indicated is the percentage of those who answered in the affirmative. d) Year 2015.

The table shows that the target set in the Regulation regarding the number of complaints registered on the ODR platform is on track to be reached, considering the limited period of time that the platform is operational. The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 does not include indicators and targets for the performance of activities funded under Objective III other than the ODR platform. However, it lists two additional indicators related to ADR and the incidence of consumer problems. The first indicator is the percentage of cases referred to ADR by ECCs, and therefore relates to an activity funded under Objective IV. The indicator shows a slight positive trend, but the target is not expected to be reached. It is, however, questionable whether this indicator is suitable in the context of measuring access to ADR bodies, as it is likely to largely depend on various unrelated factors, such as the willingness of traders to participate in ADR.

The final indicator provided in the Regulation refers to the percentage of consumers who complained in response to a problem encountered in the past 12 months, as measured by the Consumer Scoreboard. While this indicator is not directly related to the ODR platform, it is plausible that a well-working ODR/ADR system in Member States would lead to more consumers taking action once they encounter a problem. As the table shows, the percentage of consumers complaining in response to a problem encountered has actually declined from the baseline level of 83% in 2012 to 68% in 2016 (with the average in the 2014-2016 period being 73%).¹¹¹ Note, however, that a complaint in the context of this indicator encompasses a broad range of activities beyond ADR/ODR, including complaining directly to the seller, provider or manufacturer (the most common response by consumers) as well as taking a trader to court, reducing the linkage to specific activities on ADR/ODR. Also, a very similar data series from Market Monitoring Survey shows a slight increase in the percentage of consumers that complain over the last years. The results are therefore inconclusive, possibly caused by methodological differences between the two surveys and the slightly different framing of the questions. In any case, this indicator is difficult to interpret in terms of potential effects of the activities implemented under the Consumer Programme.

As in the previous Programme area, the indicators of the Regulation do not fully measure the effects of several of the funded activities in contributing to Objective III, and require further assessment. For example, while the ODR Platform is already slightly more than halfway to its 2020 targets, the assessment of stakeholders regarding the extent to which contributes to the objective of improving access to simple and low-cost redress is mixed. In our interviews, the largest group of stakeholders considered the ODR platform as moderately effective in reaching the Programme's objective, with the remaining interviewees being nearly equally split between more positive and more negative assessments (see Annex VII for more details). While several interviewees considered that it had good potential and would become more effective over time as consumers become more aware of it, others

¹¹¹ Note however that the wording and response options for this question in the Consumer Scoreboards was changed substantively between 2011 and 2012, limiting the comparability between these periods.

pointed out a number of issues that limited the effectiveness of the platform.¹¹² The **Commission's 2017 report on the** functioning of the ODR platform indicates that in 85% of the cases, complaints were automatically closed within 30 calendar days after submission, meaning that the consumer and the trader failed to agree on a competent ADR body. In a follow-up survey on consumers whose case had been closed, the Commission found that 40% of consumers who submitted a complaint on the ODR platform that was automatically closed had, however, been contacted directly by the trader to solve the problem without any further progression of the complaint on the platform. Overall, 2% of the complaints reached the ADR body that the parties had agreed upon. In around half of these cases the ADR bodies refused to deal with the case on procedural grounds such as lack of competence or the consumer's failure to attempt to contact the trader first. In summary, according to the Commission report, less than 1% of the complaints that were lodged through the ODR platform reached a final outcome through an ADR procedure.¹¹³ The platform has therefore so far been less effective in improving access to ADR, a key element of the Programme's objective. The main benefit of the ODR platform appears to be so far that traders contacted through the platform often informally solve the problem directly with the affected consumers without any involvement of an ADR scheme.

A further key element of the Programme's objective is the development and reinforcement of consumer rights, especially through behavioural and other policy studies. In our interviews, the large majority of stakeholders considered that behavioural studies were at least moderately effective in achieving the objective and helpful for policymaking, but also suggested that policymakers do not make sufficient use of them, or that the studies could be better promoted. Our case study on the evidence base (see Annex I) identified a number of examples where it is expected that the results of behavioural studies contribute to a better understanding of consumers' behaviour in the market, support the enforcement of consumer protection rules in the online environment, and inform policy options to enhance consumer protection in the online environment or contribute to activities by different Commission services (e.g. DG ENV, GROW, ENER, JRC). In addition to behavioural studies, the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 provides for other EU policy studies to be carried out under Objective III in order to support smart regulatory action, such as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, impact assessments, public consultations, and the evaluation and simplification of existing legislation.¹¹⁴ Several studies were conducted and fed directly into the development of EU consumer policy initiatives.¹¹⁵ Their practical value was confirmed by interviewed stakeholders, who found the mentioned EU consumer policy

¹¹² These included the functioning of the ODR platform itself as well as issues that would require changes to the underlying legislation. Issues that related to the functioning of the platform included, for example, translation issues. With respect to the problems identified by interviewees related to the underlying legislation, points of critique included the automatic closing of complaints within 30 days if the consumer and trader do not agree on an ADR body, and related consumer dissatisfaction. Note that interviewees assessed *Limitations of the functioning of the ODR platform* as one of the top three reasons for low levels of achievement in the area of consumer rights and redress. The other two were *Limited consumer awareness of ODR platform in my country* and *Limited trader awareness of ODR platform in my country*.

¹¹³ European Commission, ODR report (2017), p. 7.

¹¹⁴ EU consumer policy studies that have been carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme included a Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation and a Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU.

¹¹⁵ The CPC study contributed to the recast of the CPC Regulation (see below, enforcement), and the consumer market study on guarantees fed into the proposals on digital contracts and informed the REFIT of the Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive 1999/44/EC. See the activity report of the 17th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Wednesday 17th February 2016.

studies to be largely effective in reaching Objective III of the Programme, with more than 90% of interviewees providing positive feedback.¹¹⁶

Activities under Objective III also include the annual Consumer Summit and the **Citizens' Energy Forum as well as seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings** of stakeholders and experts, such as the Financial Services Users Group meetings and other working groups and hearings, as well as networking meetings, which are documented in detail in the fact sheets in Annex II. They contributed in varying degrees to achievement of Objective III, as is recognised by the interviewed stakeholders (see details in Annex VII).

Again, no change can be observed regarding the overall assessment of the interviewed stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the activities in achieving Objective III and related benefits, when the assessment for the first four years of the current Consumer Programme is compared with the assessment of the 2007-2013 Programme (in both cases on average with a 'moderate' rating, see following table).

Table 15: Stakeholder assessment of activities – progress made during evaluation period (Objective III)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Effectiveness of activities funded under Objective III (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Moderately effective (3.4) ^{a)}	Moderately effective (3.4)	O
Benefits achieved (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Moderately achieved (3.2) ^{a)}	Moderately achieved (3.1)	O

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; **O** = stable; – = negative trend.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. a) Baseline value for whole Programme period CP 2007-2013. ODR platform and communication campaigns on ADR/ODR were only funded under the 2014-2020 Programme, so that these activities are not assessed regarding CP 2013-2020.

Interviewees were also asked to assess specific benefits of the rights and redress activities in their own countries. Overall, benefits such as **Smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy** were considered to have been moderately achieved, again a largely stable view compared to the previous Programme period. Benefits related to **Better access for consumers to ADR** through the ODR platform were considered to be least achieved, according to stakeholders.

Interviewees emphasised that several factors influenced (negatively) the level of achievement. Key factors were:

- *Limited consumer awareness of ODR platform in my country;*
- *Limited trader awareness of ODR platform in my country; and*
- *Limitations of the functioning of the ODR platform.*

While consumer and trader awareness are to a large extent external factors (although information and awareness raising campaigns in this respect were also funded), the functioning of the ODR platform can be considered to be a factor directly related to the implementation of the Consumer Programme.

¹¹⁶ I.e. a rating of 3 or higher.

These assessments can be put into perspective through multi-annual data series that are available from EU consumer surveys, and concern consumer views of and experiences with ADR/out-of-court bodies, as well as consumer confidence in shopping online across EU borders, which was referred to in the Impact Assessment of the Consumer Programme as a relevant indicator. They are presented in the following table, which provides the indicators for baseline and evaluation period, as well as an indication of the progress made.

Table 16: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators for potential wider effects – Objective III)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Percentage of consumers who agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body	48%	49%	O / + (slight positive trend)
Percentage of consumers who are satisfied with complaint handling: of those who <i>complained to an ADR body</i>	57%	68%	+
Percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online <i>in their own country / in other EU countries</i>	2012: 59% / 36%	67% / 48%	+

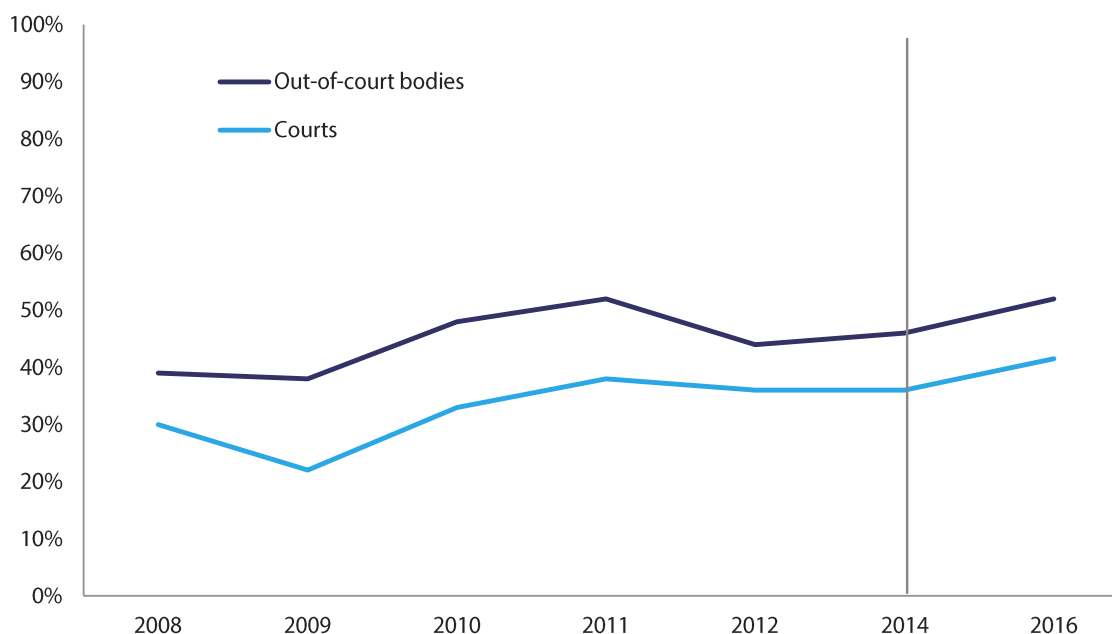
++ = significant progress made; **+** = progress made; **O** = stable; **–** = negative trend.

Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection, see notes to the figures below for question wording.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

The first indicator refers to the percentage of consumers who agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body (i.e. alternative dispute resolution). It shows a largely stable situation, with a slight improvement during the evaluation period. The following figure provides the data series in detail, and also shows the ease of dispute settlement through the courts for comparison.

Figure 11: Percentage of consumers who agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body or through the courts (EU average), 2008-2016

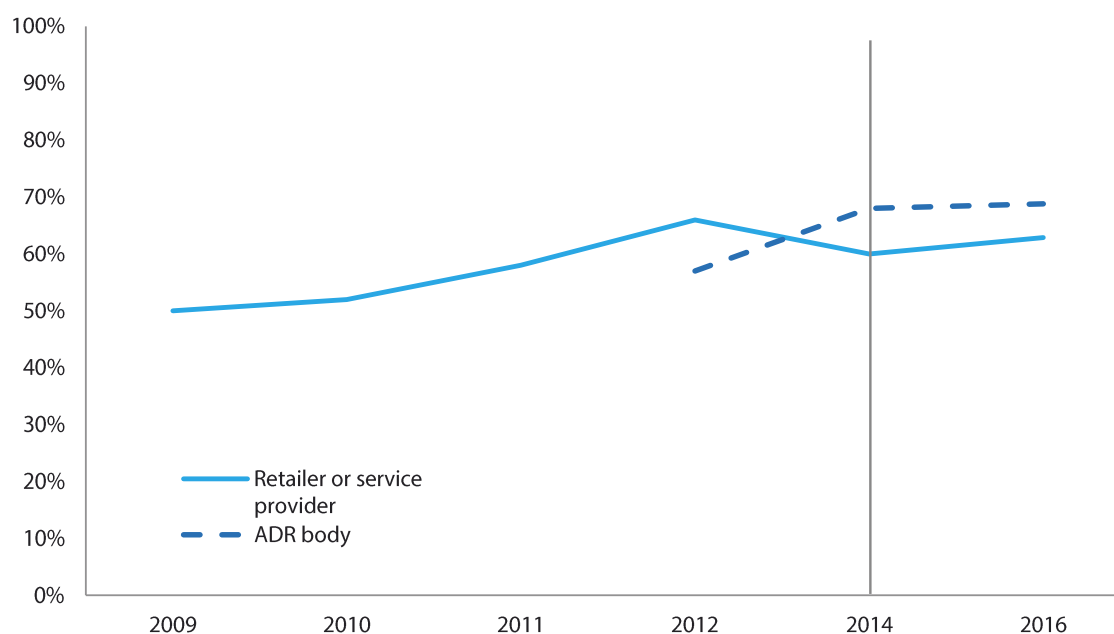


Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Flash Eurobarometer 397 and the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... It is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body (i.e. arbitration, mediation or conciliation body) / It is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through the courts. Shown above are those who 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' with these statements.

The figure above shows that consumers consistently consider it easier to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies than through the courts; overall, about half (52%) of consumers in 2016 agreed that it is easy to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies. The percentage of consumers agreeing that it is easy to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies has also increased over time, from 39% in 2008 to 52% in 2016 (a similar trend can be observed regarding courts), indicating an improvement in the accessibility of ADR during the evaluation period, as perceived by consumers. In other words, while the average values quoted above show only a slight improvement when comparing the annual averages of baseline and evaluation period, the detailed data shows a positive long-term trend, and also a positive trend since the beginning of the Consumer Programme (after a drop in 2012).

An additional relevant indicator is the level of consumer satisfaction with complaint handling, both concerning complaints to the retailer/service provider and complaints to an ADR body (see following figure).

Figure 12: Percentage of consumers who are satisfied with complaint handling after they complained to the retailer/service provider or to an ADR body (Eurobarometers) (EU average), 2009-2016



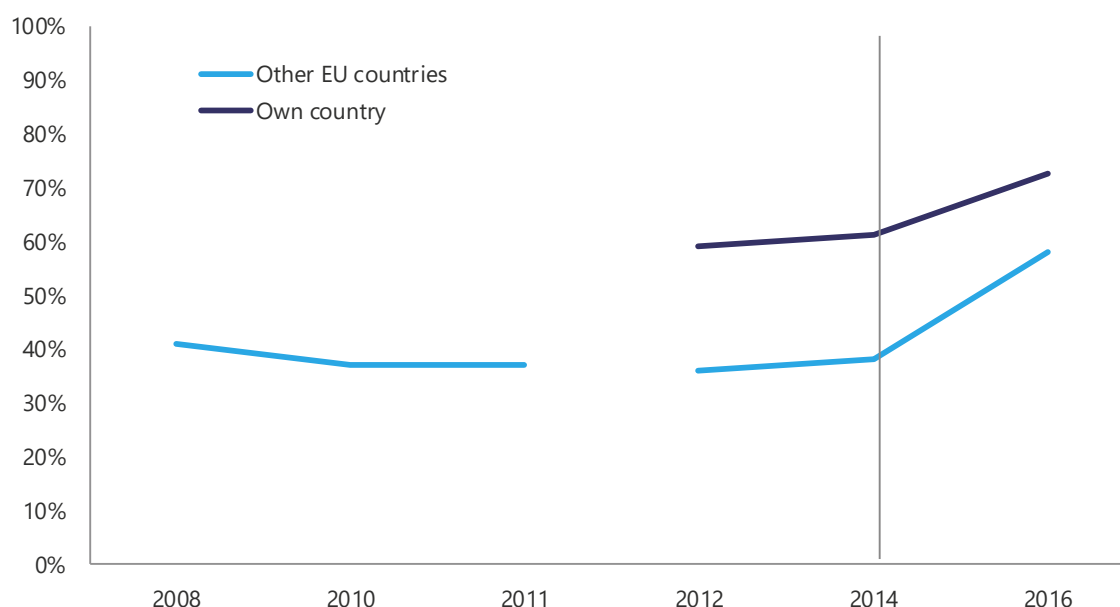
Source: Own compilation based on the survey on consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2016 and Flash Eurobarometers 282, 299, 332, 358, and 397. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: : In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way your complaint(s) was (were) dealt with by the: - Retailer/provider; - An out-of-court dispute resolution body (ADR). Base: respondents who encountered a problem and complained to the Retailer/provider; respondents who encountered a problem and complained to an out-of-court dispute resolution body (ADR).

The figure shows that satisfaction with complaint handling by ADR bodies has increased during the evaluation period, and is now higher than the satisfaction with complaint handling by traders themselves.

As mentioned above, activities funded under Objective III of the Consumer Programme also support preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, e.g. by relevant studies. However, there is no consistent measure in recent EU surveys indicating the extent to which consumers feel protected by consumer legislation.¹¹⁷ Therefore, in the following consumer confidence in purchasing online and rates of online shopping both domestically and cross-border is **used as a proxy for consumers' confidence in their rights at the European level**. The figure below shows the percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online from retailers or service providers located in their own country or in another EU country.

¹¹⁷ Prior to 2012, the regular consumer survey on which the current Consumer Conditions Scoreboard is based did include a question asking consumers whether they felt adequately protected by consumer legislation. However, this question was discontinued before the start of the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme.

Figure 13: Percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online in their own country and in other EU countries (EU average), 2008-2016



Source: Own compilation based on Special Eurobarometer 298, Flash Eurobarometers 299, 332, 358 and 397, and the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Breaks in the series indicate substantive changes in question wording. Question 2008-2011: For each of the following, are you more confident making purchases from sellers/providers located in another EU country, in (our country), or equally confident in both? Purchasing goods or services over the internet. (Shown is the percentage who are equally or more confident purchasing online from another EU country.) Question 2012-2016: You feel confident purchasing goods or services via the Internet from retailers or service providers in (our country) / another EU country. Shown above are those who "Agree" or "Strongly agree".

The figure shows that the percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online domestically or cross-border has increased substantively within the last few years, with the largest increase occurring in the period between 2014 and 2016. Confidence in cross-border online shopping in particular increased by 21 percentage points between 2014 and 2016. The gap between consumer confidence in making domestic versus cross-border purchases online has also shrunk over this period, from a gap of 23 percentage points in 2014 to 15 percentage points in 2016.

It can be concluded that during the evaluation period, a positive trend with respect to accessibility of and satisfaction with ADR can be identified, in line with the aims of the Consumer Programme. As the ODR platform only started its operation in the last year for which data was available (2016), this trend is possibly related to broader developments, such as efforts in Member States to improve ADR systems in response to relevant EU legislation and a broader recognition of ADR as an efficient means of redress. Also, the strong increase in consumer confidence in shopping cross-border is likely not only an effect of EU regulatory activity, but also of changing consumer preferences and market developments, including the development of e-commerce in general and the increasing internet penetration. Still, the increasing confidence in cross-border e-commerce and satisfaction with ADR underlines the relevance of Objective III of the Consumer Programme and related activities, especially the ODR platform, in which increasing consumer demand for such a tool can be expected, once the above mentioned limitations are addressed.

6.1.4. Enforcement

The key findings of the evaluation are that:

- ▶ **The Programme is achieving Objective IV of the Consumer Programme, which aims to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice in the area of enforcement of consumer rights. The CPC Network has visibly consolidated and expanded its activity during the Programme period. Both the mutual assistance mechanism in the form of exchange of information and enforcement requests between national competent authorities, and sweeps and joint enforcement actions have seen improvement in terms of effectiveness, although time for handling enforcement requests in the network is often long. European Consumer Centres have established themselves further during the current Programme as an important institutional component of EU consumer law enforcement.**
- ▶ **In specific areas that were targeted by sweeps of CPC enforcement authorities, the level of compliance among traders with EU consumer law has increased considerably, indicating the wider effects of the Programme activities. EU survey data shows that in parallel to the implementation of activities under the Consumer Programme, trust of consumers that public authorities protect their rights, and that retailers generally respect consumer rights has increased. This correlates with a slight reduction of problems experienced by consumers. Two thirds of retailers consider public authorities to actively monitor and ensure compliance with consumer legislation in their sector. However, this percentage has decreased over the last years.**
- ▶ **With some resemblance to the situation discussed regarding product safety (see above), limited staff and financial resources of consumer protection authorities in the Member States are considered key factors influencing level of achievements related to the Programme objective; other key factors include the rapid innovation of products and services, as well as new distribution channels that make effective consumer protection more challenging.**

In contrast to the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, enforcement is defined as a specific objective under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Objective IV is to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice. While under the previous Programme, cross-border enforcement cooperation had already been supported through the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC Network) and coordinated actions such as "sweeps", the 2011 mid-term evaluation of the 2007-2013 Programme and the impact assessment for the current Programme from the same year concluded that problems continued to exist in the area of enforcement of consumer rights, particularly in a cross-border context. The mid-term evaluation suggested to further increase the coordination within the CPC Network and enforcement authorities. It also concluded that increasing support had been provided to consumers who seek advice on disputes cross-border through the network of European Consumer Centres (ECC-Net), and suggested increasing the visibility and hence consumers awareness of the network (see baseline, section 5.1). The subsequent ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 found that while steps had been taken between 2011 and 2013 to improve cross-border enforcement (particularly with respect to increasing the efficiency of the CPC Network), problems continued to exist at the start of the current Programme (see Part 2 of this report).

Including enforcement as a separate objective of the Consumer Programme for the first time underscores the increasing priority accorded to EU actions in this area. The role of effective and efficient enforcement of EU consumer law has become particularly prominent with the advance of digitalisation and the Internet and the rapid growth of online business-to-consumer trade. While this development offers many advantages

for consumers as well as for businesses, there are also increased risks for widespread infringements of consumer rights and difficulties with enforcement of consumer rights. The Digital Single Market Strategy therefore highlighted the "need for more rapid, agile and consistent enforcement of consumer rules for online and digital purchases to make them fully effective".¹¹⁸ More recently, effective enforcement of consumer rights was made a central part of the New Deal for Consumers launched by the European Commission.¹¹⁹

The activities funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 in the area of enforcement relate to the CPC Network and the ECC-Net and are described in more detail in section 5 and in the fact sheets concerning Actions 10 and 11 in Annex II.

The extent to which Objective IV is on track to be achieved halfway through the Programme period can be judged by comparing the situation before the implementation of the Programme started with the situation during the evaluation period, based on key indicators for the progress made. With respect to this objective, the Regulation on the Consumer Programme defines five indicators, of which the first consists of three sub-indicators (bringing the total number to seven). They concern the level of information flow and cooperation within the CPC Network, and related targets for timely handling of request, as well as the number of contacts with consumers handled by the ECCs and visits on their website. In the following table we present data for the evaluation period 2014-2017 in comparison to the baseline period 2011-2013, and also provide the targets in the Regulation and an assessment of the progress made.

Table 17: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators set in the Regulation – Objective IV)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13) ^{b)}	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Targets in Regulation (by 2020)	Progress made
Number of requests to exchange information between CPC authorities	80	101 (2017: 80)	168 ^{a)}	O / + (stable if only 2017 is considered)
Number of requests for enforcement measures between CPC authorities	139	165 (2017: 198)	185 ^{a)}	++ (target already achieved in 2017)
Number of alerts within the CPC Network	58	54 (2017: 78)	82 ^{a)}	+ (target nearly achieved in 2017)
% of enforcement requests handled within 12 months within the CPC Network	47%	50% (2017: 24%)	60%	O / – (Negative trend, if only 2017 considered)

¹¹⁸ See Impact Assessment, p. 6 with reference to Commission Communication "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe" COM (2015) 192 final; see also Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business, COM/2015/0550 final.

¹¹⁹ See COM/2017/0650 final and COM(2018) 183 final.

% of information requests handled within 3 months within the CPC Network	33% ^{c)}	45% (2017: 23%)	50%	+ / – (Negative trend, if only 2017 considered)
Number of contacts with consumers handled by the ECCs	74 182	99 756 (2016: 111 563)	106 500 ^{a)}	++ (target already achieved in 2016)
Number of visits to the websites of the ECCs	2 335 000 ^{d)}	5 579 663 (2017: 8 542 936)	2 839 000 ^{a)}	++ (target already achieved)

++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; ○ = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: Single Market Scoreboard – Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016); data provided by DG JUST; CHAFAEA/EAHC annual activity reports 2013 to 2015; DG JUST annual activity report 2015; Single Market Scoreboard – European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2016-12/2016); Deloitte, European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges (2017). Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data. a) In Annex II of the Regulation on the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, this target is provided as a specified percentage increase compared to the baseline value provided therein. For convenience reasons, the table provides the target in absolute values, calculated on the basis of the Regulation baseline and the target set. b) Note that baseline data has been updated. The baseline used in the Regulation is mostly the annualised average 2007-2010 (see Part 2 of this report for the related data). c) Average 2007-2010, no data available for 2011-2013. d) Average for years 2011 and 2013.

The first rows of the table concern the three types of exchanges between participating authorities in the CPC Network: information upon request (Article 6 of the CPC Regulation),¹²⁰ information without request (Article 7) and request for enforcement action (Article 8). In the practice of the CPC Network, these measures are known as information requests, alerts and enforcement requests, respectively. Two of the indicators showed a substantial increase from the 2011-2013 baseline period to the year 2017, whereas one of the indicators remained stable. Requests for enforcement measures reached in 2017 the highest number since the network's inception (198), meeting already the target for 2020. The 2017 number of alerts is still slightly below (but close to) the 2020 target.¹²¹

A key indicator to measure achievement of Objective IV is the timely handling of information and enforcement requests. According to the Operational Guidelines for coordinated enforcement within the CPC Network, requests for information should be handled within 3 months and requests for enforcement measures within 9-12 months. As the table above shows, the target set in the Programme for information requests is on track to be reached, if the annualised averages are considered, but not for enforcement requests. However, if the last year of the evaluation period (2017) is considered, the trend has not been towards reaching the targets set, with only one quarter of request handled within the time frames envisaged, a decrease compared to the baseline values. *Slow response from consumer protection authorities in other Member States* was indicated by our interviewees as one of the most relevant factors influencing the level of achievements related to the Programme objective (the most

¹²⁰ Note that when in this section the term CPC Regulation is used, the Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 is referred to and not the new Regulation EU/2017/2394.

¹²¹ In the CPC Network, significant fluctuations in the types and numbers of request in different years can be observed, which likely depend on external circumstances, and the preferences of enforcement authorities for particular types of requests. When considering the overall information flow on basis of the annualised averages, the total number of requests per year has overall increased by 16% (from the baseline value of 277 requests per year for the period 2011-2013 to a total of 320 requests per year during the 2014-2017 period), which confirms an increasing information flow through the network and the trend towards achieving the related targets.

frequently mentioned factor being *Limited staff and financial resources of consumer protection authorities*).¹²²

A key activity funded under the Consumer Programme is the maintenance of the CPC system (CPCS), the main platform through which exchanges of information and enforcement requests between competent authorities are taking place, and which is maintained by the Commission. The database was put into operation at the time of **launching of the CPC Network. Initially, it suffered from a number of 'growing pains'**, relating to technical aspects, as well as a lack of experience and understanding on the part of authorised users. In the years that followed, considerable effort was made on the part of the Commission to address these problems in cooperation with experts and a group of key users (see Part 2 of this study, which provides an ex-post evaluation of the activities under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013). In our interviews with enforcement authorities, the technical features of the IT tool were not raised as a major issue of concern.¹²³ A recently introduced CPC knowledge exchange platform complementing the database was considered to be an effective innovation. It is also notable in this context that a review of the database is ongoing. Under the new CPC Regulation¹²⁴ the Commission will have to set up and maintain a database that is able to provide safe environment for exchanges for new processes provided for in the new CPC Regulation.¹²⁵

A function of the CPC Network that has grown in importance during the evaluation period is the promotion of a common understanding on relevant consumer law concepts and enforcement policies. Two main activities have been employed by the Commission and the CPC Network to address the problem: (i) organizing workshops and exchange of best practices on key priority areas, funded under the Programme (see below), and (ii) elaborating common positions and guidelines to enhance harmonious interpretation and application of relevant laws, e.g. in the context of joint actions (see below).¹²⁶ These types of activities had received very high assessments in the earlier, specific evaluation of the CPC.¹²⁷ Several enforcement officials interviewed for the current Programme evaluation likewise emphasised the role of the CPC Network for developing a common understanding of the CPC Regulation and a more harmonised approach to implementation.¹²⁸ Overall, the CPC Network is therefore

¹²² See detailed results of stakeholder interviews in Annex VII.

¹²³ However, during the meeting of the CPC Committee with the evaluation team, a number of Member State representatives expressed the opinion that more can be done to make the CPC system more user friendly. For instance, including machine translation in the functionalities of the system was considered to be an upgrade that could facilitate the communication between NCAs, if technically feasible.

¹²⁴ A new Regulation 2017/2394 repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (New CPC Regulation) was adopted on 12 December 2017. The New Regulation entered into force on 17 January 2018 and shall apply from 17 January 2020. Until then, the work of the CPC Network is still governed by Regulation 2006/2004.

¹²⁵ For example, the new Regulation explicitly opens the alert mechanism for other actors, such as ECCs and consumer organisations.

¹²⁶ Examples of interpretative guidelines to facilitate enforcement and compliance are the guidance documents on the application of the Consumer Rights Directive and on the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. See DG Justice guidance document concerning Directive 2011/83/EU on consumer rights, June 2014; Commission guidance on the implementation/application of Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices, SWD/2016/0163 final. See also Commission Interpretative Guidelines on Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights and on Council Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on air carrier liability in the event of accidents as amended by Regulation (EC) No 889/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

¹²⁷ External Evaluation 2012.

considered by stakeholders to be largely effective in achieving Objective IV, i.e. the support to enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies.

Apart from the rules on mutual assistance between NCAs, the CPC Regulation includes a provision on coordinated market surveillance and enforcement activities in cases of intra-Community infringements that harm the interests of consumers in more than two Member States (Article 9). EU-wide screening of websites, commonly known as sweeps, is one type of coordinated action that was employed early in the activity of the CPC Network. So far, four sweeps were funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.¹²⁹ To evaluate the effects of sweeps, a follow-up screening is usually carried out within a reasonable period after the sweep to establish whether there are changes in the rate of compliance. On the basis of these follow-up exercises it can be concluded that the level of compliance among traders with EU consumer law has increased considerably,¹³⁰ indicating the effectiveness of the sweeps. Stakeholders in the current Programme evaluation confirmed the effectiveness of sweeps in supporting enforcement of consumer rights and strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies. In particular, interviewees from national authorities commented that taking part in sweeps enables them to obtain information on the processes and problems in other Member States and to take actions *ex officio*. At the same time, some stakeholders have pointed out problems with differences in the quality of the enforcement by NCAs participating in the sweep.¹³¹ On the whole, however, the available evidence suggests that sweeps have made a positive contribution to achieving Objective IV.

Another category of coordinated enforcement actions which are supported through activities funded under the Consumer Programme to achieve Objective IV are the so-called joint actions, requiring the concerned traders to cease unfair commercial practices in areas of common interest across the EU.¹³² With the rapid growth of online trade and the emergence of large business actors acting on a global scale, the same infringement often affects consumers in several Member States. Joint actions were assessed by enforcement authorities in the interviews for the current Programme evaluation mostly as being effective or even highly effective. The new CPC Regulation places a stronger emphasis on this activity and is expected to facilitate and improve its effectiveness further. At the same time, both limitations in the legal framework

¹²⁸ A view which was confirmed during the already mentioned meeting of the CPC Committee with the evaluation team on 22 February 2018 by several participants.

¹²⁹ See fact sheet for CP2014-20 Action 10.

¹³⁰ For the 2014 sweep, 46% of checked websites were found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before the sweep, and 82% in compliance after the sweep. For the 2015 sweep the numbers are 37% websites in compliance before the sweep and 88% after. No comparable data is yet available for the 2016 and 2017 sweeps. See fact sheet for CP2014-20 Action 10; Fourth Commission Report, p. 12; Impact Assessment, p 42.

¹³¹ For details see the results of interviews Annex VII.

¹³² The CPC Network has so far concluded three coordinated enforcement actions under the current Consumer Programme: On in-app purchases in online games in 2014, on car rentals in 2015 and on contract terms of social media service providers in 2016.

provided by the CPC Regulation¹³³ as well as implementation issues have influenced the achievement of the Programme objective, as evidenced in previous studies.¹³⁴

Supporting Programme activities include training activities, such as the exchange of CPC enforcement officials and the E-Enforcement Academy, and networking activities and events. These activities were implemented as envisaged and supported the achievement of the Programme objective (see details in the fact sheets in Annex II).¹³⁵

The final two indicators in the Regulation to measure achievement of Objective IV relate to the ECC-Net and concern the activity of the ECCs and how well known they are to consumers. As shown in the previous table, one of the targets for 2020 is 106 000 contacts with consumers, which was surpassed already in 2016. It is likely that by 2020 the ECC-Net will reach even higher volumes. The other indicator concerns the number of visits to the websites. As evident from the table above, the projected number of website visits in 2017 at more than 8.5 million is already three times the targeted number for 2020. In can be concluded that the targets set by the Consumer Programme for the ECC-Net have already been more than met.

Also, the 2017 specific evaluation of the ECC-Net came to a positive overall assessment, in line with the view of the stakeholders interviewed for this Programme evaluation, which considered the ECC-Net to be effective. However, the specific evaluation also concluded that its overall visibility is still rather low and significant differences in the level of services provided by ECCs across Member States exist, including differences in the timeliness and quality of service.¹³⁶

Supporting activities to achieve Objective IV with respect to the ECC-Net included trainings, workshops, seminars, meetings and other events. The possibilities for exchange of best practices which these fora offer were positively assessed by ECC

¹³³ In terms of legal impediments, it has been pointed out that the role of the Commission in these actions was not clarified in the CPC Regulation. The rights and obligations of participating Member States were likewise not set out in detail. Therefore, the new CPC Regulation 2394/2017 outlines with greater care the procedural steps and the role of different actors in the action and strengthens the role of the Commission.

¹³⁴ Problems of coordination of joint actions were reported for the leading Member States in ensuring the participation of other Member States. Also, costs of accounting and reporting borne by the coordinating Member States have been mentioned as an impediment to fostering administrative cooperation. For a joint action to be initiated, national authorities previously had to apply to CHAFEA for a grant under the Consumer Programme. A new, simplified procedure has therefore been launched in 2017. See Impact Assessment, p. 103-104, External Evaluation, p. 103.

¹³⁵ The exchange of officials has taken off slowly but is gradually expanding and being consolidated. Compared to the numbers for the first years after the entry into force of the CPC Regulation, the total number of exchanges has seen a threefold increase, from a total of 62 CPC exchanges for the years 2009-2013 to 196 CPC exchanges for the years of 2014-2017. More detailed statistics on the exchange of CPC enforcement officials further suggests that Member States' engagement in the scheme is uneven. However, the available evidence indicates that the popularity and the use of the scheme are growing. The decrease in the number of exchanges in 2017 coincides with the launch of the E Enforcement Academy in the same year, which provided additional training opportunities for CPC officials. For the Academy, total participation in on-site and virtual events (webinars) in 2017 amounted to 155 persons, below the actual capacity of the training activities. Both exchanges of CPC officials and the E-Enforcement Academy are activities appreciated by the beneficiaries and considered to be effective in contributing to the objective.

¹³⁶ European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report, Deloitte (2017)

representatives. Several interviewees spoke particularly positively of events that are organised jointly by the ECC and CPC Networks.¹³⁷

Overall, the interviewed stakeholder considered the activities implemented in the first four years of the current Consumer Programme to be largely effective in achieving Objective IV, with a slight positive trend, when comparing them to the assessment of the 2007-2013 Programme. This is in line with the analysis provided above, and also supported by the fact that stakeholders considered related benefits to be largely achieved, a clear improvement compared to the previous Programme (see section 6.2 for more details).

Table 18: Stakeholder assessment of activities – progress made during evaluation period (Objective IV)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Effectiveness of activities funded under Objective IV (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Largely effective (3.7) ^{a)}	Largely effective (3.8)	O / + (slight positive trend)
Benefits achieved (on a scale of 1 to 5)	Moderately achieved (3.4) ^{a)}	Largely achieved (3.6)	+

++ = significant progress made; **+** = progress made; **O** = stable; **–** = negative trend.

Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

These stakeholder views are in the following validated and put into perspective through multi-annual data series that are available from EU consumer and retailer surveys, and concern several indicators for the potential wider effects of the Programme activities. They are presented in the following table, which provides indicators for baseline and evaluation period, as well as an indication of the progress made.

¹³⁷ The exchange of best practices through networking is also furthered by an online platform specifically developed for the needs of the ECC Network, as well as through a separate platform for the CPC Network (the CPC Wiki).

Table 19: Overview of progress made during evaluation period (indicators for potential wider effects – Objective IV)

Indicator	Baseline (annual average 2011-13)	Evaluation period (annual average 2014-17)	Progress made
Percentage of consumers who trust public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer	60%	65%	+
Percentage of consumers who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law	62%	73%	+
Percentage of consumers who encountered at least one problem that they considered legitimate to complain about (Eurobarometer data)	2012: 25%	21%	+
Percentage of retailers who agree that the public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with consumer legislation in their sector	75%	66%	–

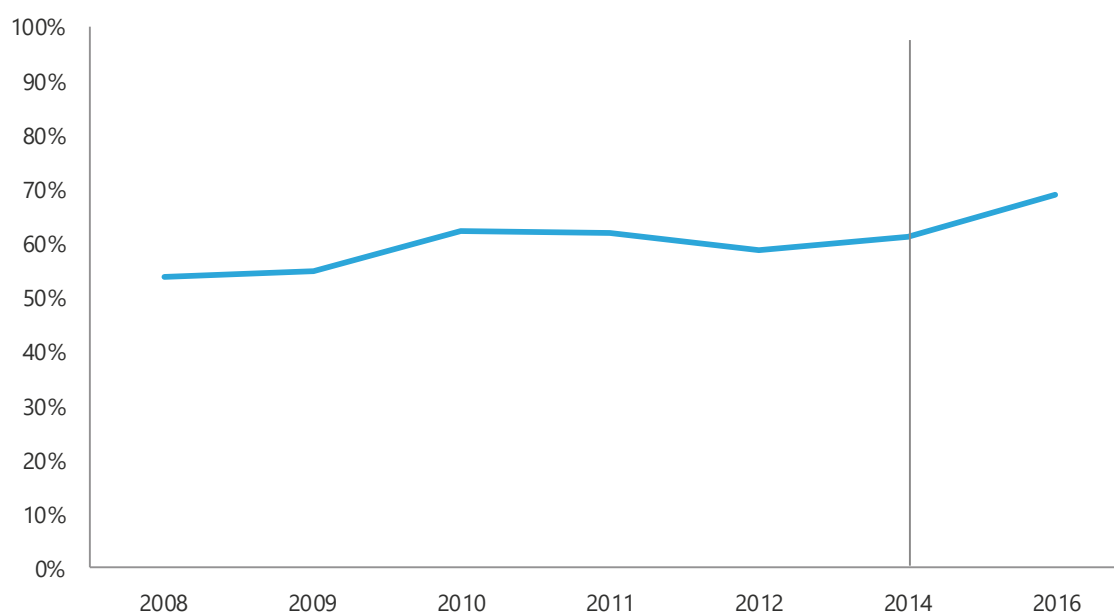
++ = significant progress made; + = progress made; 0 = stable; – = negative trend.

Source: Own compilation based on the year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection as well as the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition, see notes to figures below for question wording. Notes: Averages calculated on basis of the available annual data.

Indicators for the potential wider impacts of enforcement actions under the Consumer Programme where sufficient data is available to determine trends over time include **levels of consumer trust (i.e. consumers' perceptions as to whether public authorities protect their rights, and whether retailers generally respect consumer rights)**, the perception of retailers concerning enforcement, as well as the prevalence of problems encountered by consumers in the internal market. As the table above shows, most of the indicators show a positive trend, compared to the baseline, with the exception of retailer perception of enforcement, which shows a slight negative trend.

With respect to the first listed indicator, the following figure shows the evolution in the percentage of consumers who agree that they trust public authorities to protect consumer rights in more detail.

Figure 14: Percentage of consumers who trust public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer (EU average), 2008-2016

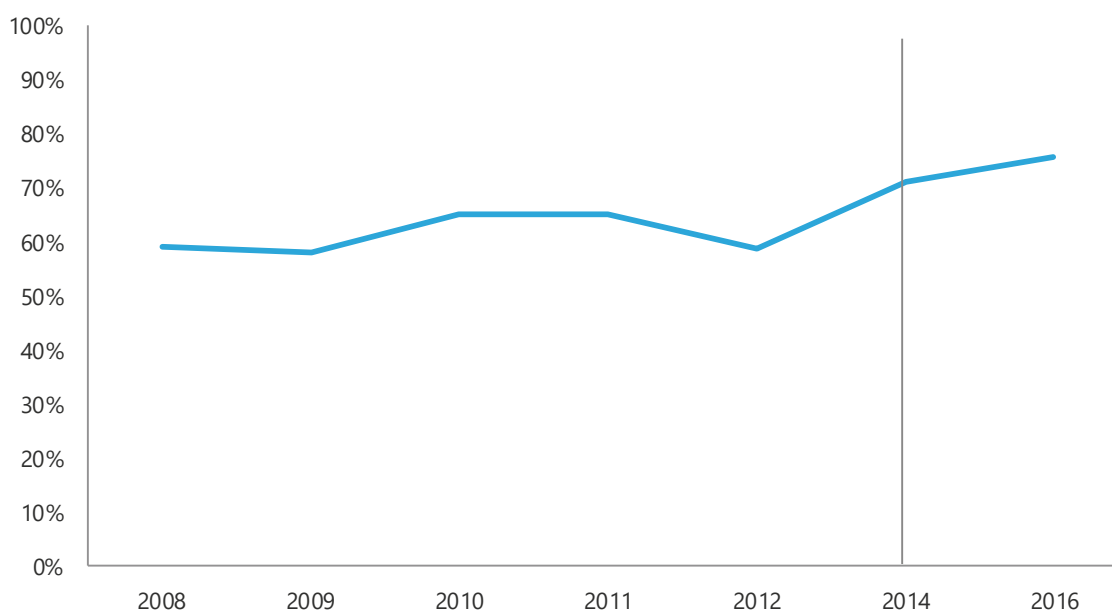


Source: Own compilation based on the year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... You trust public authorities to protect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with this statement.

As shown in the figure above, the percentage of consumers who agree that they trust public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer has increased by 15 percentage points between 2008 and 2016, from 54% to 69%. The largest increase was observed between 2014 and 2016 (from 61% to 69%).

The next figure shows the second indicator listed in the table above in more detail, namely the evolution in the percentage of consumers who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law.

Figure 15: Percentage of consumers who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law, 2008-2016



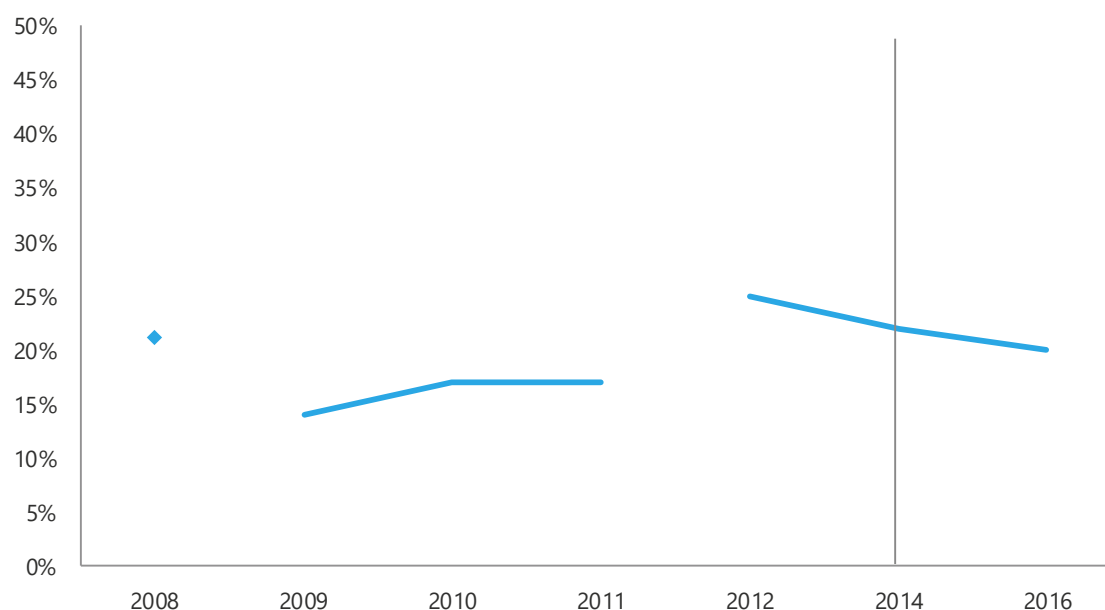
Source: Own compilation based on the year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... In general, retailers and service providers respect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with this statement.

The proportion of consumers agreeing that retailers in their country generally respect consumer law has increased from 59% in 2008 to 76% in 2016, with the largest increase occurring in the period between 2012 and 2016.

Both the consumers' perceptions as to whether public authorities protect their rights, and whether retailers generally respect consumer rights have therefore notably increased during the first years of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, after a relative low in 2012.

This increase in trust during the last years correlates with a reduction of problems experienced by consumers. The following figure shows the percentage of consumers who experienced a problem that they considered legitimate to complain about within the last 12 months (indicator three in the table above). Note that breaks in the series below indicate years in which the wording of the survey question was substantially changed.

Figure 16: Percentage of consumers who encountered at least one problem within the last 12 months that it was legitimate to complain about, 2008-2016



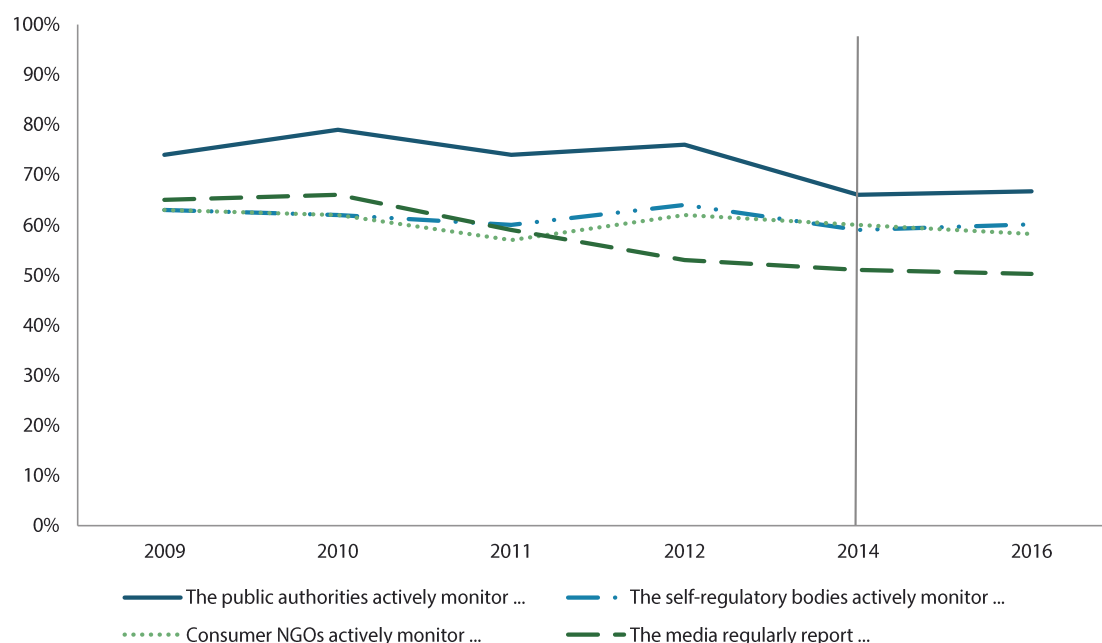
Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection, Flash Eurobarometers 282, 299, 322, 358, 397 and Special Eurobarometer 298. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Breaks in the series indicate substantive changes in question wording. Question text has changed as follows: 2008: In the last 12 months, have you made any kind of formal complaint by writing, by telephone or in person, to a seller/provider about a problem you encountered? [Possible responses: Yes / No, you have not encountered any problems / No, unlike to get a satisfactory remedy / No, sums involved too small / No, did not know how or where to complain. Displayed is the proportion that gave a response other than 'No, you have not encountered any problems.'] 2009-2011: In the last 12 months, have you encountered any problem when you bought something in (OUR COUNTRY)? 2012: In the last 12 months, have you had legitimate cause for complaint when buying or using any goods or services in (OUR COUNTRY)? 2014: In the past 12 months, have you encountered any problem when buying or using any goods or services in (OUR COUNTRY) where you thought you had a legitimate cause for complaint?

The percentage of consumers indicating that they have encountered at least one problem that they considered legitimate to complain about within the last 12 months has varied substantially over time, but appears to have decreased between 2012 and 2016. **This can be compared with the results of the EU's biannual Market Monitoring Survey**, which found that the percentage of consumers reporting problems in the surveyed markets decreased slightly from 12% in 2010 to 10% in 2015, i.e. showed corresponding trends.¹³⁸

Finally, the following figure provides details regarding the evolution of **retailers'** assessments of the monitoring work carried out by public authorities and other relevant organisations (the final indicator listed in the previous table).

¹³⁸ European Commission, Consumer Markets Scoreboard 12th edition, 2016. Note, however, that question wording and methodology are different. The MMS only considers problems arising in the same period as the good or service was paid for (one, two or three years, depending on the market). In contrast, the incidence rate in the consumer survey presented in the figure also includes problems resulting from goods or services that were purchased outside the MMS reference period. This may be one of the factors explaining the different results.

Figure 17: Retailers' assessments of the monitoring work carried out by various organisations in their sector (EU average), 2009-2016



Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition. Question text: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: The public authorities actively monitor and ensure compliance with consumer legislation in your sector/ The self-regulatory bodies actively monitor respect of codes of conduct or codes of practice in your sector/ Consumer NGOs actively monitor compliance with consumer legislation in your sector/ The media regularly report on businesses which do not respect consumer legislation in your sector. The figure above reports the proportion of retailers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with these statements. Base: All retailers. Note that the vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

While two thirds of responding retailers consider public authorities to actively monitor and ensure compliance with consumer legislation in their sector, this percentage has decreased since several years, in parallel to a perceived reduction in media reporting. In contrast, monitoring by consumer organisations and self-regulatory bodies is perceived as being more stable, but at a slightly lower level.

It can therefore be concluded that the activities funded under the Consumer Programme in the enforcement area are on track to achieve Objective IV, as is evidenced by a significant progress made in reaching most of the targets provided in the Regulation. The European Consumer Centres have established themselves further during the current Programme as an important institutional component of EU consumer law enforcement policy. Also, cooperation within the CPC Network in terms of information exchange and enforcement cooperation have grown in importance. Improvements in terms of effectiveness of the network are notable, in spite of continued differences between Member States in terms of capability and capacity of national competent authorities to make use of the CPC System and to engage in enforcement requests, which leads to response times in the network that are longer than targeted. In parallel to the implementation of activities under the Consumer Programme, most indicators for the potential wider effects of the Programme (such as consumer trust in enforcement etc.) show a positive trend, except the retailer perception of enforcement activities. This is similar to the situation regarding enforcement of product safety legislation (see section 6.1.1 above). And as was the case in this area, stakeholders reported a lack of resources available at the national level as a limiting factor in enforcement, which also influenced the level of achievements related to the Programme objective; other key factors include the rapid

innovation of products and services, as well as new distribution channels that make effective consumer protection more difficult.

6.1.5. Extent to which activities and outputs match Programme objectives

To what extent do the activities and outputs of the actions match the objectives of the programmes?

The intervention logic of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 in section 5 and the answers to the previous effectiveness questions in section 6 have indicated that the activities and outputs related to the activities under the Consumer Programme on the whole match the stated objectives for each Programme area. In other words, this evaluation has not identified any activities or outputs that would not match one of the four specific objectives and the set of specific actions set out in Annex I of the implementing Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 related to these objectives. In contrast, the evaluation identified a small number of specific actions that have not been implemented so far (see Annex VIII), without this appearing to affect the level of achievement of the related objective.

However, Objective II of the Consumer Programme 2014 also stipulates that the **actions supported under its heading should take place “including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers”**. In the context of this objective, activities specifically targeted at vulnerable consumer groups have remained limited to the consumer education program (Consumer Classroom) that is aimed at school children and the ongoing awareness campaign targeted at households in fuel poverty.¹³⁹ While other activities also consider the situation and specific needs of vulnerable consumers¹⁴⁰ to some extent (e.g. in the context of market studies or the work of BEUC, as well as the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group¹⁴¹ set up under Action 8, Objective III), no other specifically tailored activities were funded under the Programme during the evaluation period.

¹³⁹ Fuel poverty, or energy poverty, refers to the inability of a household to secure socially and materially-necessitated levels of energy in the home (see [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/607350/IPOL_STU\(2017\)607350_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/607350/IPOL_STU(2017)607350_EN.pdf))

¹⁴⁰ Consumer vulnerability is multi-dimensional. There are a wide range of factors which can increase the risk of consumers being vulnerable, including **people’s individual circumstances and needs, which can be short- or long-term**, and may fluctuate over time. Other critical contributory factors arise from the policies, practices and behaviour of market players. The 2016 Commission study on consumer vulnerability found that a vulnerable consumer is someone who: is at higher risk of suffering negative outcomes in the market; has limited ability to maximise his or her well-being; has difficulty in obtaining or assimilating information; is less able to buy, choose or access suitable products; or is more susceptible to certain marketing practices.

¹⁴¹ The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group (VCWG) was established by DG Energy in close collaboration with DG Health and Consumers (SANCO) to address the need to define the ‘vulnerable customer concept’, **feed the discussions in the Citizens’ Energy Forum, and thus support the implementation of EU energy legislation**.

6.2. Efficiency

The key findings of the evaluation regarding efficiency are that:

- ▶ The costs of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 appear to have been proportionate to the benefits achieved. This is the case for most of the funded activities, according to the available evidence. However, for several activities no conclusion could be drawn, either because they were very recent (such as the ODR platform and E-Enforcement Academy), or no specific evaluations and other evidence were available (as is the case for several of the consumer awareness campaigns). The allocation of funds among the four Programme areas is appropriate, a view shared by most stakeholders.
- ▶ For most activities the costs borne by the interviewed organisations have been affordable given the benefits they received through the Programme. In terms of efficiency of specific activities, network meetings and events in particular are assessed as activities which, with little resources, achieve highly positive results of coordination, mutual learning and exchange of best practices in different areas of EU consumer policy, as was reported across all four Programme areas.
- ▶ Administrative requirements for beneficiaries have been simplified in some areas, compared to the previous Programme period (e.g. regarding the reimbursement procedures for the exchange of officials). However, the number of activities funded and related grant agreements or service contracts under the Programme is large compared to the available budget, individual disbursements are in some cases as low as several thousands of Euro (e.g. for the exchange of officials). Because procedural requirements are to some extent independent from the amount disbursed, this increases the workload and administrative costs for Chafea, which is mandated to implement parts of the Programme.
- ▶ The overall expenditures under the Consumer Programme of less than 5 Eurocents per citizen and year are small compared to the benefits achieved, but also compared to the challenges posed by the goal of reaching a high level of consumer protection in an internal market of more than 500 million citizens.

6.2.1. Costs and benefits of the actions

Which were the costs and the benefits of the actions? To what extent are the costs proportionate to the benefits achieved?

In this section we consider the extent to which the costs of the Consumer programme 2014-20 has been so far proportionate to the benefits achieved. The analysis is based on the identification of Programme inputs and costs, as well as related benefits for beneficiaries and society. It is supported by the assessment of benefits achieved by stakeholders, and complemented by the calculation and analysis of unit costs for specific Programme outputs and results, where appropriate. We also consider evidence provided by previous, specific evaluations. The analysis is structured by Programme area.

6.2.1.1. Product safety

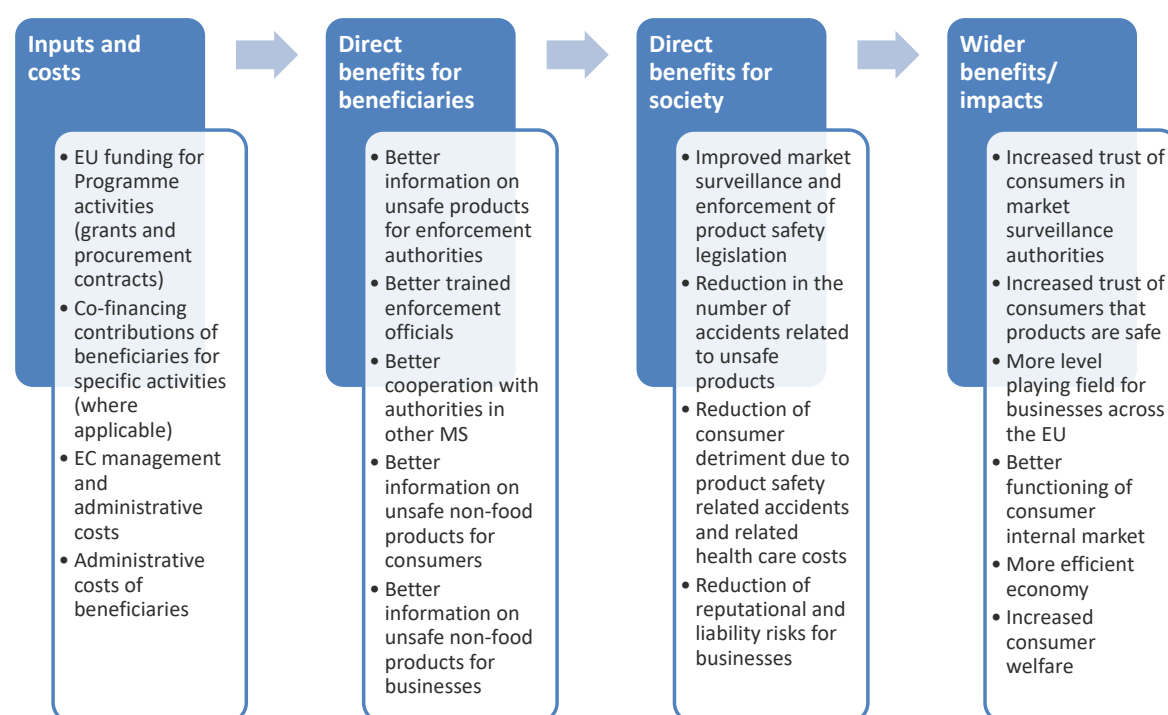
Product safety is a source of concern for consumer policy at the level of the Member States and the national product markets.¹⁴² Thus, enforcement authorities responsible

¹⁴² Among others, the Consumer Agenda (2014-2020) identifies existing or emerging challenges in the areas of product, service and food safety, and in its 2018 Communication on A New Deal for Consumers, the Commission noted that it will help Member States to cooperate better on product safety.

at the national level are called to action with the use of various mechanisms related to unsafe products. The growing integration of European product markets, both in terms of products originating in a given Member State flowing into other European markets, and of products originating outside the EU entering all or a large part of the EU single market, increase the relevance of having appropriate channels to ensure an adequate flow of information and cooperation between the relevant authorities in the Member States. Information and coordination is not only increasingly important for the governmental agencies or bodies responsible of the full range of measures in the area of product safety, but building and developing appropriate information channels such as RAPEX is also increasingly relevant at the EU level for traders (in order for them to take the necessary action, including all sorts of remedial measures) and for consumer organisations (in order to provide better advice to consumers etc.). All actions under Objective I support the functioning of the single market in terms of product safety, and resulting costs and benefits have to be considered in this perspective.

The following diagram identifies the costs and benefits of the actions implemented under Objective I of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and their interrelationship.

Figure 18: Overview of costs and benefits of actions funded under Objective I



Source: Civic Consulting.

The diagram details first the Programme inputs and costs for its implementation. They consist of EU funding for the Programme and co-financing contributions of beneficiaries, as well as management and administrative costs.¹⁴³ With respect to EU funds, in total EUR 13.1 million, or 14% of the funds committed under the Consumer

¹⁴³ In the following, we mostly consider EU funding, as Programme activities often support the implementation of specific EU legislation, and other costs such as administrative costs related to the Programme are difficult to disentangle from those that are related to the legal basis of the activity (e.g. regarding RAPEX, CPC, ODR/ADR etc). See section 4.8 on limitations of this evaluation.

Programme between 2014 and 2017, were spent on activities related to Objective I. A detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective I by main activity is presented in Section 5, which also describes the key outputs and results produced by the funded actions.

These outputs and results lead to direct benefits for beneficiaries (which are mostly enforcement authorities), as detailed in the figure above. Direct benefits mostly relate to better information on unsafe products (through RAPEX), better cooperation between Member States (e.g. in the context of joint actions) and better trained enforcement officials (through training measures funded under the Programme).

To support this analysis, enforcement authorities and other stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level assessed in our interviews the extent to which the funded activities have achieved these and other benefits in their country. The results are presented in the following figure.

Figure 19: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. N=63, 45, 53, 71, 64, 47, 36, 53, 28 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that most of the direct benefits have been largely achieved in practice during the evaluation period, including the benefits of **Better information on unsafe products** for enforcement authorities (and consumers/businesses), **Better trained enforcement officials** and **Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States**.

The previous diagram (Figure 18) also details how the direct benefits resulting from the Programme activities contribute to benefits for society. A key benefit for society is

improved market surveillance and enforcement of product safety legislation, to which RAPEX and joint actions have contributed effectively during the evaluation period (as concluded above in section 6.1). A second key benefit for society, a reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products, is likely to be achieved to some extent (as the measures taken in response to RAPEX notification by businesses and authorities in other Member States illustrate). However, consistent EU-data on product safety-related accidents and related trends is not available, see discussion in the context of effectiveness). According to interviews, the *Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products* is moderately achieved, the *Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe services* to a lesser extent. Of course, achievement of these benefits not only depends on the Programme, but also on a variety of other factors, such as financial and staff resources for market surveillance, consumer awareness of unsafe features of products, precautions taken by producers and traders etc. (factors limiting achievements have also been discussed in the analysis of effectiveness of the Programme).

Finally, Programme activities are expected to lead to increased trust of consumers that products are safe as a precondition for a better functioning consumer internal market. It is notable that consumer trust that products are safe has increased during the evaluation period, as has been evidenced in regular EU surveys.¹⁴⁴ The previous diagram also illustrates that this consumer trust is an essential precondition for a well-functioning and efficient economy that provides benefits to market participants and leads to increased consumer welfare.

Benefits for society are mostly intangible in nature or depend on a multitude of factors and the specific contributions of the actions funded under the Programme are therefore difficult to quantify.¹⁴⁵ However, EU-level inputs of EUR 13.1 million appear to be proportionate compared to the benefits of supporting the functioning of the single market through improved product safety and related trust for consumers.

At a more granular level, this evaluation also considered the balance of costs and benefits at the activity level, based on a consideration of previous, specific evaluations of individual activities, and unit costs calculated on basis of key outputs/results of the activities. Conclusions can be summarised as follows:

The only specific evaluation available concerned the functioning of the non-food scientific committees (from 2016). It concluded that **cost of the scientific committees'** activities was adequate overall and aligned with that of comparable risk assessment bodies.

Unit costs could be calculated for three of the activities, RAPEX, exchange of enforcement officials and the cosmetics databases COSING and CPNP, based on EU spending on these activities and key outputs achieved. The results are:¹⁴⁶

- The number of notifications in the RAPEX system was 8 658 in the 2014-2017 period. Average Programme cost per notification were therefore EUR 335 (equivalent to EUR 10.8 per notification and participating country);

¹⁴⁴ See section 6.1.

¹⁴⁵ See the limitations of the analysis of efficiency as discussed in section 4.8 above.

¹⁴⁶ Note that the unit costs have to be interpreted with care, as most activities have more than one output, but unit costs are calculated on basis of the main outputs of the activity. In other words, these costs include the costs for secondary tasks conducted under the activity. For some activities (e.g. joint actions), calculation of unit costs is not meaningful.

- Exchange of officials is funded through a grant system with special indemnities. The average costs per exchange are about EUR 2 000;
- The database COSING has an average of almost 1 200 000 views per month, which makes it by far the most visited DG GROW database, and more than 1 600 000 products have been notified in CPNP as of December 2017. If the amount committed for this activity is allocated equally between COSING and CPNP, the average cost per view on the COSING website is EUR 0.01 and the average cost per notified product in CPNP is EUR 0.51.

All unit costs appear to be proportionate, when considering the benefits of the specific activities for better information on product safety related risks for consumer health, consumer trust and market functioning.

The detailed analysis for all activities is presented in Annex X.

6.2.1.2. Consumer information and education

Few if any issues are as important to the functioning of consumer markets than consumer information. When consumers are perfectly informed and take decisions that are perfectly rational, traders will – according to economic theory – design their transactions to maximize net benefit to consumers, otherwise they will lose business. Specifically, traders in competitive environments will provide goods and services and offer contract terms that try to maximize the expected net benefits to the consumer (which is the expected benefit that the consumer will obtain through the consumer transaction less the actual price that the consumer pays).¹⁴⁷ But in a real-life market economy such as the EU, market forces interact with the shortcomings in consumer information and rationality. Consequently, traders generally have an incentive to structure their transactions to take into account the informational and rationality deficits that may afflict consumer decision-making. Traders who fail to consider and **act upon the consumers' biases, misinformation and misperceptions will probably lose** business and forfeit revenue and profits. Over time, the prevailing market outcomes would be ones that reflect the pervasive shortcomings in the level of information and education of consumers. However, there are also forces that counteract the effects of informational and educational failures:

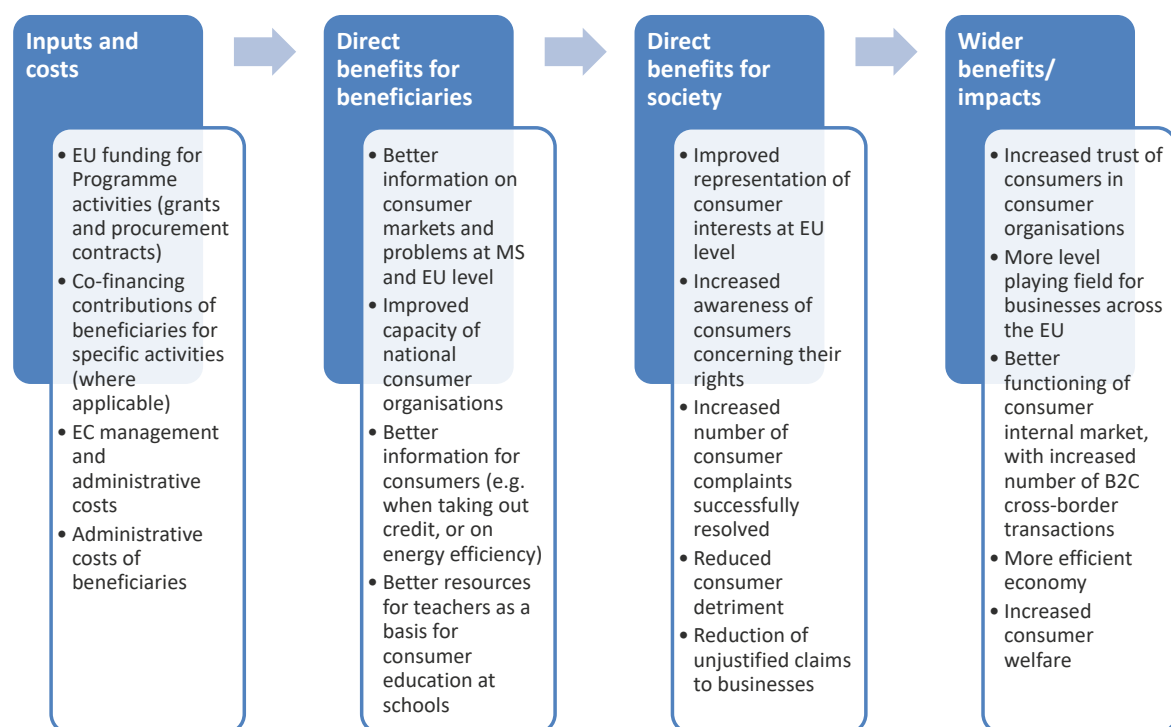
- Consumers, even those afflicted by behavioural biases, are able to learn from their mistakes, and from the mistakes of other consumers. Learning may thus improve outcomes.
- The reputation of traders may also facilitate correction of mistakes. Traders may try to provide information (in some cases they have to due to legal requirements), or may otherwise mitigate how actual transactions hinge upon informational and behavioural deficiencies.

The level of information and the propensity of behavioural biases may also be improved through expert advice and through information created and disseminated by consumer organizations, governmental entities or educational institutions. It is at this level that the various activities under the second objective of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 to improve consumer information and education are targeted.

The following diagram depicts the costs and benefits of the actions implemented under Objective II of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and their interrelationship.

¹⁴⁷ This crucial role of consumer information and consumer education (or rationality, if one prefers) is well known in the economic and law and economics scholarship. See, Bar-Gill (2012). The essential argument is already in a pioneering paper by the Nobel-Prize winner Michael Spence from 1977 (Spence, 1977).

Figure 20: Overview of costs and benefits of activities funded under Objective II



Source: Civic Consulting.

The diagram details first the main inputs and costs for Programme implementation, as already discussed above in the context product safety, which are to a large extent EU Programme funds. EUR 35.1 million (37%) of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017 were spent on activities related to Objective II. No co-financing requirements applied for any of the activities funded under this objective. A detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective II by main activity is presented in Section 5, which also describes the key outputs and results produced by the funded actions.

These outputs and results lead to direct benefits for the Programme's beneficiaries, as detailed in the figure above. For the activities funded under Objective II, beneficiaries are consumer professionals, including policy makers, teachers, and to some extent consumers as beneficiaries of consumer rights awareness campaigns. Beneficiaries receive better information, better educational resources, and in the case of consumer organisations they receive financial support (BEUC, at the EU level) or they are subject to capacity building measures (organisations at the national level). Resulting benefits for society include an improved representation of consumer interests at EU level, better informed consumers, and a better evidence base for consumer policy.

To validate this analysis, Programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level assessed in our interviews the extent to which the funded activities have achieved these and other benefits in their country. The results are presented in the following figure.

Figure 21: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=81, 93, 94, 78, 53, 77, 65. (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that several direct benefits for beneficiaries and society have been largely achieved in practice during the evaluation period. These are *improved representation of consumer interests at EU level* and *better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States*. In contrast, stakeholders considered *better information for consumers* and *consumer education* as well as *better data on consumer complaints* to be moderately achieved. *Improved capacity of national consumer organisations* was ranked the lowest in terms of level of achievement (particularly among consumer organisations). It is only achieved to a limited extent, due to the previously mentioned resource constraints of national consumer organisations that reduce the benefits of capacity building measures. Overall, these benefit assessments tally with the evaluation results regarding effectiveness of the relevant activities (see Section 6.1.2.1).

The previous diagram finally illustrates that direct benefits are expected to contribute to wider benefits and impacts such as increased trust of consumers in consumer organisations, and increased confidence in cross-border shopping in the EU. In spite of the mentioned limitations of Programme achievements, long-term trends in this respect are positive with respect to both indicators (likely also depending on other

factors). In contrast, the level of consumer awareness of their rights has not increased over the evaluation period, as measured by EU-surveys ¹⁴⁸

Again, this evaluation also considered the balance of costs and benefits at the activity level, based on a consideration of previous, specific evaluations of individual activities, and unit costs calculated on basis of key outputs/results of the activities. Conclusions can be summarised as follows:

Specific evaluations are available concerning the support to BEUC and some of the information and awareness campaigns funded. They concluded:

- BEUC is a reasonably efficient and well-functioning organisation (note, however, that the evaluation concerned the previous Programme period and was finalised in 2013). In the 2014-2017 period, outputs and results for this activity appear to be proportionate to spending levels;
- Separate evaluations for the two waves of the consumer credit campaign were conducted (dated 2014 and 2016), which both found mixed results in terms of efficiency, mainly questioning the extent to which the right people (the target group) were efficiently reached, and the large number of different tools and channels used in comparison to the available budget.

Unit costs could be calculated for three of the activities, European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS), Consumer Champion, and Consumer Classroom, based on EU spending on these activities and key outputs achieved. The results are: ¹⁴⁹

- **ECCRS:** Based on a total number of complaints registered from 2014-2017 of 2 206 045 the unit costs are EUR 0.24 per complaint submitted;
- **Consumer Champion:** Under the assumption that from the allocated budget 40% is used for the website and e-learning, and 60% for local training courses, the resulting costs per registered user on the platform are EUR 473.82, and the costs per consumer professional trained are EUR 4 042.80 (with the trainings often having a duration of 2 days). These figures include all costs, including for setting up the platform and developing training materials, website maintenance, organisation of training programmes, preparatory meetings, selection of participants, evaluation of course results, management and administration etc.
- **Consumer Classroom:** If the total number of resources submitted and lessons created by users in the periods 2015 and 2016 are considered as the key outputs of the project (in total 997 items), the resulting unit costs are EUR 1 653.46 per user-created item. Again this figure includes all costs, including for website maintenance, organising school competitions, management and administration, etc.

While the unit rates for complaints registration appear to be proportionate to the benefits of having relevant statistics available at EU level, unit costs for both the Consumer Champion and the Consumer Classroom appear to be considerable, possibly due to the related set-up costs, which can be significant.

¹⁴⁸ See the evidence presented in section 6.1 regarding the potential wider effects of Programme activities.

¹⁴⁹ Unit costs have to be interpreted with care, as most activities have more than one output, but unit costs are calculated on basis of the main outputs of the activity. See previous footnote in the section on product safety.

Overall, the following conclusions can be drawn on basis of the analysis above: Several of the actions under the Programme appear to be proportionate when considering the benefits achieved, such as the support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC), and actions related to an improved evidence base (such as scoreboards, markets studies etc). These account for 20.4 million of Programme spending, and have achieved, as mentioned above, significant benefits such as improved representation of consumer interests at EU level and a better evidence base concerning consumer markets and problems across the EU, which are both an essential precondition to prepare and implement consumer policy effectively. In contrast, the remaining EUR 14.7 million are mostly spent on activities in the area of consumer information and education, where a specific evaluation of the credit campaign showed mixed results. However, other campaigns have not been subject to specific evaluations, and this is also true for the Consumer Classroom and the Consumer Champion. A more detailed assessment of efficiency of these activities would be needed to come to a final conclusion in this respect.

The detailed analysis for all activities is presented in Annex X.

6.2.1.3. Consumer rights and redress

The third objective of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 concerns consumer rights and consumer redress. The actions concern the provision of knowledge and evidence for consumer protection lawmaking on the one hand (both in terms of the stages prior to legislative action, and the evaluation of means of implementation of legislation and of the ensuing outcomes) and, on the other, improved simple and low-cost redress (implementing Directive 2013/11/EU on alternative dispute resolution and especially Regulation 524/213 on online dispute resolution for consumers).

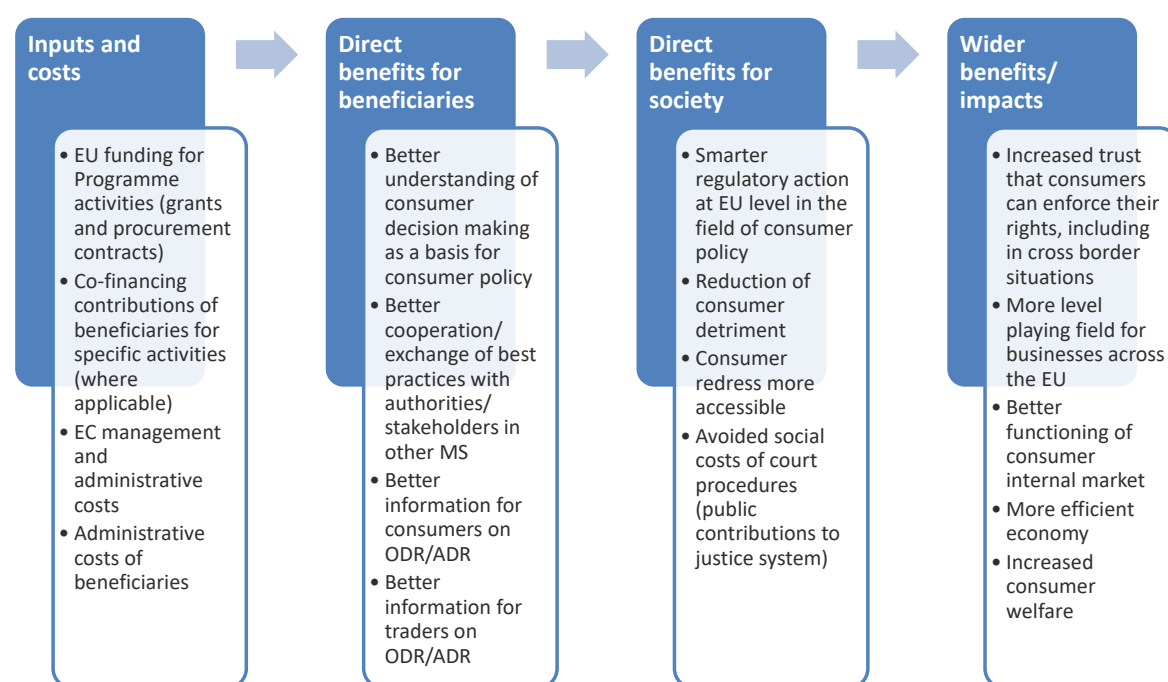
Concerning the first area, the funded activities have been policy studies, including behavioural studies intending to explore actual consumer decision-making in various contexts (such as insurance services, social media advertising, online platforms, etc). In the current literature on consumer matters, it is widely accepted that behavioural considerations are of primary relevance in understanding actions taken by participants in consumer markets. Perhaps even more importantly, they are considered crucial for consumer legislation and for the strategies to implement and enforce consumer law. Daily experiences in marketing and legal practice show that decisions and conduct of consumers diverge, not unsystematically, from the predictions grounded in the standard rational choice approach traditionally used in law and economics. Biases and cognitive limitations have been identified by psychologists, sociologists, neuroscientists and economists, and also have been empirically tested to a large extent. Behavioural studies are an essential part of the toolbox of European lawmakers for re-designing consumer legislation in the light of scientific evidence about how real consumers interact in real markets with real firms.

The second set of activities funded under Objective III of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is closely connected with consumer redress, and specifically with the out-of-court settlement of consumer complaints. Redress (the ability to obtain a remedy for the infringement of rights and entitlements) is a cornerstone of all forms of legislation. Rights without redress are virtually meaningless. Access to redress is therefore a key element of a functioning consumer protection framework. Consumers typically face relatively high costs (both compared to the size of the transaction and the size of their financial means) for obtaining redress *vis-à-vis* infringements of their rights by a firm. Thus, affecting the cost of seeking and obtaining redress, and through it deterring unlawful behaviour by firms, becomes a very relevant objective of consumer policy. Effective consumer redress is a contributor to the functioning of consumer markets, including in the online world, and especially in cross-border trade. However, the cost of seeking redress is perceived as high by many consumers, especially regarding the court system, which is also often slow, formalistic, ritualistic and hard to understand for lay persons, all this even disregarding the high costs of

operating the court system that taxpayers have to bear. When the infringements giving rise to consumer redress are spread over all or a large number of transactions of a given kind, the inadequacies of court redress become dramatically clear.¹⁵⁰ All this emphasises the relevance of redress mechanisms for consumers that are affordable, quick, intuitive and non-formalistic. This is where the ODR platform, which is based on Regulation 524/213 and was launched in February 2016, aims to improve the situation by providing easy access to ADR schemes in the Member States.

The following diagram illustrates in more detail the costs and benefits of the actions implemented under Objective III of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, and their interrelationship.

Figure 22: Overview of costs and benefits of activities funded under Objective III



Source: Civic Consulting.

The diagram details first the Programme inputs and costs for its implementation. Of the EU funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, EUR 13.0 million, or 14%, were spent on activities related to Objective III. A detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective III by main activity is presented in Section 5, which also describes the key outputs and results produced by the funded actions.

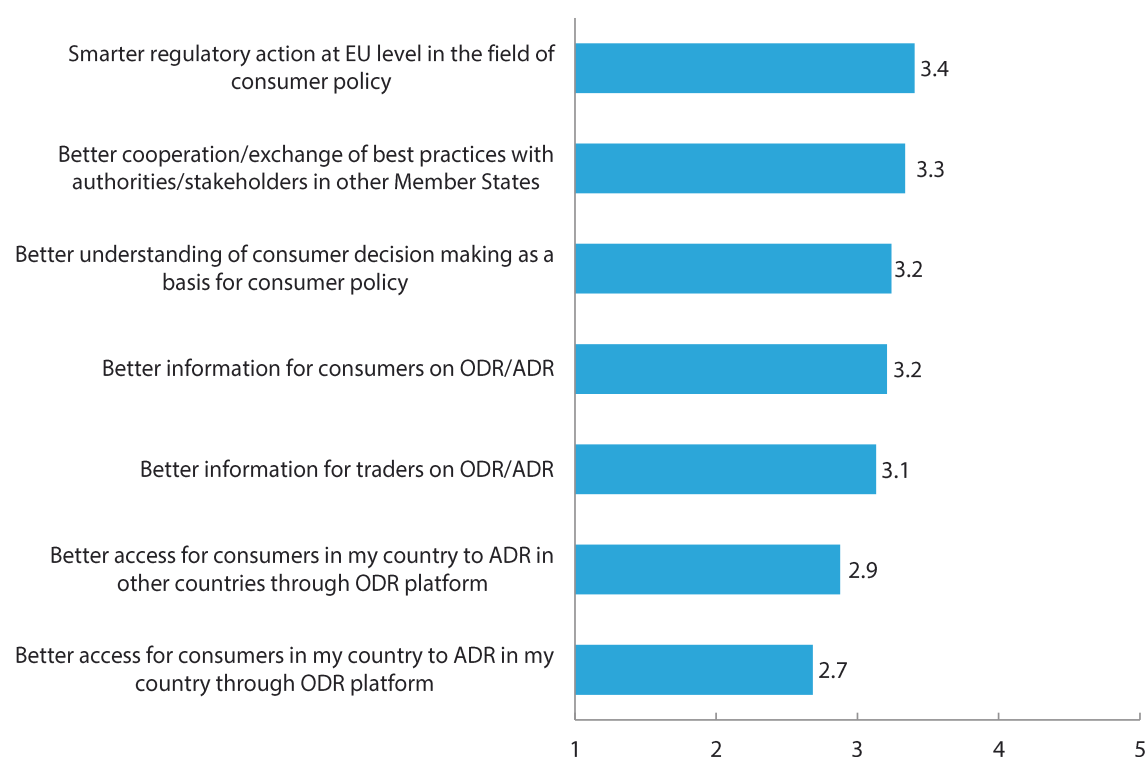
These outputs and results lead to direct benefits for beneficiaries. For the activities funded under Objective III, these are mostly a better understanding of consumer decision making (through the behavioural studies funded), a better evidence base for consumer policy (through e.g. evaluations of specific legislation and other policy

¹⁵⁰ One of the most obvious cases is the litigation wave in Spain concerning unfair terms in mortgage contracts, that has produced hundred of thousands of cases that clog the civil court system in Spain.

studies) as well as better cooperation and exchange of best practices, which all feed into smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy. As discussed above, activities under Objective III also concern improved access to ADR, mostly through the ODR platform, which so far has only materialised to a limited extent (see analysis of effectiveness in section 6.1.3). As discussed above, improved access to ADR would be expected to lead to significant benefits for society, in terms of better redress of consumers, better private enforcement of consumer claims, as well as reduced private and societal costs. This would include reduced burdens on businesses, especially if the use of ADR leads to a reduction in the number of court cases and contributes to a level playing field for businesses across the EU, which again is a factor contributing to a functioning consumer internal market.

Again, Programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level assessed in our interviews the extent to which the funded activities have achieved in their view these and other benefits in their country. The results are presented in the following figure.

Figure 23: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=84, 83, 87, 95, 91, 82, 89 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Stakeholders interviewed rated *Smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy* and *Better cooperation and exchange of best practices with authorities and stakeholders in other Member States* with the highest levels of achievement (though still only moderately achieved). Lower assessments were provided regarding the other potential benefits, including those that relate to the relative recently implemented ODR platform (see also the detailed assessment of the effectiveness of activities implemented under Objective III in section 6.1).

Only very limited complementary evidence is available to assess the balance of costs and benefits for activities funded under Objective III. Specific evaluations were not available for any of the activities funded under this objective, and unit rates could only be meaningfully calculated for the ODR Platform, for which, however, only data regarding its first year of operation was available, limiting the validity of the result.

The analysis above therefore only allows for partial conclusions: The outputs and results of behavioural and other policy studies seem proportionate to the costs involved, when considering that the contributed effectively to the development of EU consumer policy initiatives, such as the new CPC Regulation (although policy uptake of behavioural studies was assessed more critically by stakeholders, see section 6.1). Regarding the balance of cost and benefits of activities on ADR/ODR, which in principle could bring significant benefits, as has been described above, no assessment can yet be done. The campaigns on ADR have so far not been subject to a specific evaluation, and the ODR Platform is too recent to draw conclusions in this respect.

The detailed analysis for all activities is presented in Annex X.

6.2.1.4. Enforcement

The final Programme area under the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme is enforcement. Again, within this broad objective, the funded activities relate to two areas: (i) coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions in connection with Regulation 2006/2004 on Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC), a network of enforcement bodies in charge of EU consumer protection legislation, which also includes some broader cooperation in the area of enforcement of consumer legislation through the exchange and training of enforcement officials; and (ii) support for actions related to enforcement of consumer rights, especially concerning European and cross-border contexts and issues. This covers the network of European Consumer Centres (ECC-Net), which provides information on consumer rights and assists in resolving disputes when the consumer and trader involved are based in two different European countries.

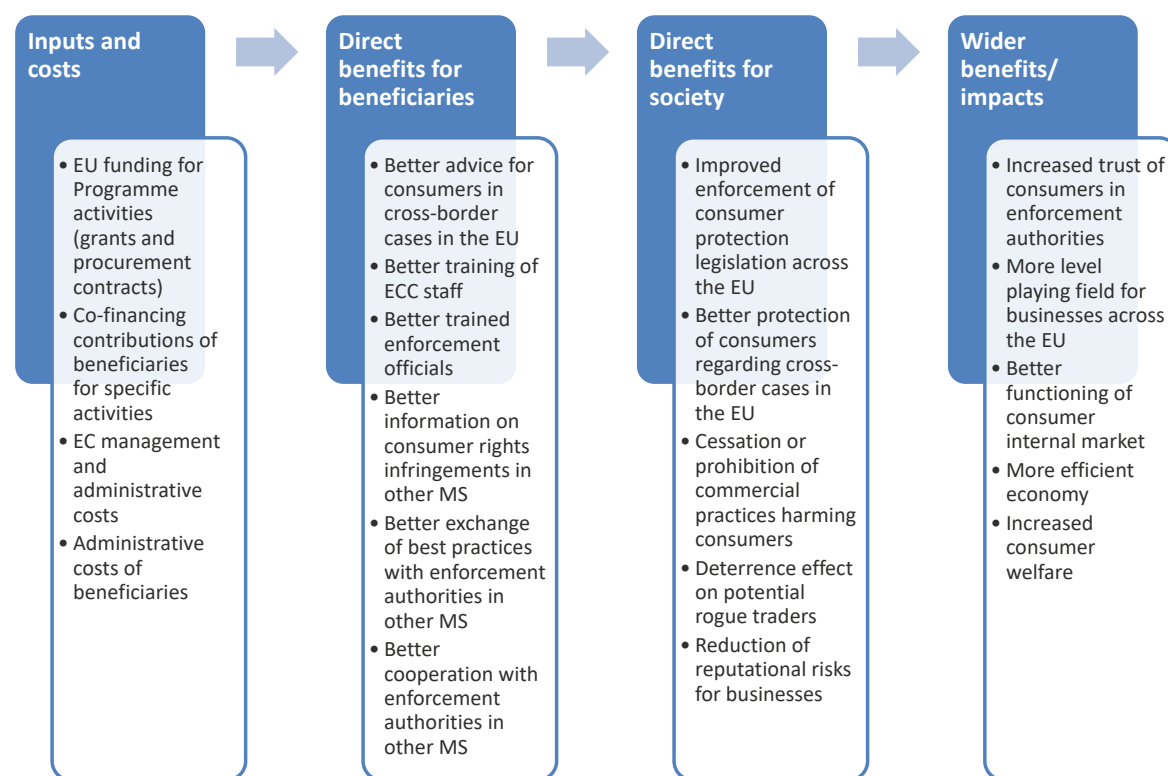
The crucial role of enforcement is by no means exclusive to European consumer law, nor to consumer law more generally. It is true for most areas of law. When dealing with consumer law, nevertheless, the role of enforcement is probably more prominent. One reason for this is that the effectiveness of the traditional model of enforcing rights and remedies among private parties, namely private litigation among equally-situated parties before ordinary civil courts, does not correspond well to many of the features of the typical interaction between firms and consumers in need of legal redress. **Moreover, enforcement in the consumer law arena involves often a “collective” dimension.** In modern developed economies, consumer goods and services, and the commercial practices that are related to them, tend to be produced and distributed in large amounts and to a large number of consumers. This means that one particular behaviour by a firm – e.g. a safety decision concerning the design of a product, a marketing campaign, a clause in a standard form contract – is likely to affect in the same way (or closely so) a significant number of similarly-situated consumers, i.e. consumers of the risky product, addressees of the marketing campaign, contracting parties of the same firm, etc. This creates relevant commonalities among the various instances in need of redress and gives rise to a large public good effect of enforcement in the consumer context: enforcing consumer law in a particular case not only provides benefits in terms of redress to an individual consumer aggrieved by the infringement, but also provides collective benefits to similarly-situated consumers, and even to prospective consumers; it creates a beneficial precedent favouring parties in similar circumstances; and it also serves to enforce the substantive rules of consumer law, thus creating a deterrence effect on potentially infringing firms.

Objective IV within the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 acknowledges the importance of EU-wide enforcement. The collective dimension of consumer law

enforcement is not contained within national borders, despite the fact that the authority and powers of the enforcement agencies of the Member States are constrained by state boundaries. When goods and services flow cross-border, or travel from outside the EU to virtually all consumer markets within the EU borders, incidents and infringements in one national market are replicated and mirrored in various other Member States. Enforcement actions (or failures to take action) in one Member State affect the behaviour of firms in other national consumer markets. Promoting of a more integrated and coordinated approach to enforcement of consumer law at the European level has therefore considerable benefits.

The following diagram illustrates in more detail the costs and benefits of the actions implemented under Objective IV of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, and their interrelationship.

Figure 24: Overview of costs and benefits of activities funded under Objective IV



Source: Civic Consulting.

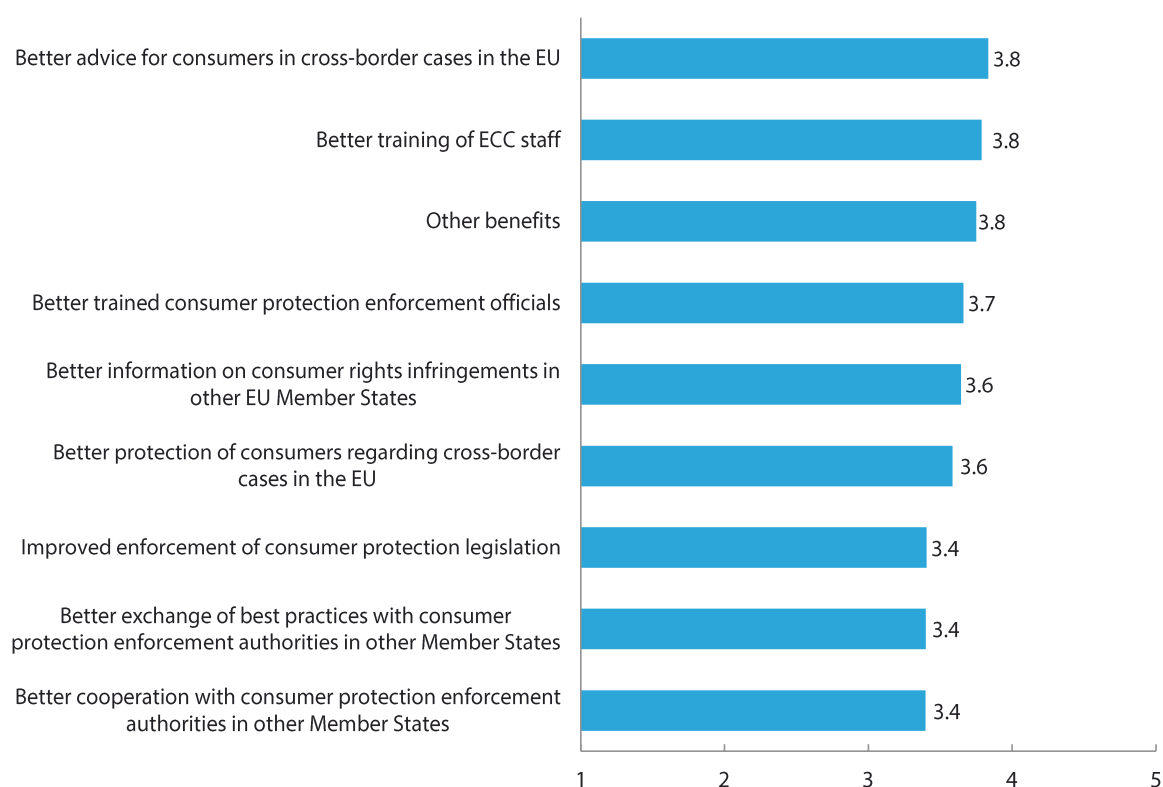
The diagram above shows how the spending for the implementation of Programme activities in the area of enforcement leads to direct benefits for the Programme beneficiaries. EUR 30.2 million, or 31% of the funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, were spent on activities related to Objective IV (mostly for financing the ECC-Net). A detailed breakdown of the funds committed under Objective IV by main activity is presented in Section 5.

Benefits of the activities funded under Objective IV are mostly better information on consumer rights infringements in other Member States and better cooperation with enforcement authorities across EU borders through the CPC Network, as well as better training through the accompanying exchange of officials and measures such as the E-

Enforcement Academy. These benefits are largely achieved, considering the results of this evaluation in terms of effectiveness (see section 6.1). The same is true for the direct benefits achieved through funding of the ECC-Net, which are better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU, as well as better trained ECC staff. In turn, these direct benefits for Programme beneficiaries leads to benefits for society, through better protection of consumers in cross-border cases, better enforcement of consumer legislation and a reduction of commercial practices harming consumers across the EU. This contributes to a better functioning consumer internal market, as well as a more efficient and welfare creating economy – wider benefits that are aimed at across all areas of the Consumer Programme.

To validate this analysis, enforcement authorities and other stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level assessed in our interviews the extent to which the funded activities have achieved these and other benefits in their country. The results are presented in the following figure.

Figure 25: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=78, 47, 4, 59, 73, 82, 74, 70, 78 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

The benefits that were rated by interviewees, on average, with the highest level of achievement were *Better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU*, *Better training of ECC-staff*, followed by benefits related to *Better trained consumer protection enforcement officials*, *Better information on consumer rights infringements in other MS*, and *better protection of consumers in cross-border cases*. The remaining listed benefits which mostly relate to improved enforcement and related cooperation

among authorities through the CPC Network were assessed on average as having been achieved to a slightly lower extent. However, achievement of these benefits was higher assessed by ministries/authorities, which are directly involved in the network.

The benefits of improved enforcement cooperation are also evidenced by the follow-up research to the CPC sweeps, which indicate significantly higher compliance rates after sweeps have been conducted. Also, trust of consumers in public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer has increased during the evaluation period, as has the percentage of consumers who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law (see section 6.1 for more details).

As indicated in the previous sections, this evaluation also considered the balance of costs and benefits at the activity level, based on previous, specific evaluations of individual activities, and unit costs calculated on basis of key outputs/results of the activities. Conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- A recent, specific evaluation is available concerning the ECC-Net. It concluded the ECC-Net had in many ways contributed to a higher level of consumer protection in the internal market, and confirmed through stakeholder interviews that the costs for running the ECC appear to be adequate as well as **"the added-value of ECCs in relation to their costs"**.
- In addition, unit costs could be calculated for one of the activities, the exchange of CPC officials. The results are that in the period 2014-2017, the average costs per exchange were about EUR 1 600, slightly lower than in the product safety area (calculated on basis of a total of 196 exchanges of enforcement officials).

It can be concluded that on basis of the available evidence, the costs of the activities funded under Objective IV of the Programme appear to have been proportionate so far to the benefits achieved, considering the outputs and results of the activities, and the related benefits in enforcement cooperation and consumer advice regarding cross-border problems.

The detailed analysis for all activities is presented in Annex X.

6.2.1.5. Overall balance of costs and benefits

The analysis presented in the previous sections leads to the conclusion that for most activities funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 the costs of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 appear to have been proportionate to the benefits achieved, based on the available evidence for main costs and benefits achieved, complemented by an assessment of stakeholder views and unit costs, where appropriate. The analysis also considered the available evaluations of specific activities.

For several activities no conclusion could be drawn, either because they were very recent (such as the ODR platform and E-Enforcement Academy), or no specific evaluations and other evidence was available (as is the case for several of the consumer awareness campaigns). The conclusions regarding the only awareness campaign separately evaluated were mixed in terms of results concerning its efficiency. Finally, unit costs for two of the funded activities (Consumer Classroom and Consumer Champion) are considerable and further review would be needed to conclude on possible reasons, which goes beyond the scope of this Programme evaluation.

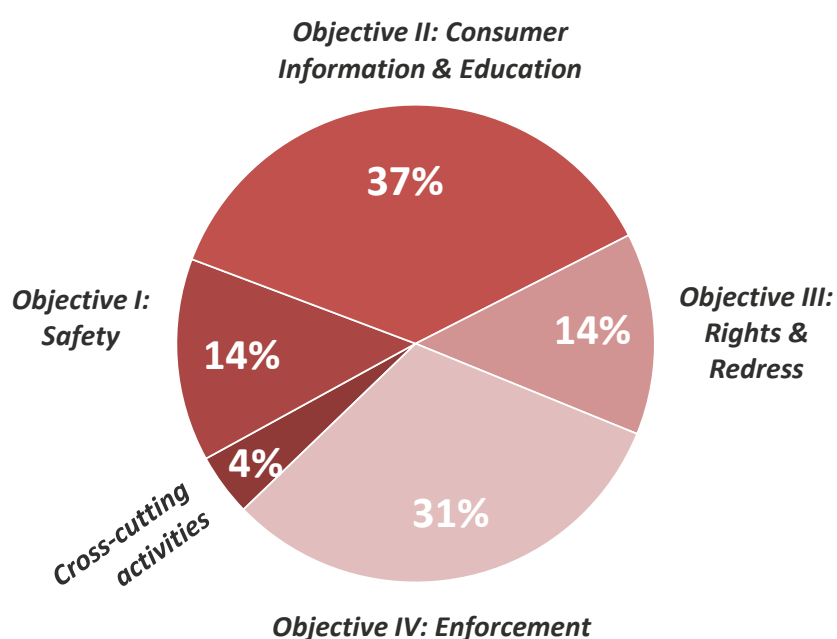
6.2.2. Allocation of resources to Programme priorities

To what extent have the costs used in the actions and their distribution among the priorities of the Programme been justified, given the changes which have been achieved?

For the Consumer Programme, funds of EUR 188.8 million were earmarked for the implementation of the Programme over the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020, of which a total of EUR 95.4 million had been committed as of the end of 2017.

The following figure presents the breakdown of funds committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017 per objective.

Figure 26: Funds committed under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 by objective, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As shown in the figure, the two objectives that received the highest share of funding between 2014 and 2017 were **Objective II: Consumer information, education and support for consumer organisations** (EUR 35.1 million) and **Objective IV: Enforcement** (EUR 30.2 million). Activities funded under **Objective I: Safety** and **Objective III: Rights and redress** consumed EUR 13.1 million and EUR 13.0 million, respectively. Approximately 4% of the budget belongs to the 'Administrative' budget line, which is used to fund cross-cutting activities.

Consumer education and information (including evidence base) and enforcement together account for two thirds of the total amount committed under the Consumer Programme between 2014 and 2017, in line with their key importance for a welfare-enhancing consumer market. Allocation of funds among the four Programme areas and the related objectives appears therefore to be appropriate. This view is also shared by most stakeholders, who assessed that distribution of funds among the four Programme areas (product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement) has been largely justified given the benefits achieved (average score of 3.7 on a scale of 1 to 5). It is notable that the assessment diverged considerably by stakeholder group, with higher average assessments given by ECCs

and ministries/national authorities, who are also major direct beneficiaries of Programme activities (see following table).

Table 20: Do you consider that the distribution of funds among the four Programme areas (product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement) has been justified given the benefits achieved? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all justified) to 5 (Fully justified)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all justified)	2	3	4	5 (Fully justified)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	1	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	1	2	8	5	3	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	1	4	8	4	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	1	10	15	11	4.0
Other	1	1	1	1	--	2.5
All stakeholders	2	5	26	30	18	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 26. N=81. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

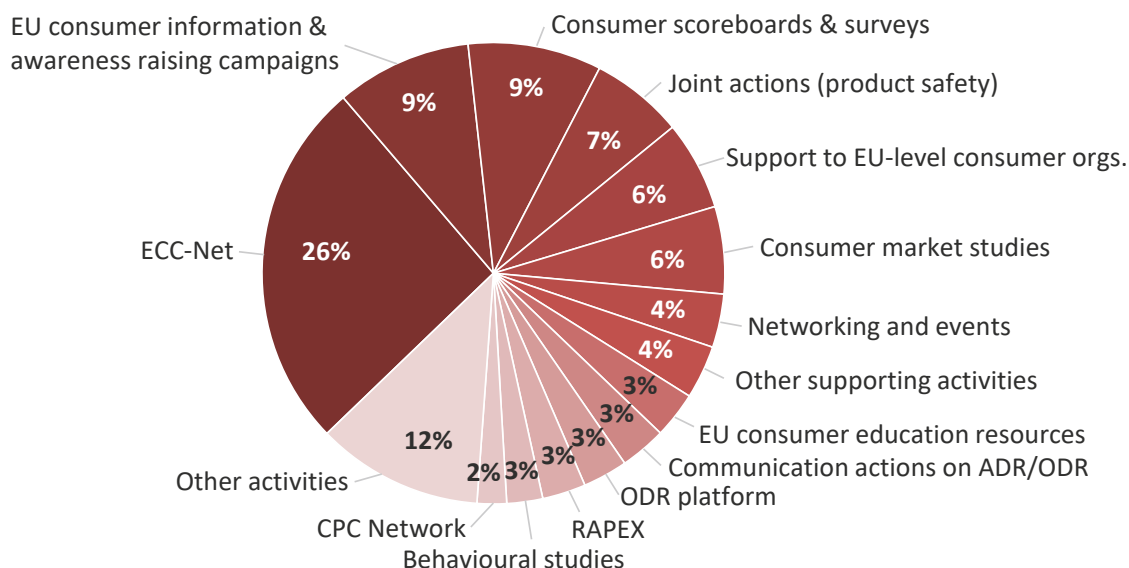
The table also indicates that a large majority of more than 90% of respondents considered the distribution of funds to be moderately or largely justified (3 or higher).

These results are generally in line with the baseline established in the previous Consumer Programme, with both the mid-term and ex-post evaluations concluding that there was general support for the current funding priorities of the Programme, except in the area of consumer redress, which stakeholders considered to have been neglected in the previous Programme.¹⁵¹ Accordingly, the proportion of funding devoted to consumer rights and redress was increased in the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 over the baseline of the previous Programme. Whereas the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 **found that the area of ‘consumer rights and redress’ received only 5% of total funding under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013**, this share was increased to 14% of the total Programme funding over the first four years of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (see Figure 27 above).

Beyond considering the allocation by Programme area/objective, it is also of interest to analyse the allocation of funding to main activities. The following figure presents the amounts committed for key activities (those receiving EUR 2 million or more).

¹⁵¹ See section 6.2.4 in Part 2 of this study as well as European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p.162.

Figure 28: Funds committed under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 by main activity, 2014-2017



Source: Civic Consulting, based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

As the figure indicates, the activities that received the largest amount of funding during the evaluation period were:

- European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) – EUR 24.8 million;
- EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns – EUR 9.0 million;
- Consumer scoreboards and surveys – EUR 8.9 million;
- Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety – EUR 6.2 million;
- Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) – EUR 6.0 million;
- Consumer market studies – EUR 5.1 million;
- EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom) – EUR 3.1 million;
- Communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR – EUR 3.1 million;
- Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform – EUR 3.0 million;
- Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX) – EUR 2.9 million;
- Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making) – EUR 2.4 million;
- Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network – EUR 2.0 million.

When reviewing these funding priorities in terms of activities, the following observations can be made:

- Funding for the ECC-Net is by far the largest budget item (EUR 24.8 million, or 26% of the total amount committed between 2014 and 2017), with funds allocated that are roughly of an equivalent size to the total amount allocated to the next three largest activities;
- Activities that support enforcement by market surveillance and consumer protection authorities, i.e. Actions 2 and 10 (including RAPEX, joint actions, E-Enforcement Academy, exchange of enforcement officials, CPC, etc) are allocated a total of EUR 16.4 million, or 17% of the total amount committed;

- In total, EUR 15.2 million have been committed between 2014 to 2017 to consumer information and awareness campaigns, and consumer education measures, or 16% of the total amount committed;
- Activities that support consumer organisations (BEUC, Consumer Champion) account for a total of EUR 7.9 million (8%) between 2014 and 2017.

It can therefore be concluded that the total amount allocated to the ECC-Net is much higher than the support to public enforcement in the areas of consumer rights and product safety. This distribution is, however, largely explained by the nature of the activities funded. The ECC-Net is almost entirely an EU project. The setting up of the Centres as entities engaged in consumer advice and enforcement is a result of an EU initiative and the Union therefore bears the main responsibility for the sustained functioning of the ECC-Net. In contrast, the entities that form the CPC Network (and RAPEX contact points) are national enforcement authorities and the responsibility for their effective and successful work in enforcing EU consumer law (and product safety legislation) lies primarily with the Member States, which also cover the staff costs in full (in contrast to the ECCs, where Member States only provide co-funding). The role of the EU is limited to providing a framework for enforcement cooperation, which can generally be achieved with less cost-intensive means. The considerable financial support for the ECCs is decisive for the activity and the very existence of the ECC-Net, at least according to the current model of co-funding. The Draft Status Report concluded that the costs for running the ECC-Net are proportionate to the added value of its services to consumers. At the same time, as pointed out in the Draft Status Report, the ECCs are facing the challenge of ensuring a comparable service content and quality across the network and the challenge of ensuring a good use of public funds / high value for money.¹⁵²

As indicated above, the funds allocated to the CPC Network have so far been modest (EUR 2.0 million in the period 2014 to 2017). The modest funding of the CPC Network has been partly preconditioned by the narrow basis for common actions under the current CPC Regulation. Hence, the costs have mostly been associated with providing and maintaining the platform for exchange of information and enforcement requests under the mutual assistance mechanism, as well as other supporting activities. Thus, it appears that the CPC mechanism has made efficient use of the well-known positive dynamics of networks, namely generating enforcement activity by connecting enforcement units and with limited intervention from the centre. However, the entry into force of the new CPC Regulation may also require additional resources under the Consumer Programme, e.g. for modernising the CPC IT-Tool or for training measures.

Furthermore, in the interviews conducted for this evaluation, the most mentioned factor influencing the level of achievement of benefits with respect to enforcement in both the consumer law and product safety field were limited staff/financial resources of authorities. With uneven capacities between Member States being an issue of concern, Member States with lower capacities may need support measures for institutional strengthening. An even more pronounced situation is the limited capacity of consumer organisations in many Member States in spite of their importance for private enforcement of consumer law (which will gain importance under a new Injunctions Directive) and for raising awareness of consumer rights (see the detailed discussion in section 6.1). The funds allocated to these Programme areas therefore seem to be limited in light of current and future challenges, especially if related capacity building activities were to be expanded (see conclusions and recommendations, section 7).

¹⁵² Draft Status Report, p. 79.

A similar situation can be observed regarding the funds allocated to consumer information and awareness campaigns. While the amount of funding provided under the Programme for consumer awareness raising and information activities under is considerable, it is small compared to the large target groups involved.¹⁵³

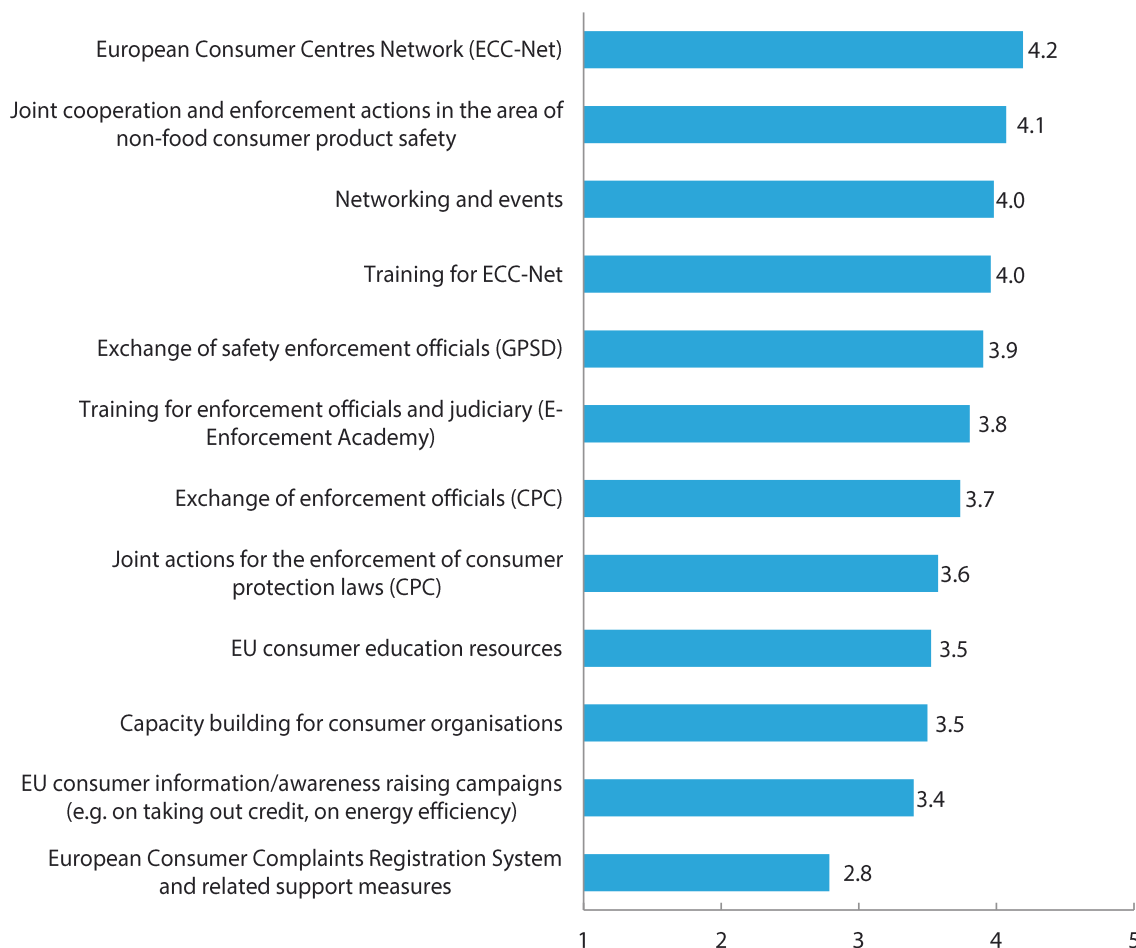
It can therefore be concluded that while the allocation of funds among the four Programme areas appears to be appropriate, the overall expenditures under the Consumer Programme – equivalent to less than 5 Eurocents per citizen and year – are limited compared to the challenges posed by the goal of reaching a high level of consumer protection in an internal market of more than 500 million citizens.

How affordable were the costs borne by different stakeholder groups, given the benefits they received?

About two-thirds of stakeholders interviewed indicated their organisation has incurred costs for participating in specific activities or applying for funding under the current consumer programmes (69%). Of those that incurred costs, a large majority found these costs to have been affordable given the benefits they received (see the following figure). For most activities, ministries/authorities and/or ECCs found them more affordable than consumer organisations (except for Consumer Champion and the complaints database, which consumer organisations found on average more affordable). Note, however, that not all types of stakeholders assessed all activities, as some activities, such as RAPEX, are not relevant cost factors for e.g. consumer organisations.

¹⁵³ In total, EUR 12.1 million have been committed between 2014 to 2017 to consumer information and awareness campaigns. This is equivalent to EUR 3 million per year, or EUR 100 000 per year and country covered.

Figure 29: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=36, 28, 54, 25, 21, 26, 19, 26, 19, 16, 20, 14 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the RAPEX system, the ODR Platform, etc.

As the figure indicates, for most activities the costs borne by the responding organisations have been affordable given the benefits they received, with assessments being clearly above the mid-point of the assessment scale. Only one activity was ranked lower in terms of affordability, the *European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures*, with an average assessment of 2.8, reflecting the limited benefits received from this activity according to stakeholders (see the detailed discussion in section 6.1, effectiveness). Note, however, that costs are incurred by different stakeholder groups for different activities, which has to be considered when comparing the resulting average values.

6.2.3. Factors influencing efficiency

What factors influenced the efficiency with which the observed achievements were attained? If there are significant differences in costs or benefits between Member States, what are these differences caused by?

In principle, factors influencing the efficiency of an intervention such as the Consumer Programme can exist at the design level, at the management level and at the delivery level. The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 had not found evidence of significant inefficiencies, noting that previous inefficiencies had been stopped as a result of specific evaluations of the different actions. It concluded that there was potential for efficiency gains with respect to the administration and implementation of the Programme as well as the financing mechanisms for the ECC-Net (see below).

Regarding the design of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, we considered several aspects in detail:

- The extent to which the Programme is well structured (i.e. there are no major gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities funded);
- The extent to which the actions/activities of the Programme are well defined;
- The extent to which the annual work programmes are transparent.

Regarding the first two aspects, this evaluation found no indication of major gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities funded, or that there were deficiencies in the definition of actions/activities. The last aspect is more subjective in character, i.e. it refers to the perception of the target groups regarding transparency of the annual work programmes. We therefore included these design aspects into our interview guide. Interviewees largely agreed that the actions/activities of the Programme are well defined, the annual work programmes are transparent and the Programme is well structured, largely due to higher assessments provided by ECCs and ministries/ authorities, which are main direct beneficiaries of the Programme.¹⁵⁴

To further explore potential inefficiencies in Programme design, management and delivery, we addressed the scope for simplification in a possible new Consumer Programme in a follow-up interview question. The highest proportion of interviewees saw a potential for simplification regarding application procedures (59%), reporting requirements (54%) and a slightly lower number considered that programme management (47%) and delivery mechanisms (44%) could be simplified. Interviewees provided very detailed explanations as to why they considered there is room for simplification. Most comments focused on application procedures and reporting requirements, with a general agreement among those that commented being that current procedures are bureaucratic and complicated, focus on outputs rather than outcomes, and demand significant financial and administrative resources on the applicant's side. Specific issues raised included:

- The application system for grants managed by CHAFEA (which had been developed for managing much larger grants under the Horizon 2020 Programme) was considered to be too complicated for the amounts involved;
- The processing of grants on an annual basis was considered to be too short a period;

¹⁵⁴ See Annex VII for details regarding the assessments provided by the different stakeholder groups.

- The reporting requirements were considered in some cases to be overly complex and burdensome;
- The re-imbursement of travel costs regarding the exchange of officials was considered to be too late, as advance financing was not always available in authorities' budgets, thereby reducing the number of participants in such exchanges, especially from less well-resourced authorities.

While therefore a large proportion of interviewees saw a need for further simplification of procedures and administrative requirements, they also conceded that application procedures and reporting requirements had already been simplified to some extent. This was highlighted by CHAFAEA in an interview with the evaluation team, and is confirmed by a review of recommendations in this respect made by the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme. The following table lists actions for simplification identified by the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme, as well as by the present evaluation, and lists the changes already implemented.

Table 21: Overview of actions taken to reduce administrative burden

Issue	Actions for simplification identified	Related changes already implemented
Use of partnership agreements	The mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 noted that there had been efficiency gains through simplification of procedures, in particular to the partnership agreement with EU level organisations and that a similar approach could be applied to other actions, such as the functioning of the ECCs. The Commission's proposal for the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 also indicated that the funding process would be simplified in particular through the use of partnership agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ With regard to the <i>ECC-Net</i>: Annual grants were replaced with three-year Framework Partnership Agreements, and since 2015 CHAFAEA co-finances the activities performed by the ECCs via signature of annual specific grant agreements. ▶ With regard to <i>BEUC</i>: After expiry of the previous one in 2014 a new Framework Partnership Agreement covering three years 2015-2018 was awarded to BEUC.
Grant procedures	In the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, some stakeholders had expressed the view that tendering processes are more cost-effective than grants. In general, beneficiaries report issues related to the application system for grants, duration of contracts and reporting requirements.	<p>Changes regarding several activities were introduced to reduce administrative burden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ With regard to <i>exchanges of officials</i>: Since 2014, a system of special indemnities has replaced cumbersome (considering the amounts involved) grant agreements. ▶ With regard to <i>joint actions</i>: The financing modus for joint actions was recently changed from action grants to procurement (tenders). ▶ With regard to <i>grant management</i> in general: In 2014, CHAFAEA started using the H2020 online tools for grant management, with mixed results according to interviewees.
Scope and duration of contracts	Potential avenues for future action in relation to administrative burden and simplification identified in the course of this evaluation include reducing the number of contracts and increasing their duration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ For the new <i>E-Enforcement Academy</i>, activities are based on a two year contract (plus one year possible renewal), with all services bundled under the same contract.

Sources: Civic Consulting.

As highlighted in the table above, the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 noted that efficiency gains were achieved through simplification of procedures, in particular to the partnership agreement with EU level organisations, but concluded that there was potential for further efficiency gains with respect to the administration and implementation of the Programme. Specifically, the financing mechanism for the ECC-Net was identified to be a source of administrative burden that implied considerable administrative costs for the ECCs and constrained their ability for long-term planning. In line with this result and exchanges with the Commission, CHAFEA, which manages a part of the activities under the Programme, has reformed the model for the allocation of funding to national ECCs. Annual grants were replaced with so called Framework Partnership Agreements for consecutive periods of three years, and CHAFEA now co-finances the activities performed by the ECCs via signature of annual specific grant agreements. Since 2015 it is hence no longer necessary to submit and evaluate a proposal per year per Member State, which can be seen as a step towards increasing cost-efficiency for both the beneficiaries and the Agency. Indeed, it is seen as a positive development by interviewees and is considered by CHAFEA to allow for planning of the operation of the ECCs to be more strategic and management of funding to be more efficient.¹⁵⁵

In addition, CHAFEA started using the H2020 online tools for grant management in 2014 and saw an improvement in efficiency in terms of project management. In particular the time needed to sign the relevant grants was significantly reduced compared to previous years, and particularly so for ECC grants,¹⁵⁶ once constraints specific to the starting phase of the electronic management system were overcome.¹⁵⁷ However, stakeholders consider this system still as being burdensome (see above).

Lastly, further action aimed at reducing administrative burden in relation to the exchanges of CPC and GPSD officials was undertaken during the evaluation period. Under the previous Consumer Programme, these activities were co-financed via the signature of grant agreements, which required the preparation of call for proposals and their evaluation, budget commitment, payment of pre-financing and calculation of balance payment. This was a cumbersome procedure considering that the amounts involved did not exceed a few thousand Euros. Since 2014, funding is provided through special indemnities, i.e. payments that follow the completion of the exchange for each concerned official on the basis of predefined allowances. It simplifies the process both for beneficiaries and for CHAFEA, thus allowing resources to be reallocated to core activities rather than administrative tasks.¹⁵⁸ In 2015 after this change of procedure, the highest number of applications for exchanges was registered. This indicates that relevant changes were implemented, where scope had been identified for simplification and reduction of administrative burden.

The rationale of grant application procedures and reporting requirements is the need for the European Commission to safeguard the application of fundamental principles and ensure that EU funds are managed prudently. CHAFEA emphasised in this respect that certain requirements originated in the EU Financial Regulation and the related Rules of Application, and therefore changes were not feasible in some cases. However,

¹⁵⁵ Results of stakeholder interviews for the present evaluation, and Chafea 2014 and 2015 Annual activity reports.

¹⁵⁶ Chafea 2015 Annual activity report.

¹⁵⁷ After Chafea registered a slight increase of the time to grant in 2014 compared to 2013 due to the starting phase of the H2020 online tools for grant management for the Consumer Programme grants, the situation improved in 2015 (according to the Administrative Simplification Scoreboard).

¹⁵⁸ Chafea 2014 Annual activity report.

there is a potential for further simplification, e.g. by combining several activities into single framework contracts, with higher budgets and longer durations, which would increase efficiency. In this context it is notable that overall, the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is financing about 30 separate main activities. Individual disbursements are in some cases as low as several thousands of Euro. Because procedural requirements are to some extent independent from the amount disbursed, this increases the workload for CHAFAEA.

Furthermore, the European Commission adopted in 2016 a proposal for a new Financial Regulation, which merges the current two legal acts (Financial Regulation and Rules of Application) into a single set of rules and aims to make a number of improvements in terms of simplification. These measures are part of a longer-term effort to simplify the implementation of the EU budget and concern *inter alia* simplification for recipients of EU funds (e.g. through easier use of lump sums), more effective use of financial instruments, more flexible budget management, and focus on results (i.e. basing EU funding on the achievement of agreed results rather than tracing the costs incurred to achieve it) and streamlining of reporting. There is therefore a general aim to further simplify administrative procedures and reporting requirements and further reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries.

An additional issue raised in interviews concerning Programme management is the communication between CHAFAEA, which handles the administrative side of certain activities, and the responsible policy unit at DG JUST. In principle, the respective responsibilities are clarified in a series of documents. However, several interviewees (both at the country level and in the Commission) saw difficulties in this communication process, as interaction with stakeholders and key beneficiaries typically occurs in Brussels in fora defined by DG JUST. During our interviews at CHAFAEA, it was emphasised that regular coordination meetings between both sides took place and further efforts to improve coordination were being made. It is expected that an ongoing evaluation of the agency will provide additional insights in how information exchange and coordination procedures can be strengthened, where needed.

Regarding the question as to whether significant differences in costs or benefits between Member States are observed, this evaluation did not find evidence in this respect. However, as mentioned before, key indicators mostly do not point to a convergence of Member States to a high level of consumer trust and protection, and a possible factor in this could be the less developed institutional infrastructure for consumer protection in some countries, both regarding authorities and consumer organisations.¹⁵⁹ The existing institutions in Member States matter for achieving the benefits of the various activities financed under the Consumer Programme. This underlines the need for additional capacity building measures in this respect.

¹⁵⁹ For more details, see the related case study in Annex I of this report,

6.3. Relevance

The key findings of the evaluation regarding relevance are that:

- ▶ The four objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and related activities address the needs and problems identified at the start of the Consumer Programme. They are appropriate to the needs of consumers in general and to the needs of its direct beneficiaries. However, activities specifically targeted at vulnerable consumer groups have remained limited.
- ▶ The needs identified at the start of the Programme continue to be relevant. The objectives and priorities are still highly relevant and fit for purpose, and with some fine-tuning, they can provide a framework of action in the consumer field to address new challenges and needs related to innovations in products, services, and markets. In addition, overarching themes such as environment and sustainable consumption could be reflected in the objectives in order to increase synergies with energy and environmental policies.

6.3.1. Appropriateness and continued relevance to needs

To what extent have the objectives of the programmes proven to be appropriate to consumer needs? To what extent have the actions under the programmes proven to be appropriate to the specific needs of different consumer groups? To what extent are the objectives and priorities of the programmes still relevant to the needs of the stakeholder community and to other consumer-relevant EU policies?

The evaluation criterion **relevance** refers to the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention,¹⁶⁰ i.e. it considers the appropriateness of the design of an intervention (the Consumer Programme) in light of **society's** needs. In the context of this evaluation this section therefore first considers the extent to which the Consumer Programme has proven to be appropriate to address the problems and corresponding needs identified at the start of the Programme, before then discussing its appropriateness with respect to the specific needs of consumers, the needs of stakeholder organisations and other EU policies.

6.3.1.1. Appropriateness and continued relevance to needs as identified at the start of the Programme

The specific needs and problems that existed at the start of the Consumer Programme have been identified and described as part of the baseline for this evaluation. The intervention logic of the Consumer Programme demonstrates how these needs or problem areas are addressed by the specific objectives of the Programme, as well as how they are linked to the intended outputs and consequently to the expected results and impacts (see baseline and intervention logic in section 5 above). It is notable that to some extent the identified needs (and related objectives of the Programme) reflect inherent needs of a consumer society. Namely, consumers have a clear, material interest in being assured that the products they purchase are safe; in being informed about their rights, and having strong organisations that defend their rights; in having strong consumer rights and simple access to low-cost redress; and in having their consumer rights enforced by the relevant authorities.

¹⁶⁰ See the definitions of the key evaluation criteria provided in the Commission's Better Regulation Toolbox, https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-47_en

In the following, the continued relevance of the Programme objectives to the problems and needs identified in the baseline is discussed separately for each of the four objectives.

Product safety

The specific objective on product safety (Objective I) was intended to address the following problems, as indicated in the intervention logic of the current Consumer Programme:

- Differences in product safety enforcement between Member States;
- Continued presence of unsafe products in the single market;
- Gaps in cooperation between Member States.

Several of the activities funded under Objective I also implement legal obligations imposed by other elements of the EU acquis in the area of consumer product safety, including:

- Support for the tasks of the independent scientific committees established by Decision 2008/721/EC;
- Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC (the General Product Safety Directive); and
- Maintenance of the databases on cosmetics set up under Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009.

The Consumer Programme therefore addresses problems and needs in the area of product safety mostly through supporting the implementation of critical elements of the relevant EU consumer legislation in terms of infrastructure, coordination and training. In this sense, the actions funded under the Programme provide the essential instruments (such as maintenance and development of the RAPEX system) to operationalise the consumer acquis and support the functioning of the wider EU consumer protection framework.

Programme activities such as the continued cooperation between Member States through the RAPEX system and through joint actions in the field of product safety have contributed towards addressing differences and gaps in product safety enforcement between Member States, as discussed in the assessment of effectiveness above (section 6.1.1). Nevertheless, differences in product safety enforcement continue to exist between Member States due to limitations in staff and resources, as noted in a recent study conducted by the European Commission¹⁶¹ and in stakeholder interviews, indicating that these problems continue to be relevant.

Also, the presence of unsafe products in the single market, notifications on serious risks in the RAPEX system illustrate the problem continues to be relevant. The number of RAPEX notifications has increased compared to the baseline period, from an annual average of 2 016 total notifications (1 818 serious risk) in 2011-2013 to an annual average of 2 165 total notifications (1 830 serious risk) in 2014-2017.¹⁶² While it is not possible to determine from these statistics whether the number of unsafe products in the

¹⁶¹ See Ex-post evaluation of the application of the market surveillance provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, Final Report, May 2017, executive summary and p. 35.

¹⁶² RAPEX Annual Report 2017.

single market has increased or decreased,¹⁶³ they highlight the need for continued market surveillance and cooperation between MS. Similarly, RAPEX data confirms a continued need for cooperation with international partners on product safety. The current Consumer Programme supported further collaboration with third countries through RAPEX China and through Trilateral Summits with the US and China. Both the number and proportion of dangerous product notifications with China as the country of origin has decreased over the Programme period, from 62% of all notifications in 2015 to 53% in 2016, where it remained in 2017.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, this means that products from China still account for more than half of all RAPEX notifications, and about 70% of all RAPEX notifications still involve products originating from outside the EU/EEA. Interviewees therefore continue to emphasise the need for further international cooperation to address product safety concerns emerging from direct B2C e-commerce with China and other third countries.

Among the stakeholders interviewed for this study, there was broad agreement that the product safety objective remains relevant, with 85% indicating that the objective was still relevant or very relevant.¹⁶⁵ Several interviewees also highlighted the need to improve or maintain a high level of market surveillance in response to increasingly complex products and services (e.g. the Internet of Things); see also the discussion below on new needs.

In sum, although there has been clear progress made during the Programme period towards achieving the product safety objective, as has been concluded in the assessment of effectiveness (section 6.1.1), the previously identified problems in the area of product safety continue to be relevant at the mid-point of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Consumer information, education and support to consumer organisations

The following problems and needs were intended to be addressed by the specific objective on consumer information and education and support to consumer organisations (Objective II), as indicated in the intervention logic of the Consumer Programme:

- Underdeveloped market monitoring;
- Low capacity of consumer organisations;
- Lack of transparent, comparable, reliable and user-friendly information for consumers; and
- Lack of knowledge regarding consumer rights.

The contribution to developing the evidence base for consumer policy has been considered by stakeholders as an important achievement of the current Consumer Programme. Nevertheless, the regular monitoring of consumer conditions and markets is by definition a continuing need, and up-to-date evidence on consumer behaviour remains essential for policymaking in response to rapid innovations in the market (e.g. regarding new intermediaries and marketing techniques; see section 6.3.4. below).

¹⁶³ The number of RAPEX notifications depends on a number of factors; an increase in notifications could reflect an increase in the number of unsafe products, but could also indicate more effective or more comprehensive surveillance. In the absence of consistent and objective data on e.g. product-related injuries and accidents, it is not possible to draw conclusions about trends in the overall status of product safety in the EU. See also the discussion in effectiveness, section 6.1.1.

¹⁶⁴ The absolute number of RAPEX notifications indicating China as the country of origin decreased from 1 262 in 2015 to 1 069 in 2016. See section 6.1.1. as well as RAPEX Annual Reports 2015, 2016, 2017.

¹⁶⁵ Assessment of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5.

Specific needs also remain with respect to the collection of data on consumer complaints, as stakeholders continue to express concerns regarding the effectiveness of the ECCRS, as well as with respect to improving the transparency of information to consumers, where limited activities have been undertaken during the Programme period (see the assessment of internal coherence in section 6.4.1).

Limited data was available to assess progress made and continuing needs with respect to the new consumer education tools (Consumer Classroom), and the available evidence for consumer awareness and information campaigns shows mixed results regarding the effectiveness of these campaigns (see section 6.1). Knowledge of consumer rights as measured by the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard show stagnation or even a slight decrease over the baseline values from 2011-2013.¹⁶⁶ Lack of knowledge regarding consumer rights is therefore a continuing problem: while ex-post evaluations of information campaigns may show modest short-term increases in consumer knowledge, the long-term effect of these activities is less discernible, indicating that the process of informing or educating consumers may need to be reinforced over time.

Finally, despite an increase in consumers' trust in consumer organisations between 2008 and 2016, especially in the newer Member States,¹⁶⁷ the assessment of effectiveness found that national consumer organisations continue to have limited institutional capacity due to a lack of resources (see section 6.1.2). While the provision of support to an EU-level consumer organisation (BEUC) has been assessed to be very effective, it also represents a continuing need under the Consumer Programme, as consumer organisations would not be able to maintain the same level of representation in EU policymaking in the absence of this funding, given the resource constraints under which they currently operate.

The problems identified in the area of consumer information, education and support to consumer organisations therefore remain relevant at the end of the evaluation period in 2017. The continued relevance of the objective on consumer information, education and support to consumer organisations was also confirmed through the interviews conducted for this evaluation, with 82% of interviewees agreeing that the objective remained relevant or very relevant.

Consumer rights and redress

The specific objective regarding consumer rights and redress was intended to address the following problems and needs:

- Sub-optimal protection of consumer rights, especially cross-border;
- Difficulty for consumers in accessing redress, especially for vulnerable consumers;
- Gaps in the integration of consumer interests into other EU policies.

Several of the activities funded under Objective II also implement legal obligations, most notably by contributing to the funding the ODR Platform, which is required by

¹⁶⁶ If a 2014 outlier is taken into account, the average proportion of right answers to three questions about EU consumer rights decreased from an average value of 52% in 2011-2013 to 46% in 2014-2017. See the discussion in section 6.1.2.

¹⁶⁷ The percentage of consumers agreeing that they trust consumer organisations to protect their rights has increased from 64% to 72% between 2008 and 2016 across the EU. In the EU13, trust in consumer organisations saw an even larger increase over the same time period, from 47% to 59%. The gap between levels of consumer trust in the EU15 and EU13 also narrowed from 25 percentage points in 2008 to 16 percentage points in 2016. See the discussion in section 6.1.2 as well as the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017.

Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 (the ODR Regulation). They therefore directly support the functioning of the existing EU legislative framework on dispute resolution and consumer redress.

In this Programme evaluation, consumer confidence in cross-border e-commerce is used as a proxy for the trust in being protected as consumer when shopping cross-border. Confidence increased substantially during the evaluation period from an average of 36% in 2011-2013 to 48% in 2014-2017, although confidence in cross-border online shopping remained below confidence in domestic online shopping.¹⁶⁸ This illustrates a continued need to protect consumer rights, especially in a cross-border context.

Consumer satisfaction with ADR also increased during the same period, from an average of 57% to 68%.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, access to ADR has not yet substantially improved, at least if the number of complaints registered on the ODR platform that ultimately reached an ADR body is taken as an indicator (2% of cases, see section 6.1). Note, however, that this data refers to the first year of operation of the Platform and could therefore improve once the Platform is better known by traders.

Although general progress has also been made on the integration of consumer interests into other EU policy areas (for example, through the participation of consumer **organisations in the Citizens' Energy Forum** and through support to BEUC, both of which have been considered to be highly effective), the assessment of external coherence (section 6.4.2) found that more could be done to improve integration of consumer interests in the Digital Single Market strategy and especially in the area of energy and sustainable consumption, which was also confirmed through stakeholder interviews.

There was again a large consensus among the stakeholders interviewed for this study regarding the continued relevance of consumer rights and redress as a Programme objective, with 85% considering that it was still relevant or very relevant. This is in line with the findings of a major study conducted to support the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law, which concluded that "consumer law infringements are a continuing problem", which are "likely due to insufficient enforcement but also several factors related to the development of markets and society, with innovation in technologies and practices not only bringing benefits to consumers, but also creating new vulnerabilities which can be exploited by unscrupulous traders."¹⁷⁰

Enforcement

The enforcement objective of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 was intended to address the following problems and needs, as indicated in the baseline and intervention logic of the Consumer Programme:

- The CPC Network was not being used to its full potential, with gaps in cross-border enforcement persisting; and

¹⁶⁸ Own calculation based on Special Eurobarometer 298, Flash Eurobarometers 299, 332, 358 and 397, and **the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection**; see section 6.1.3.

¹⁶⁹ Own calculation based on Special Eurobarometer 298, Flash Eurobarometers 299, 332, 358 and 397, and **the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection**; see section 6.1.3.

¹⁷⁰ Civic Consulting (2017), Study to support the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law.

- The ECC-Net was not reaching its full potential due to low awareness among consumers and other factors limiting its effectiveness.

The activities related to the CPC Network (Action 10) funded under the Programme also support the implementation of legal obligations contained in Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (the CPC Regulation) and provide essential tools for its functioning (e.g. the maintenance of the CPC IT-tool).

As indicated in the assessment of effectiveness (6.1.4), the activities undertaken with respect to the CPC Network, including improvements to the mutual assistance mechanism, the issuance of common guidelines, and the use of networking and training events, have contributed to promoting a common understanding on cross-border enforcement and to improving the effectiveness of the CPC Network in general. On average, most of the Programme indicators related to information flow within the CPC Network have shown improvement in the first half of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 compared to the period of 2011-2013, and several national authorities interviewed considered that the Programme activities had contributed to a more harmonised approach to the enforcement of consumer legislation. However, the timeliness of responses within the CPC Network remains a problem, with the targets set in the operational guidelines for the handling of information and enforcement requests not being met.¹⁷¹ Additional problems are caused by resource constraints of enforcement authorities in Member States, which may result in an uneven level of enforcement. The needs resulting from the identified problem at the start of the Programme with respect to the CPC network therefore continues to exist.

The output of the ECC-Net during the evaluation period has been significant and increasing (see section 6.1). Nevertheless, a recent external evaluation of the network found that consumer awareness of the ECC-Net remains relatively low,¹⁷² and differences in the level of service provided persist. This indicates that there is a continued need for raising the visibility of the ECCs, and addressing uneven service levels.

The evidence collected for the evaluation therefore indicates that the problems noted above with respect to enforcement continue to be relevant. This is confirmed by the interviewed stakeholders. Out of all four objectives, enforcement received the largest proportion of stakeholders indicating that the objective continued to be relevant or very relevant (87%). Stakeholders also emphasised that the explosive growth of the Internet and online B2C trade has further complicated the pattern of cross-border consumer law infringements and strengthened the need for a coordinated approach to enforcement. This need has recently been reemphasized in EU policy documents such as the Digital Single Market Strategy and the New Deal for Consumers;¹⁷³ see also section 6.3.4. on new needs.

¹⁷¹ See the table of progress made on indicators set in the Regulation in section 6.1.4.

¹⁷² See Draft Status Report.

¹⁷³ The centrality of enforcement was already acknowledged through the adoption of the CPC Regulation in 2004. By establishing a network of national competent authorities, the Regulation sought to address the main challenge of EU consumer law enforcement, namely its decentralised nature and the fact that responsibility for enforcement of EU consumer law still lies primarily with the Member States. The recent review of the CPC Regulation sets more ambitious goals for coordinated investigation and enforcement actions for curbing widespread infringements with a Union dimension. This testifies to the continued and increased relevance of the objective.

Continued relevance of objectives in light of the problems identified at the start of the Programme

It can therefore be concluded that the identified problems and related needs at the start of the Programme continue to be relevant in a societal perspective, and these needs correspond with to the overall needs of a consumer society in safe products, empowered consumers, protection of their rights and related enforcement and redress. All four specific objectives continue to remain appropriate and relevant, as was strongly suggested by the interviewed stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level, and also confirmed during several meetings with relevant EU networks of Member States authorities and consumer organisations in the course of the evaluation.¹⁷⁴

6.3.1.2. Appropriateness and continued relevance to the needs of consumers, including specific consumer groups

The identification of consumer needs is generally indirect, as discussed in section 4.8 on limitations encountered in the evaluation. It relies on sources such as market research, behavioural studies, or Consumer Scoreboards. These sources typically address specific dimensions of the consumer situation, and have been used throughout this evaluation to identify the persistence of specific problems and possible indicators for wider effects of the Programme, such as the evolvement of consumer trust (e.g. that products are safe) over the evaluation period, compared to a baseline period. However, this data is not equivalent to a comprehensive needs assessment, which so far has not been conducted. Given these data limitations, the extent to which the specific objectives and activities of the Consumer Programme have been generally appropriate to consumer needs is discussed in the following with respect to the assessments of stakeholders which (in the case of national authorities, ECCs, and consumer organisations) are specifically tasked with protecting and/or representing the consumer interest and which are also familiar with the activities of the Consumer Programme, often being direct beneficiaries.

At a general level, the stakeholders interviewed for the mid-term evaluation considered that the objectives and activities under the current Consumer Programme were largely appropriate to the needs of consumers. The appropriateness, or relevance, rating was higher on average from ministries and national authorities and ECCs than from consumer organisations and business associations (see the following table).

¹⁷⁴ Notably the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) Meeting and the Consumer Policy Network (CPN) Meeting (both on 23 January 2018), and the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC) Meeting (on 22 February 2018).

Table 22: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of consumers – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all appropriate to needs)	2	3	4	5 (Very appropriate to needs)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	2	1	1	3.2
Consumer organisation	1	5	9	8	1	3.1
European Consumer Centre	--	--	5	10	3	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	--	10	19	6	3.9
Other	--	1	2	3	--	3.3
All stakeholders	1	8	28	41	11	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=89. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

Stakeholders providing **lower assessments of relevance to consumers’ needs** in some cases referred to broader challenges such as economic disparities between Member States and resulting problems, or perceived deficiencies of the legal framework.

Nevertheless, the fact that close to 90 percent of interviewees concluded that the objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-20 and the related activities have been at least moderately appropriate to the needs of consumers indicates that, as perceived by a large majority of stakeholders, the Programme can be considered generally appropriate to the needs of consumers in general.

With respect to the needs of specific groups of consumers, such as vulnerable consumer groups, the situation is more complex. The Regulation setting out the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 emphasised the importance of addressing the specific needs of vulnerable consumers, particularly with respect to the actions under Objectives II and III. Nevertheless, as indicated before (see section 6.5.1), few activities targeting vulnerable consumers could be identified. Where specific activities targeting vulnerable consumers were identified (such as consumer education resources), these were found to mostly target children, to the exclusion of other potentially vulnerable consumer groups (e.g. elderly or less educated consumers).

The limited number of activities related to vulnerable consumers was also noted by stakeholders, who considered **the Programme’s objectives and activities** to be moderately relevant to the needs of vulnerable consumers on average, but lower than the **Programme’s** relevance to consumer needs more generally or to the needs of their own organisation. Consumer organisations provided the lowest assessment, considering that the objectives and activities of the Consumer Programme were of limited relevance to the needs of vulnerable consumers.¹⁷⁵ When elaborating on their assessments, many of the interviewees considered that the objectives and activities of

¹⁷⁵ Consumer organisations provided an average rating of 2.7 out of 5, below the mid-point of the scale. For more details, see Annex VI with the interview results.

the Programme did not do enough to address the needs of vulnerable consumers, especially for specific consumer groups other than children (e.g. the older population). A European organisation also remarked that an EU-level study on vulnerability¹⁷⁶ has not been used enough in practice, but so far only in the energy sector.¹⁷⁷

Additionally, to some extent, the focus on activities to support the Digital Single Market (see section 6.4 and the case study in Annex I) has mostly served the interests of consumers that typically are not considered to be vulnerable. For example, enforcement activities within the CPC Network and the ECC-Net have first and foremost addressed the needs of consumers who make active use of their access to the Single Market. Enforcement activities that are directed to online trade inevitably cater disproportionately to the needs of consumers who have at least basic digital competence. At the same time, some of the actions under the Programme have aimed at protecting and enforcing the rights of vulnerable consumers in particular. Examples include the first joint action in 2015 on in-app purchases, where unintended purchases by minors were at the centre of the misleading practice targeted by the enforcement action (although again, children were the primary focus).

It can therefore be concluded that addressing vulnerability across the various activities of the Consumer Programme remains a challenge, and except for certain well-defined areas, such as activities targeted at children, or fuel poverty, additional efforts are needed to address these cross-cutting needs in the various activities of the Programme.

6.3.1.3. Appropriateness and continued relevance to the needs of stakeholders and to other consumer-relevant EU policies

Interviewed stakeholders, including many direct beneficiaries of the activities funded under the Consumer Programme, were asked to provide an assessment of the **appropriateness of the Programme's objectives and activities to the needs of their own organisation**. On average, the interviewed stakeholders considered the activities under the current Consumer Programme to be slightly better than moderately relevant to the needs of their organisation. However, the assessment differed significantly between stakeholder types, as indicated in the following table.

¹⁷⁶ European Commission, Consumer Vulnerability Across Key Markets (2016), <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d1af2b47-9a83-11e6-9bca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

¹⁷⁷ An awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy poor households is currently ongoing, started in 2016, and its results and outputs are not yet available.

Table 23: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of your organisation – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all appropriate to needs)	2	3	4	5 (Very appropriate to needs)	Average assessment
Business association	1	1	5	1	--	2.8
Consumer organisation	2	7	9	3	2	2.8
European Consumer Centre	--	--	5	7	5	4.0
Ministry or national authority	--	2	11	18	4	3.7
Other	2	1	--	2	--	2.4
All stakeholders	5	11	30	31	11	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=88. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

While ministries and national authorities and ECCs mostly considered the objectives and the related activities to have been appropriate to their needs, both consumer organisations and business associations were split in their assessment. Nevertheless, the plurality of both consumer organisations and business associations assessed the Programme to be moderately in line with their needs (i.e. gave an assessment of 3 out of 5, at the midpoint of the scale).

In this respect, it is important to note that the stakeholder types providing the highest assessments of relevance to the needs of their organisation (ECCs and national authorities) are direct financial beneficiaries of the Consumer Programme, while those providing the lower assessments (consumer organisations and business associations) are generally not; indeed, the largest number of negative assessments came from consumer organisations.¹⁷⁸ Those that provided further comments argued that the objectives and activities of the Programme do not address the needs of their organisations as they were often unable to fulfil these objectives due to a lack of resources and capacity, and noted the absence of Programme activities directly funding consumer organisations (see discussion under effectiveness, section 6.1).

With respect to other consumer-relevant EU policies, the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 have been generally relevant, especially regarding the development of the evidence base; see the detailed discussion in the assessment of external coherence (section 6.4.2) as well as the case studies on the Digital Single Market and energy and sustainable consumption in Annex I. However, it was suggested at the meeting of the European Consumer Consultative Group that overarching themes such as environment and sustainable consumption should also be reflected in the objectives.

¹⁷⁸ Although consumer organisations are indirect beneficiaries of many of the activities under the Consumer Programme (e.g. the capacity building activities carried out by BEUC) and do receive funding under the Consumer Programme in limited situations, e.g. to attend events such as the Citizens’ Energy Forum, consumer organisations are not one of the main direct beneficiaries of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; see the discussion in section 5.8 and summary table in section 5.9 for more information.

6.3.2. Emergence of new needs

Have new needs emerged which necessitate an adjustment of the Programme? How well adapted is the intervention to subsequent economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances?

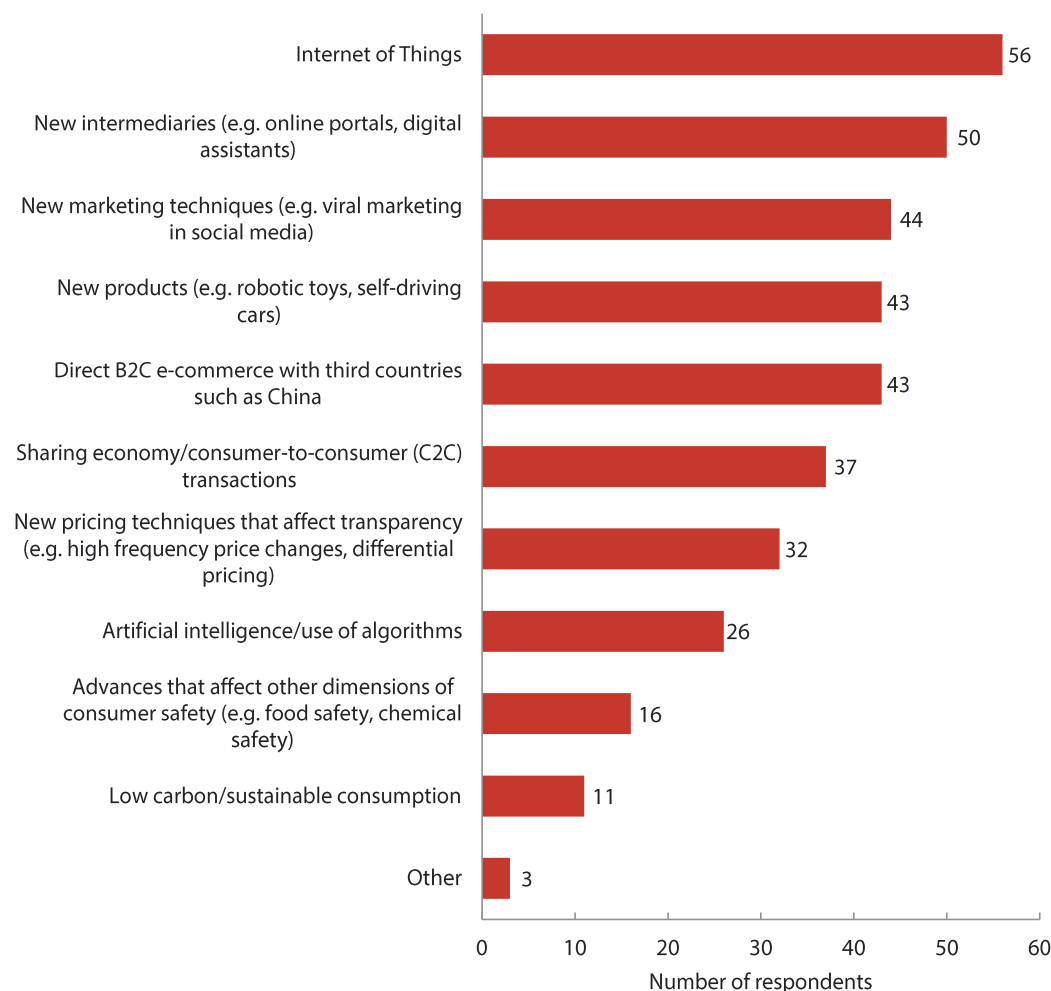
The objectives of the Programme have been assessed in the sections above to be **appropriate to consumers' needs** and remain generally relevant. Nevertheless, new needs have emerged since the current Programme was formulated which are above all linked to new innovations in products, services, and markets, as indicated for example in the Digital Single Market strategy¹⁷⁹ and in the New Deal for Consumers.¹⁸⁰

The general assessment that new needs have emerged which necessitate an adjustment of the funding decisions or current priorities under the Consumer Programme was also widely shared by the stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation, who considered that new needs had emerged particularly in the Programme areas of consumer rights and redress (78% of interviewees) and enforcement (77% of interviewees). Over two-thirds of interviewees (71% and 68%, respectively) indicated that they considered new needs had also emerged in the Programme areas of product safety and consumer information and education. Stakeholders were also asked to indicate specific advances that they considered to be the most relevant in creating new needs that should be considered in a possible new Consumer Programme; the results are indicated in the figure below.

¹⁷⁹ European Commission, "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe" COM (2015) 192 final

¹⁸⁰ European Commission, "Communication on a New Deal for Consumers" COM(2018) 183 final

Figure 30: Please indicate up to three economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances that you consider to be the most relevant in creating new needs that should be considered in a possible new Consumer Programme



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 17. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

The most commonly cited source of new needs mentioned by stakeholders was the Internet of Things, with the closely-related category of ‘New products’ not far behind. Supporting the development of the Internet of Things is an explicit goal of the Digital Single Market strategy,¹⁸¹ and an estimated 6 billion products in the EU will be connected to the internet by 2020.¹⁸² Nevertheless, recent Commission reports indicate that the rise of the Internet of Things and smart products raises concerns related to both data protection as well as product safety, including several novel liability aspects (especially as far as advances in artificial intelligence are concerned, e.g. with respect to self-driving cars).¹⁸³ The need to potentially adapt the EU consumer policy framework to deal with the new challenges posed by the Internet of

¹⁸¹ See for example: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/internet-of-things>

¹⁸² A New Deal for Consumers, footnote 52

¹⁸³ European Commission, “Commission Staff Working Document: Advancing the Internet of Things in Europe” SWD/2016/0110 final

Things was also acknowledged as part of the New Deal for Consumers¹⁸⁴ as well as expressed by the stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation.

Another key point mentioned by the stakeholders interviewed for this study related specifically to product safety concerned the increasingly complex value chains and the related risks for consumer harm originating from traders based outside the territory of the EU. The necessity of enhanced cooperation with enforcement authorities in big trading partners such as the US and China has not only been emphasised by interviewed stakeholders, but has also been reflected in recent policy initiatives¹⁸⁵ such as the New CPC Regulation.¹⁸⁶

Advances in the use of new online intermediaries and new online marketing or pricing techniques have also been identified as key sources of emerging needs¹⁸⁷ in recent market studies such as the 2018 Behavioural study on transparency in online platforms¹⁸⁸ and the 2018 Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing and offers in the EU.¹⁸⁹ Many of the interviewees for this evaluation also highlighted challenges related to online platforms and data protection as well as adapting to new sales channels and marketing techniques, and suggested that better consumer education and/or capacity building activities for consumer organisations would be needed in these areas.

Another cross-cutting theme that has been addressed in a recent Commission report¹⁹⁰ and in the New Deal¹⁹¹ as well as mentioned by stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation was the need to improve redress mechanisms for consumers, including the need for collective redress mechanisms in **'mass harm' situations**, especially in a context of increasing cross-border transactions. Multiple interviewees cited the recent Volkswagen scandal as an example demonstrating the limitations of the current framework.

In conclusion, there is considerable consensus among stakeholders and reflected in recent policy initiatives that new needs have emerged due to economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances, which will have to be considered when designing actions and activities under a possible new Consumer Programme.

¹⁸⁴ A New Deal for Consumers, section 7.

¹⁸⁵ A New Deal for Consumers, section 4.

¹⁸⁶ The New CPC Regulation includes even more extensive provisions on concluding international agreements for enforcement cooperation with enforcement authorities in third states. This activity was launched under the previous Consumer Programme but was less pronounced under the current Programme.

¹⁸⁷ A New Deal for Consumers, section 2.

¹⁸⁸ European Commission, "Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms", 2018

¹⁸⁹ European Commission, "Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union", 2018

¹⁹⁰ European Commission, Report on the implementation of the Commission Recommendation of 11 June 2013 on common principles for injunctive and compensatory collective redress mechanisms in the Member States concerning violations of rights granted under Union law (2013/396/EU), COM(2018) 40 final

¹⁹¹ A New Deal for Consumers, section 3.

6.4. Coherence

The key findings of the evaluation regarding coherence are that:

- ▶ The key areas of the Consumer Programme correspond to the priorities of the Consumer Agenda. The Consumer Programme is also overall coherent with other consumer-relevant EU policies and Programmes.
- ▶ In several areas, coherence is demonstrated at a practical level through activities that have been funded under the Consumer Programme and which are of relevance for other policy areas. This includes the specific activities regarding the Digital Single Market and also a limited number of activities regarding energy/sustainable consumption, as well as broader activities such as consumer behavioural studies, policy studies, consumer scoreboards and market studies, which have built the evidence base on consumer conditions that is vital to ensure that EU sectoral policies meet the needs of consumers.
- ▶ In principle, synergies between the actions funded under the Programme could exist, however although there are a few exceptions, activities funded under different actions only rarely produce synergies, partly due to the wide range of actions funded under the Consumer Programme.
- ▶ While synergies with other policy areas are produced to some extent, especially regarding the Digital Single Market, more could be done regarding other areas. In particular, activities funded under the Programme that focus on energy and sustainable consumption have been limited in number, and more synergies could be developed in this area.

6.4.1. Coherence of actions with the Consumer Programme

To what extent are the actions coherent within the Consumer Programme? To what extent have the priorities of the Consumer Programmes produced synergy, focus and coherence between the funded actions in delivering on the objectives?

The coherence evaluation criterion refers to how well different actions work together.¹⁹² Both evaluation questions above refer to the *internal* coherence of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. They require an analysis of how the various components (actions and activities) of the intervention operate together to achieve its objectives, or, to put it differently: whether there are any overlaps, inconsistencies or gaps within the actions/activities of the Programme, and to which extent synergies are produced.

As has been described before, the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 specifies four specific objectives, which are linked to eleven specific actions, under which a total of approximately 30 main activities are funded. Through this hierarchical (or 'tree') structure, overlaps and inconsistencies are minimised by design. This was confirmed in the analysis of the Programme's actions and activities in the framework of this Programme evaluation, and was already the conclusion of the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme, which had a similar structure.¹⁹³ No overlaps and inconsistencies were identified, as was also confirmed through our stakeholder interviews.

¹⁹² See the definition of evaluation criteria in Tool #47 of the Better Regulation Toolbox.

¹⁹³ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 163

By definition, the analysis of gaps is more complex. When analysing the coherence between objectives and actions, the evaluation has not found any evidence of gaps – all elements of the objectives are reflected in the related actions. On the other hand, when analysing the coherence between actions and the main activities funded (see table on the next pages), the following potential gaps can be identified at this stage of Programme implementation:

Objective I – Safety:

- **Action 2 — Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety, and actions to improve consumer services safety:** No activities that specifically focus on services safety have been funded so far;

Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations:

- **Action 6 — Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information:** Limited activities that enhance the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services, have been implemented so far;
- **Action 7 — Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers:** Focus on consumer education targeting vulnerable consumers has so far been limited to one group only (children, through the Consumer Classroom);

Objective III – Rights and redress:

- **Action 9 — Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities:** The first activity regarding networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities took place in June 2018 (i.e. outside the evaluation period 2014 to 2017), and no activities that provided specific attention to adequate **measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights in this respect** were identified so far.¹⁹⁴

No potential gaps were identified regarding Objective IV.

Several of the gaps listed in the table were also raised in our interviews with stakeholders, namely the lack of activities that specifically focus on services safety, and the lack of educational measures targeting additional vulnerable consumer groups. The latter point had also been raised already in 2011 during the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme.¹⁹⁵

In spite of these potential gaps, all levels of the intervention (objectives, actions, activities) are consistent and coherent. This is also the general view of stakeholders, which largely considered the Consumer Programme to be well structured (no major gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities funded).¹⁹⁶ In spite of this

¹⁹⁴ In June 2018, the Commission hosted the ADR Assembly 2018, which brought Alternative Dispute Resolution bodies, businesses, consumer representatives, and Member States authorities from across the EU. See europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-18-4130_en.htm.

¹⁹⁵ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 120

¹⁹⁶ See also the discussion of relevance, section 6.3.

largely positive assessment, several stakeholders indicated that they found the scope of the Consumer Programme too limited, i.e. they identified gaps regarding other areas that could potentially be covered. This mostly referred to policy areas for which sectoral legislation provides consumer protection rules that are under the responsibility of other Commission DGs, such as financial services and telecommunication. Also, several stakeholders emphasised the importance of chemical safety and food safety for consumers, for which also other Commission DGs are responsible, and which are therefore not covered by the Consumer Programme (see also below, external coherence).

Finally, the evaluation question above asks whether the priorities of the Consumer Programme produced synergies between the funded actions. In principle, such synergies could exist, e.g. if separate activities contribute to reaching the same target. For example, actions under both Objective I (product safety) and Objective IV (enforcement) concern the coordinated enforcement of consumer relevant legislation in the Member States. However, in this case the funded activities have little in common in practice, due to the fact that product safety measures and measures to enforce other consumer protection legislation are often implemented by different institutions in the Member States. At a general level the activities funded under a given action appear to have the most synergies with other activities funded under the same action. For example, training of enforcement officials contributes to better quality of enforcement and can be reasonably expected to increase the effectiveness of enforcement cooperation. Exchange of enforcement officials, as well as network meetings and other common events, are activities that are prone to enhance mutual learning and exchange of best practices. They offer a platform where common interpretation of consumer laws can be sought and enforcement priorities coordinated. The same can be said, to provide another example, for the activities within the ECC cluster, where training, network meetings and workshops are adequate supporting activities for raising the quality of services and enhancing shared understanding of relevant enforcement issues across the network.

There are, however, several examples where important synergies exist between activities funded under different actions:

- The support to BEUC under Objective II (consumer information and education) is also relevant for actions funded under the other objectives, as BEUC's work covers most of the areas of the Consumer Programme;
- The two eligible actions under Objective IV (enforcement) complement each other and feed into a coherent and consistent enforcement policy. Whereas the activity of the CPC Network seeks to strengthen the public dimension of EU consumer law enforcement and is focused on consumer law infringements affecting collective consumer interests, the ECCs provide **advice and assistance "on the ground", in direct contact with consumers**, aiming at consumer empowerment. The E-Enforcement Academy, which is funded under the same specific objective (in Action 10), also serves enforcement officials in the context of Action 2 (product safety).

The mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme (which contained actions very similar to those in the current Consumer Programme) also found evidence of other synergies between actions, for example, that the evidence base fed into the development of consumer legislation and consumer education resources as well as enforcement activities (e.g. sweeps).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 142

In spite of these exceptions, however, activities funded under different actions only rarely produce synergies, partly due to the wide range of actions funded under the Consumer Programme. Several stakeholders have therefore called to increase these synergies. For example, it was suggested to involve national consumer organisations into consumer information and education campaigns, to increase synergies between the actions, and at the same time strengthen the capacity of these organisations. Representatives of ECCs suggested increasing the synergy with the CPC Network by increasing the number and scope of joint activities of the networks, to exchange information on new or problematic commercial practices, and best practices in addressing them. Earlier evaluations have identified the lack of cooperation between national competent authorities (NCAs) and the ECC-Net as a hurdle to effective mutual assistance.¹⁹⁸ The two networks have a number of intersecting activities and currently information from the ECC-Net is often used by the CPC Network when deciding on annual sweep actions or on the focus of joint enforcement actions. This cooperation is so far mostly of an informal character and could be further institutionalised.

Connected with the last observation is another possible drawback in terms of coherence between different objectives and actions under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. The strong EU support for the ECC-Net may be perceived by some national consumer organisations as a certain threat to their hard-gained position in the system of national and EU consumer protection. In a similar manner, the growth and success of the CPC Network, while conducive to a more powerful consumer protection policy, may be perceived as diminishing the role of consumer organisations in consumer law enforcement. While these actors have all their important place in a diversified system of public and private enforcement, the implications of different activities on these key actors should therefore be studied and taken into account in future policy choices, so that synergies between actions are strengthened wherever possible, and the strengthening of one pillar of enforcement is complemented with similar efforts regarding the other pillars.

6.4.2. Coherence of Consumer Programme with EU consumer policy and other policies

To what extent have the objectives, priorities and actions of the Consumer Programmes been coherent with those of the Consumer policy and/or with other consumer-relevant EU policies, in particular those which have similar objectives, and other EU programmes, such as the 2014-2020 Multiannual 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme?

This evaluation question refers to the **external** coherence of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, i.e. to how well the Programme works together with EU consumer policy in general and other consumer-relevant EU policies and whether any gaps or synergies can be identified in this regard.¹⁹⁹

The mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the previous Consumer Programme found that it had been consistent with EU consumer policy in general (the Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013). To consider coherence of the current Consumer Programme with EU consumer policy, a short review of its development shows that it directly derives from a strategic vision for EU consumer policy, the European Consumer Agenda. The Consumer Agenda was adopted by the Commission in 2012, and was

¹⁹⁸ External Evaluation, p. 83.

¹⁹⁹ See the definition of evaluation criteria in Tool #47 of the Better Regulation Toolbox.

aimed to be a more ambitious approach than previous Consumer Strategies.²⁰⁰ Directly referencing the **Europe 2020** goals,²⁰¹ the Consumer Agenda emphasised the need to realise the potential of the single market by improving consumer confidence in cross-border online shopping and enabling consumers to make informed choices, and it affirmed the importance of integrating consumer interests into all relevant EU policies. In particular, the Consumer Agenda identified existing or emerging challenges in the areas of product, service and food safety; adapting rights and policies to economic and social change (including the digital revolution, sustainable consumption and social exclusion/vulnerability); consumer knowledge; and redress and enforcement.²⁰²

The agenda also outlined the strategic vision on consumer policy with 62 action points grouped around 4 pillars:

- Promoting consumer safety;
- Enhancing knowledge of consumer rights;
- Strengthening the enforcement of consumer rules;
- Integrating consumer interests into key sectoral policies.

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020²⁰³ was adopted two years later (in February 2014) to support the implementation of the 2012 European Consumer Agenda and contribute toward achieving the goals of the **Europe 2020** strategy.

The key areas of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 correspond to the priorities of the Consumer Agenda and therefore, by design, the Programme is coherent with European consumer policy. This conclusion is confirmed by our stakeholder interviews, in which there were no indications of any incoherence in this respect.

In the interviews, we asked stakeholders to assess three dimensions of external coherence, as indicated in the following figure.

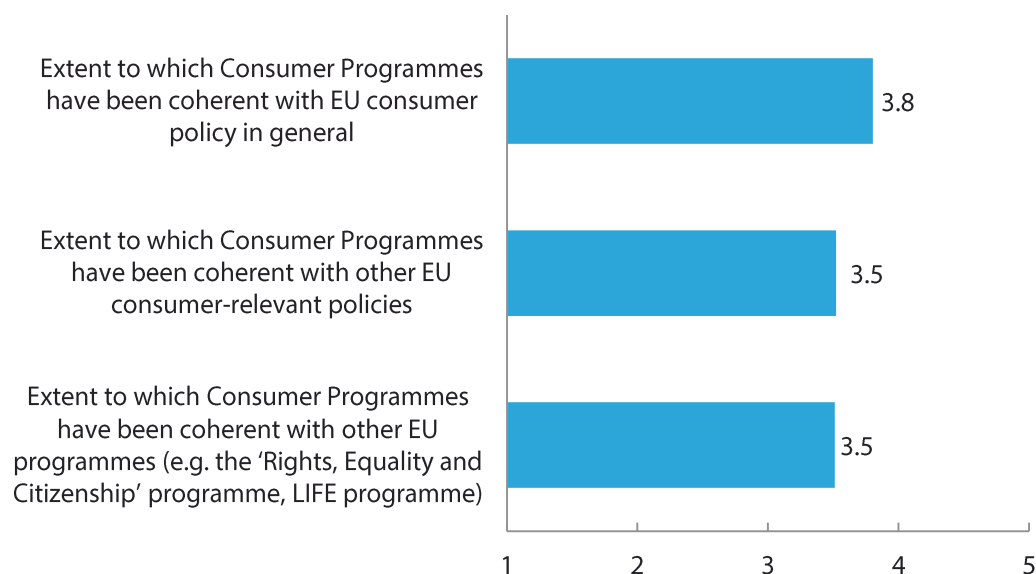
²⁰⁰ European Commission, 2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions - A European Consumer Agenda (2014-2020).

²⁰¹ Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

²⁰² European Commission, 2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions - A European Consumer Agenda (2014-2020)

²⁰³ Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

Figure 31: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes have been coherent with EU consumer policy in general, and with other EU consumer-relevant policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, transport, digital single market, financial services)? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all coherent) to 5 (Very coherent)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 18. N=97, 88, 43 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the figure, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme was considered by interviewees to be largely coherent with EU consumer policy in general (with average assessments of 3.8 on a scale of 1 to 5), as well as with other EU programmes and other EU consumer-relevant policies (3.5).

The mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the previous Consumer Programme concluded that it had been coherent with other EU policy areas relevant for consumer policy, including certain *Europe 2020* initiatives. Indeed, the integration of consumer interests into other EU policy areas was a key activity in the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, with the 2007-2013 Programme going further in this regard than earlier Consumer Programmes.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme, stakeholders considered that consumer interests could still be better integrated into the development of other EU policies, and identified transportation, sustainable consumption and the Digital Agenda as areas where external coherence could be improved.²⁰⁵

When considering the external coherence of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 with other consumer-relevant EU policies and programmes, it is first necessary to consider the range of policies that could be relevant in principle. In light of the fact that consumer expenditure accounts for 56 % of EU GDP,²⁰⁶ and Article 12 TFEU

²⁰⁴ See the conclusions of the ex-post evaluation in Part 2 of this study.

²⁰⁵ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 163

²⁰⁶ See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/National_accounts_and_GDP#Consumption_and_investment

requires that consumer protection is taken into account in defining and implementing other Union policies and activities, the number of potential areas is large.

The main policy areas where the integration of consumer interests is currently applied include:..

- **Retail financial services.** These include products such as current and savings accounts, payment services, credit cards, mortgages, insurance and investment products. Retail banking markets remain nationally fragmented and continue to include barriers to competition. The Commission has undertaken a number of measures to promote a competitive and safe retail financial services market for European consumers, including the launch of the Consumer Financial Services Action Plan in March 2017, intended to improve consumer access to financial services across the EU;²⁰⁷
- **Services of general interest.** These are services that the public authorities of EU Member States classify as being of general interest, such as public transportation, postal services, and healthcare, and which are therefore subject to specific public service obligations. These must include appropriate measures for consumers and ensure, where appropriate, that universal service is safeguarded at the EU and Member State level;..
- **Passenger rights.** Union legislation has been introduced for all modes of transportation to protect the rights of air, road, rail and maritime passengers within the EU, allowing passengers to claim their rights when something goes wrong with their trip;..
- **Gas and electricity.** Retail energy markets have been assessed to include several obstacles to consumers, including a lack of transparency, insufficient competition, and the slow adoption of new technologies; consumer vulnerability is also a key concern in energy markets..²⁰⁸ In addition to the general consumer rights set out in EU legislation, the EU has defined a set of energy consumer rights..²⁰⁹ Energy union, including a fully-integrated internal energy market, has also been made one of the key priorities of the Commission under the Juncker administration (see below)..²¹⁰

Other Union policies have also been integrated into consumer policy in order to take advantage of possible synergies. Since the end of 2014, the implementation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 has been adapted to take account of the guidance provided by the following Juncker Commission priorities:²¹¹

²⁰⁷ European Commission, 'Consumer financial services policy', https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/consumer-finance-and-payments/consumer-financial-services/consumer-financial-services-policy_en

²⁰⁸ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers (SWD(2015) 141 final) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.pdf

²⁰⁹ European Commission, 'Energy topics - Consumer rights and protection', <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/markets-and-consumers/consumer-rights-and-protection>

²¹⁰ European Commission, 'A fully integrated internal energy market', https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/energy-union-and-climate/fully-integrated-internal-energy-market_en

²¹¹ European Commission – DG JUST, Management Plan 2017

- **A connected digital single market**, including the objectives to increase the share of businesses and consumers engaging in online trade cross-border and enhance consumer and business confidence in buying and selling online, as well as in accessing and making use of digital content. This involves improving enforcement related to online and cross-border purchases, notably through the CPC network and the support of joint actions;
- **A deeper and fairer internal market**, through consolidating and improving consumer rights in the internal market as well as improved market surveillance for product safety, capacity building of consumer organisations, expanding the evidence base for consumer policy, and improving consumer access to redress through e.g. the use of ADR/ODR;
- **A more resilient Energy Union**, in particular through educating and empowering consumers regarding their rights in the energy market and enhancing competition through improved and comparable information on billing and offers, and improved tools for comparison and switching.

Furthermore, the Programme supports the consumer-relevant policy contribution to Sustainable Consumption/Circular Economy initiatives.

In the following, we will focus on two key policy areas selected for case studies (DSM and energy/sustainable consumption, which were also areas identified in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme where external coherence could be improved), as well as review other key areas/programmes.

Coherence of Consumer Programme with Digital Single Market policies

With legislation and policies in sectors such as e-commerce, progress in the Digital Single Market (DSM) could be achieved if consumers are well-aware of their online rights and are therefore confident to shop cross-border throughout the EU, while businesses sell cross-border and do not “geoblock”. Supporting the Digital Single Market and ensuring a high level of consumer protection are therefore main aims of the Digital Agenda, and also pertinent to the Consumer Programme. As our case study on DSM illustrates (see Annex I), several relevant activities were funded under the Programme. More specifically, the case study concluded:

- The available evidence shows that there has been considerable use of the **evidence base** (consumer market studies, behavioural studies, and Consumer Scoreboards) for DSM policy initiatives, with interviewees citing the studies on geo-blocking and online platforms as particularly useful sources. More specifically, the Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market has **provided key evidence for the Commission’s Regulation** on addressing geo-blocking;²¹² and evidence from the studies on the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market have provided essential evidence for the Digital Contract Proposals;²¹³
- The Digital Single Market forms one of the priorities in the work of **BEUC**, the European Consumer Organisation, which receives an operational grant under the Consumer Programme. It has provided consumer-side policies and evidence on main issues pertaining to the DSM, including pro-active

²¹² Activity Report 18th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group, see fact sheet action 4, source i

²¹³ Activity Report 17th Meeting of Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), see fact sheet action 4, source j

advocacy leading to the new geo-blocking regulation, as well as positions and advocacy on copyright, data protection, digital content, etc;²¹⁴

- The **Consumer Champion** programme includes e-learning modules on Digital Services and Telecommunications, and the **Consumer Classroom** also provides some relevant resources;
- Evidence on the early results of the **ODR platform** suggests that it has been less effective in reaching its aim to improve access to ADR in e-commerce disputes, both due to the lack of traders' willingness to engage in ADR and some procedural and legal limitations, but may have provided an incentive for traders to respond to complaints outside the platform (see also above, section 6.1 on effectiveness for more details);
- Evidence on the **CPC Network** and related **sweeps** and **joint actions** show that these are essential enforcement tools in the e-commerce context (as is elaborated above, section 6.1 on effectiveness). Strong enforcement has been highlighted as an important precondition for consumer trust in the Digital Single Market. Indeed, many of the priorities in the work of the CPC Network have been geared towards combatting consumer law infringements in the online environment, where cross border trade is constantly expanding. This applies for many of the joint enforcement actions (like those on in-app purchases and contract terms in social media platforms), and in particular to the sweep exercises, which are entirely directed to monitoring the online environment. Likewise, the most recent training initiative, the e-Enforcement Academy, is exclusively devoted to capacity building among enforcement officials for raising the quality of investigations of online infringements.

Overall, stakeholders considered that the effectiveness of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 for addressing challenges for consumers related to the DSM had significantly improved over the previous Programme, with an average assessment of 3.4 for the 2014-2020 Programme compared to 2.9 for the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme (both assessed on the same scale from 1 to 5).

In conclusions, the available evidence shows that the Consumer Programme is not only coherent with the DSM-related policies, but produces essential synergies through a variety of activities, a fact which is also acknowledged by stakeholders and Commission officials, including at DG CONNECT. A high degree of coherence with the Digital Single Market policies especially exists in the area of enforcement. At the same time, both technology and market practices develop at a rapid pace and many interviewees have noted that there are new phenomena and practices that current enforcement policies are not yet adapted to. Stakeholders have pointed out the rapid growth of the sharing economy as well as consumer issues related to big data, for instance individualised pricing and loss of consumer power due to algorithmic price setting as new phenomena which current regulatory policies are not prepared to address in an adequate manner. Interviewees also cited product safety, online platforms, and digital skills development in particular as areas where more could be done to enhance consumer protection in the DSM.

Coherence of Consumer Programme with policies regarding energy consumers and sustainable consumption

Consumption is an integral part of the 2018 EU Circular Economy Package,²¹⁵ so **synergies and coherence with the Consumer Programme "is crucial", as emphasised by**

²¹⁴ <http://www.beuc.eu/digital-rights/digital-single-market#publications>

²¹⁵ See http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm.

a DG ENV official interviewed for this Programme evaluation; all the aspects relevant for consumers in the field of sustainable consumption are considered of great importance to the work of the DG ENV. The Consumer Programme explicitly aims (in Action 6) to ensure "consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data (...) to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services". However, activities funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 that focus on energy and sustainable consumption have been limited in number. This is illustrated by our case study on energy and sustainable consumption, which concluded:

- Two consumer market studies related to energy and sustainable consumption have been carried out under the Consumer Programme (on Precontractual Information and Billing in the Energy Market and Residential Prosumers in the European Energy Union). The available evidence shows that there has been policy uptake of the market studies related to energy (and expected uptake of the upcoming behavioural study on circular economy) by various Commission services;
- BEUC (funded in the Programme) promotes environmental aspects of consumer policies, including a priority focus on the EU Ecolabel.²¹⁶ The Ecolabel is an important tool in promoting consumer awareness of their consumption impacts, including understanding of misleading environmental claims;
- There is limited evidence available on the use or effectiveness of the energy- and sustainability-related elements of capacity building (the Consumer Champion includes a module on energy) and consumer education (the Consumer Classroom website includes sections on sustainable consumption and energy). An awareness raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy-poor households is ongoing;
- **The Citizens' Energy Forum and associated working groups have been** assessed to be effective by interviewees at the EU and national levels, who emphasise its usefulness as a forum for detailed discussion and highlight its role in integrating consumer interests in the Clean Energy Package.

Overall, interviewees rated the effectiveness of the Consumer Programme in addressing challenges related to energy and sustainable consumption as moderately effective, only slightly better than the previous Consumer Programme 2007-2013 in the ex-post evaluation, reflecting a slight improvement over the baseline.²¹⁷ The rating is below other assessments regarding the effectiveness of the current Programme in addressing certain cross-cutting challenges (namely: safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union, creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general and addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market).

Interviewees at both the EU and national levels suggested that the Consumer Programme could be doing more to address challenges related to energy and sustainable consumption, in particular with respect to the integration of these aspects in consumer education and awareness raising activities.

²¹⁶ <http://www.beuc.eu/sustainability/ecolabel>

²¹⁷ For the current Programme, the highest average assessments were provided by business associations and the lowest by ministries, national authorities and other organisations. A possible reason for the particularly low assessment of ministries and authorities regarding this point is the fact that the review of the enforcement priorities during the current program does not show any notable focus on sustainable consumption.

Coherence of Consumer Programme with other areas/programmes

Activities funded under the Consumer Programme have a considerable potential to synergise and underpin the effectiveness of other EU policies and programmes, in the two above-mentioned areas and in other areas. Examples for relevant programmes are:

- ***LIFE programme (DG ENV):*** The LIFE programme is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed more than 4 500 projects. For the 2014-2020 funding period, LIFE will contribute approximately **€3.4 billion** to the protection of the environment and climate.²¹⁸ While so far consumption issues and consumer-related issues have not been a major focus, the emphasis on a circular economy also includes consumption; according to DG ENV, this includes possibilities of funding activities which are related to consumption (such as activities related to environmental information tools, to the EU Ecolabelling, to certification schemes, etc), with goals similar to those of the Consumer Programme (i.e. enabling them to make informed decisions), but approached from an environmental angle.
- ***Rights and Equality Programme (DG JUST):*** The REC programme contributes to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty, the Charter and international human rights conventions, are promoted and protected. One of its nine specific objectives is to enforce consumer rights. For the 2014-2020 funding period, the REC budget is EUR 439 million.²¹⁹ In 2017, a budget of EUR 1.3 million was allocated to enable individuals in their capacity as consumers or entrepreneurs in the internal market to enforce their rights deriving from Union law, in addition to projects funded under the Consumer Programme.²²⁰
- ***Connecting Europe Facility (INEA):*** CEF is a key EU funding instrument to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. CEF funding has contributed to financing the ODR platform under the Consumer Programme.

With respect to these and other Commission funding programmes, no incoherences were identified in relation with the Consumer Programme.

It can therefore be concluded that the Consumer Programme is coherent with other EU policies and Programmes. In several areas, coherence is demonstrated at a practical level through activities that have been funded under the Consumer Programme and are of relevance for other policy areas. This includes the specific activities regarding the Digital Single Market and energy/sustainable consumption described above, as well as broader activities, such as consumer behavioural studies, that play an important role in determining and guiding policies which rely on understanding and possibly guiding consumer behaviours (e.g. towards more sustainable patterns of consumption, better choices regarding financial products, etc). Other studies and research, such as the consumer scoreboards and market studies, have built the

²¹⁸ See <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/>.

²¹⁹ See http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/rec/index_en.htm.

²²⁰ See Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for the implementation of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/files/rec_2017_annex_en.pdf

evidence base on consumer conditions, which is vital to ensure EU sectoral policies meet the needs of both the supply and the demand side.

Synergies with other policy areas are produced to some extent, especially regarding the Digital Single Market, but more could be done regarding other areas, including developing more synergies regarding sustainable consumption, as already had been recommended in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme. Activities funded under the Consumer Programme have a considerable potential to synergise and underpin the effectiveness of other EU policies and programmes, which so far has only been tapped to a limited extent.

6.5. EU added value

What is the additional value resulting from the EU interventions compared to what could have been/be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels? To what extent do the issues addressed by the interventions continue to require actions at EU level? What would be the most likely consequences of stopping or withdrawing the existing EU interventions?

The key findings of the evaluation regarding EU added value are that:

- ▶ **Activities under the Consumer Programme, from RAPEX and the CPC Network to ECC-Net and support to BEUC, have generated genuine EU added value, as is largely recognised by stakeholders.**
- ▶ **The EU added value of actions which complement and support national measures is substantial where there is a clear cross-border element, or economies of scale exist, or cross-border synergies are created.**
- ▶ **The vast majority of interviewed stakeholders considered that the same results would not have been achieved in their countries without the EU interventions through the Programme.**

The evaluation criterion of *EU added value* considers whether observed changes can be reasonably attributed to the EU intervention beyond what could have been reasonably expected to be achieved by Member States acting at the national level.²²¹

As indicated in the impact assessment of the current Consumer Programme,²²² in addition to the actions which stem from existing treaty and other legal obligations at the EU level (e.g. RAPEX, the CPC Network), the actions funded under the Consumer Programme are of two kinds:

- Actions which are not or could not be undertaken at the national level because of their EU-level character; and
- Actions complementing and enhancing the efficiency of measures at the national level.

The EU added value with respect to the first of these two types is by definition high. This includes activities which have an inherent cross-border nature or are of EU relevance, such as the co-financing of the ECC-Net, the development of the ODR

²²¹ Tool #47 of the Better Regulation Toolbox

²²² Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 17

platform, support for an EU-level consumer organisation, and the collection of a robust and comparable evidence base for benchmarking the situation in different Member States and feeding into policymaking at the EU-level, all of which had already been highlighted as key sources of EU added value in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme²²³ and in the impact assessment of the current Consumer Programme²²⁴ (except the ODR platform, which did not exist at the time). The development of legislation at the EU level and the integration of consumer interests into other areas of EU policy were also cited in the ex-post evaluation as key sources of EU added value.²²⁵ Given the inherent EU-level character of these activities, in the absence of EU funding and coordination, it could not be reasonably expected that the Member States would (or could) have undertaken these activities or achieved similar coverage and results.

The EU added value for the first type of actions can be illustrated by the enforcement objective under the Consumer Programme, which is focused on cross-border enforcement of EU consumer laws and supported by common training initiatives (e.g. ECC-Net training, CPC workshops) as well as common IT tools provided at the EU-level to facilitate the exchange of information. While the focus on cross-border enforcement is partly determined by competence constraints and the principle of subsidiarity, it is also well-acknowledged that Member States could not achieve effective cross-border enforcement on their own. Many stakeholders in the current evaluation are of the view that without the decisive EU intervention in this area, national governments and enforcement authorities would likely put more resources into domestic enforcement and would not prioritise the Single Market dimension.

The second type of actions under the Consumer Programme aim to complement national measures and support Member State authorities and other national actors in achieving a high level of consumer protection. These include e.g. networking activities and events intended to facilitate the exchange of best practices and expertise (such as the ECCG, FSUG, etc.), the funding of joint actions related to product safety and consumer rights enforcement, capacity building for national consumer organisations, and consumer education and information activities. These types of actions provide EU added value to the extent that these actions actually complement national measures in practice and assist Member State authorities and other national actors in achieving results beyond what could be accomplished at the national level alone.

The EU added value regarding actions that support national measures is evident in cases where there is a clear cross-border element, where implementing activities at the EU level can take advantage of economies of scale, or where particular cross-border synergies can be achieved (e.g. in the case of common training and networking activities). Activities such as joint enforcement actions, support for cross-border networking and events, and capacity building activities (to the extent that they benefit from synergies and economies of scale) can therefore provide substantial EU added value. In the case of other activities, e.g. EU consumer education resources or awareness and information campaigns, where the potential to take advantage of cross-border synergies or economies of scale is less clear, the EU added value depends on the extent to which the activities are in fact complementary to national measures. This was also implied in the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme, which concluded that education and awareness activities produced

²²³ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 154

²²⁴ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 17

²²⁵ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 163

different levels of EU added value in different Member States depending on the existing national framework.²²⁶

In the current evaluation, the vast majority of interviewed stakeholders (89%) considered that the same results would **not** have been achieved in their countries without the EU interventions through the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme. Several interviewees considered that the EU-funded activities were complementary to already-strong national consumer protection frameworks. One consumer organisation interviewee pointed out that in terms of consumer rights on the statute books, the results would have been similar, but in terms of their implementation, it would not have been possible to reach similar outcomes without EU-level support. An authority from one of the newer Member States supported this assessment, and considered that the increased awareness of consumers about rights of redress would have been difficult to obtain without EU intervention.

It can therefore be concluded that the Consumer Programme provides an inherent EU added value with respect to actions having a cross-border character or being of EU relevance, such as the ECC-Net, CPC Network, support to BEUC or development of the evidence base for consumer policy, which Member States could or would not be expected to undertake on their own in the absence of support through the Consumer Programme. The Consumer Programme also provides EU added value through complementing and enhancing national measures where there is a clear cross-border element, cross-border synergies, or economies of scale, e.g. through joint actions, networking and training activities, and capacity building for national consumer organisations. In other cases, e.g. consumer awareness campaigns, the EU added value depends on the level of complementarity with national policies (see next section).

6.6. Complementarity and sustainability

The key findings of the evaluation regarding complementarity and sustainability are that:

- ▶ **Interviewed stakeholders acknowledged that the Programme and the related activities have been complementary to some extent to relevant policies pursued in their Member State.**
- ▶ **The positive effects from successful activities under the current Consumer Programme, such as enhanced market surveillance, better representation of consumer interests at EU level, better evidence base, enhanced consumer confidence, and improved enforcement can be expected to last for some time after the end of the Programme.**
- ▶ **However, it can hardly be expected that the activities currently carried out within the framework of the Consumer Programme will be readily taken over by Member States or by market actors in the absence of continuous Union commitment and support for these activities.**

Complementarity: To what extent do the actions of the Consumer Programme/ policy support, complement and usefully supplement and monitor policies pursued by the Member States?

Complementarity forms part of the general objective of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, which states that "... **The Programme** shall complement, support and

²²⁶ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 154-155

monitor the policies of Member States.”²²⁷ This objective is also reflected in the implementation of the Programme as the direct (financial) beneficiaries are not consumers or national consumer organisations themselves but national consumer protection authorities, which are supported by Programme activities in achieving their mandate of ensuring a high level of consumer protection (see also the discussion of beneficiaries in section 5.8).

As indicated in the impact assessment of the current Consumer Programme,²²⁸ a number of actions under the Programme are explicitly aimed at complementing and enhancing national measures, including:

- Coordination and co-financing of joint actions related to product safety and to consumer rights enforcement;
- Consumer education resources and awareness/information campaigns; and
- Capacity building for national consumer organisations.

Joint actions (both in a product safety and consumer rights enforcement context) and capacity building for national consumer organisations have been identified in the evaluation to be effective activities which are appreciated by the national stakeholders who participate in them (see section 6.1) and which provide genuine EU added value (see section 6.5). The assessment of national stakeholders regarding both the consumer education resources and awareness and information campaigns was more divided, with some interviewees considering that these activities were not adapted well enough to the local context. In the case of consumer education resources, some national stakeholders pointed out that consumer education was not reflected in the national curriculum at all and thus the resources were not used, limiting the potential for synergies with national measures. This is also supported by the conclusion of the mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme, which found that the added value of education and awareness activities depending on the existing national frameworks in the Member States.²²⁹

This evaluation has also identified additional activities funded under the Consumer Programme which complement and support national measures, such as the common training of product safety and enforcement officials through the E-Enforcement Academy, exchanges of product safety and enforcement officials, and support for networking activities and events which allow participants to exchange experiences and best practices and improve coordination between Member States (see the assessment of effectiveness in section 6.1). Interviewed stakeholders considered these networking and training activities to be highly effective, and some provided specific examples of knowledge gained through these activities that they were then able to helpfully apply to their work in the national context.

In general, interviewed stakeholders considered that the Consumer Programme and related activities had been complementary to the relevant policies pursued in their Member State to a moderate extent, providing an average rating of 3.3 out of 5. They also considered that the Programme monitored relevant policies in their Member States with a similar level of agreement, giving an average rating of 3.2 out of 5. Most interviewees who elaborated on their assessment of complementarity considered that

²²⁷ Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20, article 2

²²⁸ Impact assessment of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, p. 17-18

²²⁹ European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 154-155

there was room for improvement, and that there could be better coordination between EU and Member State authorities. For example, one interviewee considered that the activities were too theoretical to be helpful, and that more could be done to share best practices and experiences with respect to solving practical problems.

Interviewees were also asked to what extent the actions of the Programmes have had an impact on their consumer-related national policies. The vast majority (88%) considered that the Consumer Programme's actions have had an impact on the development of national policies in the consumer field to a moderate to great extent (rating of 3 or higher out of 5), with an average rating of 3.7. As the following table illustrates, ECCs, national ministries/authorities and business associations saw a more pronounced impact than consumer organisations. However, it is notable that none of the interviewed stakeholders saw no impact of the Programme at all on national policies (see table below).

Table 24: In your view, to what extent have the Consumer Programmes' actions impacted on the development of national policies in the consumer field? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (To a great extent)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all)	2	3	4	5 (To a great extent)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	3	1	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	7	10	7	3	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	1	3	13	5	4.0
Ministry or national authority	--	3	17	21	8	3.7
Other	--	1	3	3	1	3.5
All stakeholders	--	13	34	47	18	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 21. N=112. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Almost all interviewees who elaborated on their responses considered that the EU intervention through the Consumer Programme provided an added value beyond what could have been achieved through national policies alone, with one interviewee from a newer Member State stating that the EU Consumer Programmes constituted the 'engine' for consumer policy activities in their country. Interviewees particularly emphasised the development of an evidence base (studies and surveys) for consumer policy as an example of a positive impact of the Consumer Programme on the development of national policies. Training for officials was also mentioned by a couple of the interviewees as an activity that had an important influence at the national level.

Sustainability: How likely are the effects to last after the interventions' end?

In both the mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the previous Consumer Programme, interviewed stakeholders considered it likely that the impacts of that Programme would be sustained in the medium time, with legislative initiatives being highlighted as generating a particularly long-lasting impact. This result holds generally true for the

evaluation of the current Programme as well. The interviewed stakeholders largely considered that the effects of the Programme would outlast the Programme.²³⁰ It was pointed out that although materials and processes developed during the Programme in one period may not last forever, they provide a foundation as well as lessons learned upon which further activities of a similar character can be built, which also constitutes a beneficial longer term effect. Another example of sustainability is the support to European Consumer organisations (BEUC): as remarked earlier, consistent support over the years has allowed the organisation to develop and grow, and also to find other sources of funding that contribute to its sustainability.

However, while recognising that some actions of the Programme would be sustainable in the longer term, many of the needs and problems that the Programme was intended to address are inherently ongoing, as discussed in the assessment of relevance (section 6.3). Notably, this includes market surveillance and enforcement activities, which require continuous effort to maintain as well as constant adaptation in order to meet the present challenges of rapid innovations in products and markets. A large number of the interviewees therefore argued that support is needed to continue beyond the end of the Programme, and specifically highlighted the areas of product safety and enforcement. Interviewees also considered it essential to consolidate accomplishments to ensure they are long-lasting, both in general terms and with emphasis from some interviewees on activities related to consumer education and information, while addressing evolving market places, products and practices.

It can also hardly be expected that many of the activities currently carried out within the framework of the Consumer Programme will be readily taken over by Member States or by market actors in the absence of continuous Union commitment and support for these activities,²³¹ especially for those activities that have an inherently EU-level character or cross-border dimension.²³² A clear example of this is the ECC-Net, where several stakeholders expressed the view that a withdrawal of the EU support for the network would mean that the whole initiative would be discontinued, given financial constraints and pressures of policy prioritisation at the national level. Seen from this perspective, the **Consumer Programme's** continuing support for the infrastructure for coordinated enforcement in the CPC Network (and also under RAPEX and the CSN regarding product safety) is indispensable. Whereas some well-functioning bilateral or regional forms of cooperation would probably continue to exist, fully developed frameworks for EU-wide enforcement cooperation without the leading and coordinating role of the Commission are not likely to persist. Even at the national level, several stakeholders underscored the low priority accorded to consumer policy in some Member States and the decisive effect that the commitments under the EU Consumer Programme exerts for strengthening consumer law enforcement policy at the national level as well.

²³⁰ On a scale of 1 to 5, stakeholders considered effects to last after the end of the Programme especially in the area of product safety, which received the highest average assessments (3.9), while in the other areas of the Consumer Programme assessments were on average slightly lower (3.6 to 3.7). See detailed interview results in Annex VII.

²³¹ The mid-term evaluation of the previous Consumer Programme found that among national authorities, slightly more than half (55%) considered that Member States were increasingly taking over or multiplying actions launched under the Consumer Programme at the national level; however, consumer organisations were much less inclined to agree with this statement (38%). See European Commission, Final Report (March 2011): Consumer Policy: Ex-Post and Mid-term Evaluations, p. 139.

²³² See also the discussion of EU added value in section 6.5.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we present the conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Halfway through the Programme period, the Consumer Programme has overall been mostly effective in reaching its objectives, though with some improvements necessary. All four objectives of the Programme and the corresponding actions and activities are based on the priorities of EU consumer policy, and have been improved and adjusted over time, reflecting the results of the mid-term evaluation of the previous Programme and specific evaluations conducted (e.g. regarding actions in the area of consumer education). The objectives are still fit for purpose, and – with some finetuning – also provide a framework of action to address new challenges and needs. Costs of the Programme and the related benefits appear to be mostly proportionate. This evaluation also concludes that the Consumer Programme is overall coherent with consumer-relevant EU policies and Programmes and provides genuine EU added value.

In the following sections, we present detailed conclusions, including key issues identified, before we elaborate on the recommendations of the evaluation.

7.1. Conclusions

7.1.1. Effectiveness

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 defines for the first time indicators, as well as associated baselines and targets to measure progress for each of its four objectives. These indicators show that substantial progress has been made in achieving the Programme's objectives: For 6 of the 14 indicators evaluated, the targets for 2020 have already been achieved, for 3 indicators the trend was positive and targets are likely to be reached by 2020 or before. Finally, for 5 indicators data did not show clear trends, with some minor positive or negative changes compared to the baseline period. However, evaluation results also indicate that the level of achievement differs between objectives. While the Programme is on track to achieve two of its four objectives (I and IV), the level of achievement for the remaining objectives (II and III) differs between the priority areas funded. Evaluation results by Programme objective are:

- The Programme is on track to consolidate and enhance product safety through market surveillance in the EU (Objective I). Programme's activities such as RAPEX and joint actions have improved information exchange and cooperation between Member States, thereby reducing differences in enforcement across the EU, with RAPEX having grown into an effective and important pillar of the EU market surveillance architecture that is internationally recognised and appreciated by its main target groups across the EU.
- Similarly, the Programme is achieving Objective IV in the area of enforcement of consumer rights. The CPC Network has visibly consolidated and expanded its activity during the Programme period. Both the mutual assistance mechanism in the form of exchange of information and enforcement requests between national competent authorities, and sweeps and joint enforcement actions have seen improvement in terms of effectiveness, although time for handling enforcement requests in the network is often long. European Consumer Centres have established themselves further during the current Programme as an important institutional component of EU consumer law enforcement.

- With respect to Objective II, progress varies between priority areas. The Programme is largely on track to develop the evidence base for consumer policy. Consumer scoreboards and market studies have led to policy uptake at EU and national levels, and are considered to be useful for benchmarking purpose in Member States. The Programme is also effectively contributing to achievement of the objective in its support to consumer organisations. The EU-level organisation BEUC is making an important and consistent contribution to representing consumer interests at the EU level, and the local training courses for national consumer organisations and other consumer professionals funded under the Programme are being appreciated by beneficiaries. However, the capacity of consumer organisations in many Member States remains limited. Also, the Programme's consumer information and education activities have so far been less effective in achieving the objective than other measures.
- The Programme has so far made limited progress in achieving Objective III. While behavioural and other consumer policy studies contributed in varying degrees to smart regulatory action and evidence-based policymaking, other activities – mainly the ODR platform, awareness campaigns on ADR/ODR and networking – have only partly been successful in improving access to simple and low-cost redress. Possible reasons include the early stage of implementation of the platform, a limited awareness of consumers and traders of the platform, and the reluctance of traders to settle disputes via ADR.

Across all Programme areas, the selection of actions and related activities appears to be appropriate in light of the objectives. No major gaps were identified, and stakeholders interviewed in all Member States and at EU level were generally positive with respect to the Programme's effectiveness, although the differences in the level of achievement between objectives was clearly reflected in their views (with some activities only considered to be moderately effective, especially in the areas of consumer education and information, complaints registration and redress).

Overall, the evidence regarding the wider effects of the Programme is limited. However, it is notable that during the evaluation period consumer trust in product safety has increased, according to EU surveys, in parallel to the efforts in enforcing product safety in recent years, both at national and EU levels. Also, trust of consumers that public authorities protect their rights, and that retailers generally respect consumer rights has increased. In contrast, consumer awareness of their rights has not increased.²³³

The main factors that have limited Programme achievements so far are mostly external in nature, i.e. they do not relate directly to the implementation of the Programme. These are limited staff and financial resources for market surveillance and consumer protection authorities, as well as for consumer information and education at the Member State level; in the area of capacity building of consumer organisations they include resource constraints of the target organisations, which cannot appropriately be addressed by the provision of training alone. Other factors include the rapid innovation of products and services, as well as new distribution channels (e.g. e-commerce with third countries) that make effective consumer protection more challenging.

Remaining key issues concerning effectiveness of the Programme are:

²³³ Trust data refers to the Commission's regular surveys on consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection. Consumer awareness of their rights is measured as the average proportion of correct answers to three knowledge questions in these surveys.

- ⇒ While Programme activities that maintain and develop RAPEX and the CPC Network are largely effective, these networks require continued improvement, e.g. in terms of modernising the IT-infrastructure, reducing notification/response times and conducting related training measures.
- ⇒ There is a need for a shift in focus regarding the support to national consumer organisations, to increase their capacity, as well as regarding consumer information and awareness raising measures;
- ⇒ Some Programme activities are in need for a detailed review, most notably the support provided in the area of consumer education;
- ⇒ While the inclusion of actionable objectives and related, specific indicators in the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 to measure their achievement is a very significant improvement over previous Programmes, there are limitations in the indicators used, such as a lack of coverage of certain Programme areas (e.g. consumer education and information), and a focus on output indicators.

7.1.2. Efficiency

This evaluation concludes that the costs of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 have been proportionate to the benefits achieved for most of the funded activities, according to the available evidence. However, for several activities no conclusion could be drawn, either because they were very recent (such as the ODR platform and E-Enforcement Academy), or no specific evaluations and other evidence were available (as is the case for several of the consumer awareness campaigns). In terms of efficiency of specific activities, network meetings and events in particular are assessed as activities which, with little resources, achieve highly positive results of coordination, mutual learning and exchange of best practices in different areas of EU consumer policy, as was reported across all four Programme areas.

The allocation of funds among the four Programme areas is appropriate, a view shared by most stakeholders. Overall expenditures under the Consumer Programme of less than 5 Eurocents per citizen and year are small compared to the benefits achieved, but also compared to the challenges posed by the goal of reaching a high level of consumer protection in an internal market of more than 500 million citizens.

For most activities the costs borne by the interviewed organisations have been affordable given the benefits they received through the Programme. Administrative requirements for beneficiaries have been simplified, compared to the previous Programme period (e.g. regarding the reimbursement procedures for the exchange of officials). However, the number of activities funded and related grant agreements or service contracts under the Programme is large compared to the available budget, and individual disbursements are in some cases as low as several thousands of Euro (e.g. for the exchange of officials). Because procedural requirements are to some extent independent from the amount disbursed, this increases the workload and administrative costs for Chafea, which is mandated to implement parts of the Programme. While oversight over some activities is in practice shared between Chafea and the responsible policy unit at DG JUST, the respective responsibilities are clarified in a series of documents. However, there were reportedly some difficulties in the communication between the two, as policy process, communication with stakeholders and also interaction with key beneficiaries typically occurs in Brussels in fora defined by DG JUST. This issue is expected to be further analysed in a separate evaluation of Chafea that is ongoing.

Remaining key issues concerning efficiency of the Programme are:

- ⇒ The number of activities funded and related grant agreements or service contracts under the Programme is large compared to the available budget.

- ⇒ There is a need to further simplify administrative procedures and reporting requirements, where possible.
- ⇒ The budgetary envelope for a possible new Consumer Programme will need to be adapted if new recommended measures are to be implemented.

7.1.3. Relevance

The four objectives of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and related activities address the needs and problems identified at the start of the Consumer Programme (see intervention logic in section 5). They are appropriate to the needs of consumers in general and to the needs of its direct beneficiaries. However, activities specifically targeted at vulnerable consumer groups have so far remained limited to consumer education activities aimed at school children and the ongoing awareness campaign targeted at households in fuel poverty (although other activities also consider the situation and specific needs of vulnerable consumers to some extent, e.g. in the context of market studies or the work of BEUC).

The needs identified at the start of the Programme continue to be relevant. The objectives and priorities are still highly relevant and fit for purpose. With some fine-tuning, they can provide a framework of action in the consumer field to address new challenges and needs. In addition, overarching themes such as environment and sustainable consumption could be reflected in the objectives in order to increase synergies with energy and environmental policies.

Data from EU surveys and the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard mostly do not point to a further convergence of Member States to a high level of consumer trust and protection during the evaluation period, in spite of considerable efforts under the Programme. A possible factor could be the less developed institutional infrastructure for consumer protection in some countries, both regarding authorities and consumer organisations.

Remaining key issues concerning relevance of the Programme are:

- ⇒ Additional efforts are required to ensure that the needs of specific consumer groups such as vulnerable consumers are addressed.
- ⇒ New needs have emerged related to innovations in products, services and markets which may necessitate an adjustment of specific activities funded and require increased international cooperation.
- ⇒ Differences in the level of consumer trust and protection between Member States persist in spite of considerable efforts, and indicate a need for further action to reduce them.

7.1.4. Coherence, added value and sustainability

The key areas of the Consumer Programme correspond to the priorities of the Consumer Agenda. The Programme is also overall coherent with consumer-relevant EU policies and Programmes. Coherence is demonstrated at a practical level through Programme activities that have been relevant for other policy areas. This includes the specific activities regarding the Digital Single Market and also a limited number of activities regarding energy/sustainable consumption, as well as broader activities such as consumer behavioural studies, policy studies, consumer scoreboards and market studies, which have built the evidence base on consumer conditions that is vital to ensure that EU sectoral policies meet the needs of consumers.

Activities under the Consumer Programme, from RAPEX and the CPC Network to ECC-Net and building the evidence base, as well as support to BEUC, have generated

genuine EU added value, as is largely recognised by stakeholders. While the positive effects from activities under the current Consumer Programme, such as enhanced market surveillance, better representation of consumer interests at EU level, better evidence base, enhanced consumer confidence, and improved enforcement can be expected to last for some time after the end of the Programme, it can hardly be expected that the activities currently carried out within the framework of the Consumer Programme will be readily taken over by Member States or by market actors in the absence of continuous Union commitment and support for these activities.

Remaining key issues concerning coherence, added value and sustainability are:

- ⇒ Synergies with other EU policies and programmes could be further developed.
- ⇒ There is a need for continued EU funding of Programme activities to contribute to a high level of consumer protection and empowered consumers across the EU.

7.2. Recommendations

7.2.1. Effectiveness

Based on the results of this evaluation, it is recommended to **further improve already effective activities** in the areas of market surveillance and enforcement, by continuously improving the IT infrastructure for RAPEX and the CPC Network and the cooperation of its members in the framework of the ongoing efforts of the Commission. It is also recommended to continue the related trainings and workshops (including in the area of notification/case-handling), to safeguard a common understanding and harmonious application of EU legislation and to improve the adherence to common standards in information exchange and response.

This evaluation has identified emerging challenges in the areas of market surveillance and enforcement, which might require the development of new tools and methods qualified to handle these tasks in the digital era. The Consumer Programme could continue to support this process through appropriate actions and supporting the exchange of best practices between Member States as well as related skill development – the E-Enforcement Academy is a valuable step in this direction.

It is also recommended to continue the activities for developing the evidence base for consumer policy, including through scoreboards, surveys, market research, behavioural and policy studies, while documenting systematically the policy uptake of the results. Similarly, support to the EU-level consumer organisation BEUC has been an effective measure, and it is recommended to continue and enhance this support, and possibly also support additional EU-level organisations under the Programme.²³⁴

Synergies between Programme activities could be increased in several areas, e.g. by organising exchanges of enforcement officials in connection with specific joint actions, by continued strengthening of cooperation between the CPC Network and the ECC-

²³⁴ While support to Union-level consumer organisations is in principle not limited to any specific number of organisations, so far only BEUC has been supported under the 2014-2020 Programme. It could be considered, after evaluation and assessment, to re-integrate financial support to ANEC within a new Programme, due to the specific consumer perspective ANEC brings, which is well aligned with the consumer focus of the Programme and DG JUST. It could also be considered to support EU-level NGOs working on sectoral issues affecting consumers, particularly vulnerable groups (such as the elderly or people with special needs), so that the needs of vulnerable consumers are better represented in the EU policy process.

Net, as well as with other relevant networks. Also, ECCs and consumer organisations could be better integrated in awareness-raising activities (see below).

A **shift in Programme focus is recommended** regarding the support to national consumer organisations, as well as consumer information and awareness raising. A lack of resources of national consumer organisations was identified as one of the most important reasons for the limited (institutional) capacity of consumer organisations in many countries. This contrasts with their increasing importance as qualified entities under a possible new Injunctions Directive and as organisations that will be expected to provide alerts to the CPC Network (under the new CPC Regulation). It is therefore recommended to consider – in addition to continued training measures – possible approaches for providing financial support to national consumer organisations under the Consumer Programme.²³⁵ Possible avenues would include operational grants conditional on effective organisational development within a certain period, or regular task-based funding awarded on a competitive basis (as in some countries there are several competing organisations) e.g. for creating and maintaining unbiased sources of consumer information.

It is also recommended to **explore alternative approaches** to large scale awareness campaigns. For example, awareness raising activities could be implemented by consumer organisations and members of the ECC-Net in countries sharing similar problems, e.g. through organisation of events, press releases and other activities. This evaluation has also identified the **need for further review** of the approach for consumer education. Education that provides competencies and empowerment early in life, but also at later stages, where particular consumption decisions and vulnerabilities are most relevant, can provide significant benefits for consumers. However, the effectiveness of the funded measures (Consumer Classroom) is unclear, including with respect to the dependence of its uptake on national curricula, which are beyond the control of the Programme. Finally, a review of approaches for enhancing the effectiveness of complaint registration and improving access to redress through the ODR Platform is recommended (concerning the latter also depending on the future performance of the Platform, which only recently started its operation).

External factors that affect the effectiveness of Programme implementation and its performance could be **better monitored**. The effectiveness of the Programme in several areas, most notably market surveillance and enforcement, crucially depends on Member State authorities having appropriate financial and staff resources to fulfil their tasks. It is therefore recommended to regularly monitor (e.g. through relevant studies funded under the Programme or other means) the compliance of Member States with their obligations with respect to market surveillance and enforcement and provide adequate resources for this purpose.²³⁶ It is also recommended to include more **indicators for results and impacts** at the objective level in a new Consumer Programme, for which data could be regularly collected and reported in a consolidated format such as an annual progress report. This could include existing data from the Consumer Scoreboards, and newly created data, e.g. in the area of product-safety and enforcement of consumer rights.²³⁷

²³⁵ Support measures could focus on those Member States where the need for institutional development is highest, as established on basis of objective indicators.

²³⁶ To safeguard continued and effective measures under the Programme, EC staff capacity for coordination and monitoring of enforcement actions should also at least be maintained, or extended, if possible, especially as the new CPC Regulation has accorded a more active role to the Commission in this respect.

²³⁷ Existing data series include multi-annual data concerning consumer trust collected through the **Commission's regular** consumer surveys. New data on product-safety related trends could be collected, e.g. by establishing a Pan-European Accident and Injury Data System to record accidents caused by consumer

7.2.2. Efficiency

It is recommended to increase the efficiency of Programme management and administration by **bundling and prioritisation of activities**. Where possible, the number of contracts (e.g. in the area of training) could be reduced, and the duration of these contracts increased.²³⁸ It is also recommended to opt for framework contracts, wherever this is possible. Most beneficiaries of the Programme suggest to **further simplify administrative procedures and reporting requirements**. It is therefore recommended to use all flexibility offered by the regulatory framework (in particular the new Financial Regulation) and review the related processes to simplify them where feasible. As most of the current activities are essential for supporting the implementation of EU consumer policy in the future, new recommended measures such as **increased financial support** to consumer organisations will need to be reflected in the budgetary envelope provided for a possible new Consumer Programme. It is therefore recommended to increase, or at the very least maintain the current level of funding.

7.2.3. Relevance

The objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are assessed as being very relevant for all Programme areas. A possible new Consumer Programme could therefore **build on the current objectives**. It is recommended to also explicitly refer at the objective level to the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption, and to emphasise the overall goal of convergence to a high level of consumer protection across the EU. It also is recommended to explore how **consumer vulnerability can be better addressed**. For example, when designing activities under the Programme, it could be assessed whether there is a vulnerability angle and how it could be taken into account.

Improving avenues for cooperation with consumer protection authorities in third countries to address new challenges could be a matter of priority, including e.g. regarding mutual assistance, exchange of information, and exchange of staff. This could build on the existing efforts in this respect, such as the cooperation with China and the US in the area of product safety.

7.2.4. Coherence, added value and sustainability

The Consumer Programme 2014-2020 has considerable potential to underpin the effectiveness of other EU policies and programmes, and related **synergies** (which already exist regarding the Digital Single Market and to some extent also in the area of energy and sustainable consumption) **could be further developed**.

Considering the wide range of policy areas that are relevant for consumer protection, it is recommended to **further emphasise** the role of the Consumer Programme as a mechanism for catalysing the **horizontal aspects of consumer policy**. For example, networking activities and events that relate to consumer relevant policies led by other Commission DGs could be expanded, building on the experiences with the support already provided to the **Citizens' Energy Forum** and the Financial Services User Group.

products, as has been requested by stakeholders, possibly by extending the functionality of existing mechanisms such as the European Injury Database (IDB).

²³⁸ The E-Enforcement Academy can serve as an example in this regard because activities are based on a two year contract (plus one year possible renewal), with all services bundled under the same contract.

In light of the clear EU added value identified by the evaluation, and the established ongoing needs underlying the measures funded, it is recommended to **continue the Consumer Programme** after the current Programme expires, building on the experiences made so far, and the results of this evaluation.

Annex I Case studies

Case study: Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety (Action 2)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective I — Safety: to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union.
Eligible actions	<p>Defined in Article 4(a) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC, and actions to improve consumer services safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development, modernisation and maintenance of IT tools (such as databases, information and communication systems) in particular so that the efficiency of existing systems can be improved by increasing the potential for data export, statistical sorting and extraction, and facilitating the electronic exchange and use of data between Member States; (b) organisation of seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings of stakeholders and experts on risks and enforcement in the area of product safety; (c) exchanges of enforcement officials and training focusing on integrating a risk-based approach; (d) specific joint cooperation actions in the area of the safety of non-food consumer products and services, under Directive 2001/95/EC; (e) monitoring and assessment of the safety of non-food products and services, including the knowledge base for further standards or the establishment of other safety benchmarks, and clarification of the traceability requirements; (f) administrative, enforcement and product traceability cooperation, and development of preventive actions, with third countries other than the ones falling under Article 7 of the Regulation, including with those third countries which are the source of the majority of products notified in the Union for non-conformity with Union legislation; (g) support to bodies recognised by Union legislation for the coordination of enforcement actions between Member States.

II. Description of activities

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<p>In order to ensure that only safe products are placed on the market, the General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC) (GPSD)^{b)} establishes a general safety requirement for all non-food consumer products. According to the GPSD, a safe product is defined as one that “under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use for the safety and health of persons” (GPSD, Article 2).^{b),i)}</p> <p>Article 12 of the GPSD establishes the European rapid alert system for dangerous products (RAPEX) to ensure that information about dangerous products withdrawn from the market and/or recalled from consumers anywhere in Europe is quickly circulated between Member States and the European Commission, so that appropriate action can be taken everywhere in the EU. Thirty-one countries (all countries of the European Union plus the EFTA/EEA countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) participate in the system.^{f)}</p>
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While RAPEX primarily is a tool of information exchange for competent authorities of Member States and the EU to facilitate market surveillance, it also serves through its website as a source of information for the wider public on products found unsafe. On the RAPEX website, the European Commission publishes information on notified unsafe products on a weekly basis, and since the beginning of 2008 on a daily basis. The website describes in detail the products subject to RAPEX notifications as well as their non-compliance or hazard.¹⁾

Products subject to RAPEX notifications are described using the following classification:¹⁾

- ▶ Product category;
- ▶ Brand and name of the product;
- ▶ Type or number of the model;
- ▶ Batch number or barcode;
- ▶ OECD portal category;
- ▶ Country of origin; and
- ▶ A detailed description of the product with a picture.

Furthermore, information on the reason for the notification is provided, specifying:¹⁾

- ▶ The type and severity of the risk notified;
- ▶ The measures taken;
- ▶ The notifying country; and
- ▶ All countries taking actions in the follow-up.

The purpose of making this information publically available is to enable consumers as well as business operators and other interested stakeholders to identify unsafe products in the market.¹⁾

Related IT tools include the GRAS-RAPEX application for indicating notifications and reactions,^{ab)} the Business Application for manufacturers and distributors to voluntarily report dangerous products,^{aa)} and the Risk Assessment Guidelines (RAG) application,^{y)} which assists authorities in applying the risk assessment guidelines for non-food consumer products.²⁾

A specific module of the Rapid Alert System has been created to allow for swift flagging of notifications concerning unsafe products from China [“RAPEX China”]. The Chinese authorities investigate these cases in order to trace back the manufacturers, exporters and businesses concerned with the aim of making them aware of product safety rules in Europe. Where necessary, they take further measures to ensure that those products are no longer produced and shipped to Europe.^{d),s)}

Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety

Each year the European Commission co-finances a number of coordinated market surveillance activities (joint actions) carried out by the network's Member State authorities.^{d)} The proposed joint actions aim at promotion and coordination of administrative cooperation for the application of Directive 2001/95/EC and ultimately at ensuring a consistent approach towards the effective enforcement of product safety legislation across the internal market.^{c)}

The joint actions cover the following aspects of administrative cross-border cooperation activities:^{c)}

- ▶ Assessment of risks posed by non-food consumer products and product testing;
- ▶ Market surveillance operations and co-operation with customs authorities;
- ▶ Exchange of expertise and best practices;
- ▶ Meetings and workshops, implementation of an effective communication strategy and collaboration

The activities include a number of product oriented, coordinated, market surveillance actions. On the basis of a list of products agreed by national authorities, specialised laboratories are selected to test the products and assess if they are dangerous. These actions often lead to submission of notifications to the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX).^{d)}

Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)

The exchanges of officials involved in the application of the GPSD contribute to a coordinated and coherent approach to the enforcement of product safety and market surveillance rules across the EU and to exchanging information and best practices between product safety stakeholders.^{c)} Exchanges are open to officials from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.^{x)}

The exchanges may cover visits, coordination of enforcement or investigations, small workshops to tackle common issues among safety and enforcement authorities.^{c)} Generally the exchanges consist of a 3 to 5 days work mission to a host organisation by one visiting fellow (or few) to share/exchange field expertise with their colleagues in other countries. Tailor-made workshops are also organised.^{x)}

E-Enforcement Academy

Details on the E-Enforcement Academy with respect to product safety are presented in the case study fact sheet for Action 5 of the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme.

Networking and events

The Consumer Safety Network is a consultative experts group chaired by the European Commission and composed of national experts from the administrations of the EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Main areas of discussion are the safety of consumer products (including safety requirements for standardisation), co-ordinated market surveillance activities by Member State authorities, new and emerging issues, relevant data collection, international activities and cooperation, and communication activities.^{s),v),ae)} A permanent CSN subgroup of RAPEX contact points meets on average 1-2 times per year.^{s),v)}

With the globalisation of supply chains and the constant evolution of the markets, the EU works closely with its main trading partners to ensure safety at source, no matter where the product is produced. The International Product Safety Week takes place every 2 years on this basis. It comprises a series of events for non-food, consumer product safety professionals and stakeholders from around the globe, representing regulators, industry, consumer organisations, standard-makers and test laboratories.^{u)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	400.0	852.0	848.4	800.0	2 900.4	3.0%
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	2 000.0	2 185.0	2 026.0	-	6 210.7	6.5%
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	100.0	100.0	52.0	100.0	422.0	0.4%

<i>Networking and events</i>	60.5	453.0	140.0	277.5	930.9	1.0%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	307.8	323.1	98.0	175.0	903.9	1.0%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ RAPEX Total (IT): RAPEX, RAPEX Archive, RAPEX China, RAPEX Publication ▶ IT EU's Rapid Alert System for non-food dangerous products (GRAS-RAPEX) ▶ Risk Assessment Guidelines (IT) ▶ GPSD business application (IT)
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grants for joint cooperation and enforcement actions which aim at improving the effective application of the GPSD
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exchange of GPSD officials
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Safety Network (CSN) Expert Group meetings ▶ CSN sub-group on the safety of ladders ▶ CSN sub-group on products sold online ▶ CSN sub-group on tattoos ▶ CSN sub-group - RAPEX contact points ▶ Market Surveillance Indicators Task Force meeting ▶ Task force for ICSMS internet-supported information and communication system for the pan-European market surveillance of technical products/RAPEX convergence ▶ Organisation and publications for the annual RAPEX media events ▶ RAPEX workshop with businesses ▶ The organisation of the International Product Safety Week 2016
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contribution to the Joint Research Centre research on tattoos: Safety of tattoos and permanent make-up ▶ Contribution to DG Joint Research Center - Injuries and accident data collection for product safety and market surveillance ▶ Online community manager services for consumer product safety platforms ▶ Production and dissemination of an awareness-raising video on the functioning of the RAPEX network

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<p>RAPEX statistics are primarily measured in notifications and reactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A notification consists of information provided by the Rapid Alert System network participating countries concerning measures or actions taken for products presenting risk to the public interests.^{r)} ▶ A reaction is information provided by the Rapid Alert System network participating countries in response to a submitted notification. These reactions provide information on whether the notified dangerous product was found also on other network countries and which measures were taken there in order to restrict its marketing and distribution.^{r)}
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The following table shows selected indicators related to the number of notifications and reactions during the Programme period. See Annex II of this case study for the total number of notifications since 2003 and notifications and reactions per Member State over the Programme period.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of notifications</i>	2341 ^{d)}	2072 ^{d)}	2044 ^{d)}	2201 ^{ae)}
<i>Number of notifications (serious risk)</i>	2067 ^{d)}	1703 ^{d)}	1691 ^{d)}	1860 ^{ae)}
<i>% notifications entailing at least one reaction</i>	42% ^{k)}	40% ^{l)}	46% ^{ae)}	46% ^{ae)}
<i>Ratio number of reactions to number of notifications (serious risks)</i>	1.28 ^{k)}	1.56 ^{j)}	1.80 ^{h)}	1.66 ^{ae)}

The five most notified product categories made up 69% of the total notifications in 2016. The most notified product categories in 2016 were:^{d)}

- ▶ Toys (26% of total notifications);
- ▶ Motor vehicles (18% of total notifications);
- ▶ Clothing, textiles and fashion items (13% of total notifications);
- ▶ Electrical appliances and equipment (7% of total notifications); and
- ▶ Childcare articles and children's equipment (5% of total notifications).

The five most notified types of risk in 2016 were:

- ▶ Injuries (25% of total notifications);
- ▶ Chemical (23% of total notifications);
- ▶ Choking (14% of total notifications);
- ▶ Electric shock (11% of total notifications); and
- ▶ Fire (9% of total notifications).

Other risks not listed above made up 18% of total notifications in 2016.^{d)}

China remains the number one country of origin of dangerous products but figures have gradually been going down since 2013. In 2016, the percentage of notifications for which China (including Hong Kong) was indicated as country of origin went down to 53%, a drop of 9% compared to 2015.^{d)}

Measures in response to notifications can include the withdrawal of dangerous products from the market, sales bans, corrective actions, rejection of imports, etc. When the measures are ordered by national authorities, they are referred to as 'compulsory measures'. Measures initiated by the economic operator (the manufacturer, authorised representative, importer or distributor) are referred to as 'voluntary measures'.^{d)}

The following table shows the breakdown of all reactions per year by the type of measure that was taken by the national authorities in response.

	<u>2014^{f)}</u>	<u>2015^{e)}</u>	<u>2016^{d)}</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Voluntary measures</i>	76%	80%	77%	77% ^{ae)}
<i>Compulsory measures</i>	4%	4%	7%	5% ^{ae)}

<i>Compulsory and voluntary measures</i>	0%	0%	0%	0% ^{ae)}
<i>No measures</i>	20%	16%	16%	18% ^{ae)}

Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety

Five joint actions on product safety have been undertaken each year between 2014 to 2016. The following table shows the focus of these joint actions as well as the participating countries (EU/EEA).^{d)}

	<i>Focus of the joint action</i>	<i>Participating countries (EU/EEA)</i>
2014	<i>Child care articles: safety barriers^{af)}</i>	BE, BG, HR, CZ, FR, EL, IS, LU, MT, ^{af)} NL, PT, ^{af)} SK
	<i>Acoustic toys^{ae)}</i>	AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, FI, DE, IS, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO
	<i>Lighting chains and LED lamps</i>	HR, CZ, DK, FI, DE, LV, NL, NO, PT, SE
	<i>Fireworks</i>	BE, BG, EL, IS, LU, NL, PL, SI
	<i>Power tools: angle grinders^{ag)}</i>	BG, HR, CZ, FI, DE, LV, LU, MT, PL, PT, SK, SI
2015	<i>Childcare articles: soothers and soother holders</i>	BE, BG, CY, DK, FR, EL, IS, IT, LV, LT, MT, NL, RO, SK
	<i>Plastic toys: chemical risks</i>	BE, CY, CZ, EE, DE, EL, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SK, ES, SE
	<i>Household appliances: mixers</i>	BG, CY, CZ, FI, DE, LV, MT, NL, PT, SE
	<i>Playground equipment</i>	BE, CZ, DE, IS, LV, NO, SK, SI
	<i>Power tools (esp. with cutting blades)</i>	BE, CZ, FR, DE, LV, LU, MT, PT
2016	<i>Baby carriers</i>	AT, BE, BG, HR, CZ, IS, LV, LT, MT, PT
	<i>Electric toys</i>	BE, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FR, EL, IS, LV, LT, MT, PL, SK, SE
	<i>Electrical appliances</i>	BG, HR, CY, CZ, FI, FR, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SE
	<i>Power tools: impact drills</i>	BG, HR, DE, LV, LT, MT, PL
	<i>Climbing equipment</i>	BE, BG, HR, DE, IS, LV, LU, MT, NO

Reports are available for the 2014 joint actions on safety barriers, acoustic toys, and power tools. Reports for the remaining 2014 joint actions on lighting chains/LED lamps are expected to become available later in 2017.

- In the 2014 joint action on **fireworks**, 138 products were sampled and tested. The results from the market surveillance exercise were that 40% of the fireworks failed to comply with the physical tests required by the standard, and that 17% failed to comply with the marking and labelling requirements in either the legislation or the standard. Taking both these factors into account a total of 48% of the samples failed to meet the physical requirements or the product information requirements or both.^{ah)}
- In the 2014 joint action on **safety barriers**, 112 products were sampled and tested, including 106 safety barriers, 3 multi-functional barriers and 3 traditional playpens. 77% of the 106 safety barriers failed to meet the requirements of the current standard. All three playpens failed to meet the

current relevant standard. Two of the three multifunctional barriers failed to meet all the tests designed by the project participants. Following the results of this exercise, the participating national authorities took enforcement actions on many of the models tested.^{af)}

- In the 2014 joint action on **acoustic toys**, around 2,190 different models of acoustic toys were inspected. 10% of the tested acoustic toys were found non-compliant. The acoustic toy group with the highest non-compliance was cap-firing toys (28%), followed by close-to-the-ear toys (20%) and wind toys (14%). Market surveillance authorities issued 3 recalls, 30 sales-bans and/or withdrawals from the market and 26 RAPEX alerts were notified or are in the process of notification.^{ae)}
- In the 2014 joint action on **power tools (angle grinders)**, 60 grinders were sampled. Sampling took place in the lower end of the market, supposing to find there the most non-compliant grinder-brands. The test results showed (multi) non-conformities in all grinders. Actions taken in response included 20 voluntary market surveillance measures, 15 mandatory market surveillance measures (i.e. sales ban and/or withdrawal from the market) and 34 RAPEX notifications.^{ag)}

Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)

The following table shows the number of exchanges of product safety officials during the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.^{qi)}

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of exchanges</i>	19	31	20	56
<i>Participating countries (beneficiary)</i>	HR, CZ, EE, HU, LT, MT, NL, PL, SI, UK	AT, HR, EE, FR, LV, LI, LT, PL, RO, SI, UK	AT, BG, FR, LU, PL	BE, BG, HR, EE, DE, IS, LT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SI, ES, UK
<i>Participating countries (host)</i>	FI, FR, EL, LT, MT, NL, PL, RO, ES, UK	CZ, DE, HU, IS, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SI, SE	FI, LV, MT, PL, SI, ES, SE	AT, BG, HR, FR, MT, PL, PT, SE

Officials from 21 EU and EEA states took part in exchanges during the Programme Period. The top three Member States of beneficiaries have been Poland (36 officials), Bulgaria (26 officials), and Croatia (10 officials). The top three hosting Member States have been Poland (23 officials), Malta (18 officials), and France (14 officials).^{qi)}

The countries that have not sent any product safety officials on exchange in this Programme period are Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Slovakia. The following countries have not hosted any exchanges of product safety officials in this Programme period: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway and Slovakia.^{qi)}

Networking and events

The Consumer Safety Network (CSN) met 13 times between January 2014 and January 2018. The CSN permanent subgroup of RAPEX contact points met 4 times between January 2014 and January 2018.^{v),w)}

The European Commission's DG for Justice and Consumers hosted the 2016 edition of the International Product Safety Week from 14 to 18 November in Brussels.^{u)} During the International Product Safety Week 2016, the

Commission gathered regulators, manufacturers, e-commerce actors and consumer organisations from more than 40 countries around the globe to exchange about emerging risks and ways forward to address them.⁸⁾

VI. Potential wider effects of activities

Consumer trust in product safety

Consumer perception of the level of product safety in the EU can provide an indication of potential wider effects of the product safety actions implemented under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Consumer trust in product safety has generally increased over time in the EU. In the EU28, the proportion of consumers agreeing that essentially all non-food products in their country are safe (or that only a small number are unsafe) increased from 65% in 2008 to 78% in 2016, i.e. an increase of 13 percentage points. The largest increase (9 percentage points) occurred between the 2014 and 2016 surveys after a period of relative stagnation between 2010 and 2014.

VII. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)

Civic Consulting, Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs (2015)¹⁾

- ▶ “A survey carried out between December 2014 and July 2015 amongst importers, distributors and retailers in five target sectors (toys, clothing, electrical appliances, cosmetics and childcare articles) in 14 EU Member States found that 66% of the respondents are well aware of RAPEX, as they visit the RAPEX website sometimes, once a month, or once a week. 34% of the survey respondents are less aware of RAPEX, as prior to the study they did not know about RAPEX at all or had heard about RAPEX but had never or only once visited the website before. Amongst small and micro size companies the share of companies less aware of RAPEX increases to 49%.¹⁾
- ▶ “According to economic operators, the main limitations to currently using the RAPEX website are that it is too time-consuming/not practical to use, the data base is too broad making it cumbersome to identify relevant information, the information is difficult to comprehend or not relevant for the company’s operations, and that national authorities appear to be more trustworthy than European initiatives. A variety of improvements relating to the content and functionality of the RAPEX website would overcome these limitations. Furthermore, research revealed that for the effective promotion of the RAPEX website, general awareness regarding product safety needs to be increased, in particular among micro-sized and small companies.”¹⁾
- ▶ Note that in reaction to the results of the study the Commission has improved the RAPEX portal and included the option 'Personalise Your Weekly reports', allowing users to e.g. only receive data on specific product groups, see:
https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/?event=personalisedSubscription.subscribe

VIII. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The large majority of interviewees with an opinion on RAPEX considered it to be an effective and important tool, although some argued that the scope could be expanded; ▶ A few interviewees provided examples of specific issues such as language barriers and suggested that communication to consumers (including the website's user interface) could be improved.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EC officials commented that Rapex is a well-functioning and reliable system but also saw room for improvement in the involvement of concerned national authorities and communication between them.
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Most interviewees considered joint actions to be effective. A number of interviewees indicated that joint actions enabled authorities in some Member States to conduct testing activities that could otherwise not be financed at the national level.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EC officials positively assessed the resulting harmonised approaches on how to deal with problematic products across Member States. ▶ While one interviewee noted the relevance of joint actions for various stakeholder groups, including for consumer organisations to voice concerns and for the industry to be aware and understand EU-wide approaches, another interviewee noted that the communication of results could be improved given their importance and the related effort.
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	National and EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ While most of the national ministries or authorities that mentioned exchanges of officials assessed this activity positively, this assessment was not uniform; ▶ Some interviewees at national and at EU levels cited a lack of resources to participate as a limiting factor.
<i>Networking and events</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees considered networking and events related to product safety to be a useful opportunity to share best practices and improve coordination between Member States in the area of market surveillance.
<i>General</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In general, the interviewees considered that the Programme activities related to product safety were highly effective, but cited the continued presence of unsafe products on the market as well as emerging risks (e.g. from new, technically complex products or from e-commerce with third countries) as evidence that market surveillance needed to be continuously improved; ▶ The interviewees however noted that the adequate implementation of the activities and adequate use of the tools relied on resources of the national authorities and often cited lack of resources and/or time to participate in or use the output of the activities as a limiting factor; ▶ The most commonly cited new needs among the interviewees

related to the challenges of keeping up with new innovations in products, services, and markets. Interviewees mentioned the need for new approaches to deal with connected products and the Internet of Things as well as product safety concerns related to 3D printing;

- ▶ Several interviewees also mentioned product safety concerns related to direct B2C e-commerce with third countries such as China and emphasised the need to improve market surveillance in this area. Nanomaterials were also mentioned as raising product safety issues.

- EU-level ▶ Interviewees at the EU level agreed that product safety is a pillar of consumer protection with clear added value resulting from the EU interventions given the scale and grounds to be covered to ensure product safety in the internal market.

IX. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N= 70, 45, 26, 55)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.1	4.5	3.8
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	3.0*	3.2	3.0*	4.2	3.8	3.9
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	-	3.0*	-	3.9	4.0*	3.8
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.7	3.3	3.5*	4.3	4.3	4.0

*Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

IX. Conclusions

- ▶ The activities funded under Action 2 of the Consumer Programme have been largely effective according to stakeholder assessments.
- ▶ In particular, RAPEX has grown into an effective and important pillar of the EU market surveillance architecture. To a large extent, the targets set by the Consumer Programme for RAPEX for 2020 have already been met. However, certain limitations of RAPEX have also been noted.
- ▶ Other activities to support EU wide market surveillance and enforcement measures, such as joint actions, and training and networking are also considered to be effective cooperation mechanisms by the main target group, national product safety authorities. They appreciate the coordinated approach to common problems, the opportunity to join forces and to establish direct contacts with authorities from different countries as well as the exchange of knowledge.
- ▶ Stakeholders uniformly noted that market surveillance is facing major issues due to new economy and business models, new marketing and selling techniques, digitalisation of products as well as direct B2C

e commerce with third countries such as China.

X. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>b) Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 December 2001 on general product safety (GPSD)</p> <p>c) European Commission, Annex to the Commission implementing decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>d) <u>Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2016 Annual Report</u></p> <p>e) Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2015 Annual Report</p> <p>f) Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2014 Annual Report</p> <p>g) DG JUST Annual activity report 2016</p> <p>h) DG JUST Annual activity report 2016 – Annexes</p> <p>i) DG JUST Annual activity report 2015</p> <p>j) DG JUST Annual activity report 2015 – Annexes</p> <p>k) DG SANCO Annual activity report 2014</p>
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	<p>l) Civic Consulting, Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs (2015)</p> <p>m) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016)</p> <p>n) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)</p> <p><u>ac) UNE Consortium, Support Services to Develop and Provide Training in Internet Investigations for the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) and Consumer Product Safety Networks (CSN) - E-Enforcement Academy (2017), prepared for the European Commission</u></p> <p>ae) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Acoustic toys (2017)</p> <p>af) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Safety barriers (2017)</p> <p>ag) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Power tools (2017)</p> <p>ah) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD – Final technical report, Fireworks 2 (2018)</p>
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	<p>o) BEUC/vzbv, The challenge of protecting EU consumers in global online markets (Nov 2017)</p> <p>p) CHAFAEA, Participation in interactive deliverables - E-Enforcement Academy (2017)</p> <p>q) CHAFAEA, Exchange of officials 2014-2017 (2017)</p> <p>r) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/repository/content/pages/rapex/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>s) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/international_cooperation/bilateral_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>t) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/cooperation_with_stakeholders/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>u) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/international_cooperation/international_product_safety_week/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>v) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupId=935 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>w) https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/63000727-616d-429d-824d-f689471ee277 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>x) http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/consumers/exchange-of-officials-index_en.html (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>y) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer-safety/rag/ (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>z) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer-safety/rag/?event=documentation&id=RAG.pdf (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>aa) https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/gpsd-ba/index.do (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ab) http://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register/details.htm?id=42907 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ad) http://www.prosafe.org/index.php/about-us/contentall-comcontent-views/what-is-prosafe (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ae) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)</p>

ANNEX I: Indicators provided in the Regulation

Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)

Indicators provided in Regulation

According to Article 3(1)(a) the objective will be measured in particular through the activity and effectiveness of the EU rapid alert system for dangerous consumer products (RAPEX).

As specified in Annex II of the Regulation, relevant indicators are:

<u>Indicator:</u>	<u>Baseline (2010) provided in Regulation</u>	<u>Target in Regulation (by 2020)</u>	<u>Interim status</u>
% of RAPEX notifications entailing at least one reaction (by other Member States)	43% (843 notifications)	Increase of 10% by 2020 [47.5%]	46% (2017) ^{j)}
Ratio number of reactions/number of notifications (serious risks)*	1.07	Increase of 15% by 2020 [1.23]	1.66(2017) ^{h)}

*Note: A notification can trigger several reactions from authorities of other Member States

Case study: Capacity building for consumer organisations (Action 5) also including trainings for CPC/GPSD enforcement officials ("E-Enforcement Academy", Actions 2 and 10)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related

Defined in Article 3 (1) (b) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.**

Eligible actions

Defined in Article 4 (b) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation:

Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise:

(a) **financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations** representing consumer interests in accordance with Article 5(1) of this Regulation;

(b) **capacity building for regional, national and European consumer organisations**, notably through training available in various languages and throughout the Union and exchange of best practices and expertise for staff members, in particular for consumer organisations in Member States where they are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness as evidenced by monitoring of consumer markets and the consumer environment in the Member States;

(c) **greater transparency and more exchanges of good practice and expertise, in particular through enhanced networking**, assisted by the setting up of an online portal for consumer organisations to provide an interactive exchange and networking area and make materials produced during training courses freely available;

(d) **support to international bodies** promoting principles and policies which are consistent with the objectives of the Programme; and:

Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, including:

(b) **actions to improve cooperation between authorities** as well as coordination of monitoring and enforcement such as exchanges of enforcement officials, common activities, trainings for enforcement officials and for members of the judiciary.

II. Description of activities

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)

Consumer Champion is a capacity building programme for consumer professionals providing training, resources and networking opportunities. It was launched in 2014^{c)} and is designed for the management teams of consumer entities, consumer professionals, consumer experts and professional volunteers.^{h)} The global objective is to provide capacity building activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of consumer organisations (including other actors and stakeholders in consumer policy). It also intends to promote exchange of practices between Consumer Professionals.

Building on the previous "TRACE" programme (see the fact sheet for Action 5 under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013), Consumer Champion is divided into 5 main activities complementing each other:

- ▶ Web networking platform;
- ▶ E-learning courses;
- ▶ Class teaching courses;
- ▶ Local training; and
- ▶ Expert courses.^{h)}

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)

In 2015 the Commission developed an initiative to support an "e-enforcement training academy", catering for both the CPC network and the product safety area where similar needs exist to strengthen enforcement of consumer legislation in online businesses-to-consumers trade.ⁱ⁾

The E-Enforcement Academy started its activities in 2017 (after a preparatory phase and financial commitments since 2015^{d)} to boost the CPC and product safety networks' ability to conduct online investigations.^{e)} It consists of in-person and virtual events, which include webinars, workshops and master classes.

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)	779.9	600.0	500.0	0	1 879.9	2.0%
Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)	-	999.0	0	0	999.0	1.0%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) ▶ Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) notably through: local training, e-learning courses, exchange of best practices and expertise

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy) ▶ E-Enforcement Training Academy for consumer legislation

V. Outputs and results of activities

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) The following table shows the cumulative number of visitors, registered users, and registered organisations on the Consumer Champion online platform. Note that this table contains visitors, users and organisations from eligible countries only (i.e. EU Member States, EEA, candidate countries and potential candidates).^{g)}

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Visitors	1 247	9 041	18 978	40 066
Registered	212	620	1046	1587

<i>users</i>				
<i>Registered organisations</i>	852	941	898	1096

Including non-eligible countries, Consumer Champion has seen 35,536 website visitors since the launch of the platform, with 220 news items published, 53 blogs written including 41 from users, and 126 events published. 542 e-learners are using the online modules.^{f)}

The Consumer Champion online platform currently consists of 6 modules:

- ▶ Consumer Law I (basic level);
- ▶ Consumer Law II (advanced level);
- ▶ Energy;
- ▶ Financial Services;
- ▶ Telecommunications;
- ▶ Digital Services.

These modules are each available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish.^{g)}

BEUC notes that the Consumer Champion platform did not have the success expected. Consumer Professionals were not active and engaged on the platform and the online community is hardly taking off. This might be due to several reasons such as lack of time from Consumer Professionals; the difficulty of navigating the platform; language obstacles; culture in the consumer movement (i.e. face to face networking preferred over online tools); other platforms already used (e.g. BEUC's networking platform).^{f)}

BEUC also stated that the e-learning modules had a low participation rate compared to the considerable efforts put in developing, translating and promoting them. The modules do apparently not respond to the consumer professionals needs and the format suggested might be time-consuming for them. As stated during the ECCG meeting in October 2017 by several members, Consumer Professionals are very often overloaded by work and some of them work on a voluntary basis. They also mentioned the time a module takes to follow. On top of this and despite the very good content, the topics are too EU oriented and difficult to implement on a daily basis. Some other members specified that their needs in terms of training are more face-to-face trainings.^{f)}

Under the Consumer Champion program, 21 local courses, including 6 upcoming courses,^{f)} have been organised in 9 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries: Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Cyprus.^{b)s)} These courses have resulted in 279 trained Consumer Professionals in these countries.^{f)} *Note: Data until October 2017.*

Local courses are the most appreciated services within the programme. Evaluations were carried during the local courses and 3 months after. Overall, participants found the courses very useful for their daily work (85% graded the content of the training as being very useful) and could implement the information received for giving better and more effective advice to consumers. Participants noted that more local courses would be useful for their countries, for instance on telecom, digital, energy or banking issues, but also e-commerce, market surveillance, project development and funding.^{b)}

According to BEUC, the local courses are the capacity building tool that works better because they create a unique space/opportunity for networking with all the stakeholders in the consumer movement (ministries, COs, ECCs, regulators, etc.) as it is an opportunity for all the consumer professionals from different sectors of entities to meet for the first time, and the courses

are in the national language and considering all the national specificities.⁷⁾

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)

The following resources/activities delivered during the first year of the E-Enforcement Academy are listed below:

- ▶ 112 blog posts
- ▶ 4 newsletters
- ▶ 6 wiki-pages
- ▶ 3 E-Enforcement tools reports
- ▶ 6 knowledge sharing webinars
- ▶ 8 basic/intermediate coaching webinars
- ▶ 4 advanced trainee webinars
- ▶ Assistance to basic-level trainees forum
- ▶ 3 Master class meetings in Brussels
- ▶ Organisation of 2 CPC e-enforcement group workshops in Brussels
- ▶ 5 e-learning modules
- ▶ 1 promotion video and 4 additional online tutorials
- ▶ Gathering of user feedback

Total participation at on-site and virtual events (webinars) in 2017 amounted to 120 for CPC participants.^{j)}

The following detailed statistics are available for the participation of product safety officials in E-Enforcement Academy activities in 2017:

- ▶ 13 product safety officials from 10 EU/EEA states participated in knowledge webinars;
- ▶ 4 product safety officials from 2 EU/EEA states participated in coaching webinars;
- ▶ 6 product safety officials from 5 EU/EEA states participated in advanced webinars; and
- ▶ 12 product safety officials from 10 EU/EEA states participated in master classes.^{k)}

VI. Potential wider effects of activities

Consumer trust in consumer organisations

- ▶ A potential indicator for the wider effects could be consumers' level of trust in consumer organisations to protect their consumer rights: the percentage of consumers agreeing that they trust consumer organisations to protect consumer rights has increased from 64% in 2008 to 72% in 2016 across the entire EU, despite dipping briefly to 62% in 2014.
- ▶ Furthermore, as the capacity building activities under the Consumer Programme have focused in particular on the New Member States, a comparison of the development in consumer trust in consumer organisations between the EU15 and the EU13 may be relevant in this context. While the percentage of consumers agreeing that they trust consumer organisations to protect consumer rights in the EU13 has remained below that of the EU15 since 2008, the difference in levels of trust between the two groups has decreased over time, from a 25 percentage point gap in 2008 to a 16 percentage point gap in 2016. Also, while consumers in the EU15 reported only a modest rise in their trust in consumer organisations between 2008 and 2016 (from 71% to 75%, a 4 percentage point gain), consumers in the EU13 reported a much larger gain over the same period (from 47% to 59%, a 12 percentage point gain).

Consumer trust in

- ▶ Capacity building activities for authorities could in the long run be

authorities

expected to make authorities more effective, with consumer trust in them increasing as a consequence. While other factors are also relevant, and any positive influence at this stage is likely not related to the E-Enforcement Academy, but rather to previous capacity building measures (such as trainings, participation in CPC activities etc), consumer trust in authorities can serve as an indicator for potential wider effects. The percentage of consumers who agree that they trust public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer has increased by 15 percentage points between 2008 and 2016, from 54% to 69%. The largest increase was observed between 2014 and 2016 (from 61% to 69%). These results can be contrasted with the results from the 2017 Consumer Market Study for the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law, which found that 46% of consumers felt confident that competent national authorities take measures to stop traders from breaching consumer rights.z)

VII. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)

- ▶ No evaluation conducted during the Programme period.
- ▶ Note that Consumer Champion is a follow-up programme of TRACE. The “Evaluation of Consumer Education, Information and Capacity Building Actions: Final Report” (Ecorys, 2011) recommended that “TRACE courses continue and explore how the training activities may be developed and focused further on developing a value network (where the actors also are participants in building and sharing good practice) rather than the existing value chains (where organisations receive training, but what happens after that is additional to the formal training offer)”.

VIII. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)

- | | |
|----------|---|
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer organisations and ECCs were generally positive in their assessment of the capacity-building activities funded under the Consumer Programme, but provided suggestions for improvement. While a number of consumer organisations stated that they were happy with Consumer Champion, some stated that it led to less personal interaction with consumer professionals in other countries, which they felt was important for building connections and sharing best practices. Some consumer organisations also complained that the Consumer Champion content was too focused on the New Member States; ▶ Some interviewees also noted that, while such capacity-building activities led to better trained staff on an ad-hoc basis, challenges remained for the national organisations to reap sustainable benefits from these activities, i.e. to see training materialise in real practice and keep trained staff within the organisation. |
| EU-level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewed EC officials noted that, while it is considered to be a good investment, creating online content is costly and time consuming and that at the moment the community website and online resources were too little used; ▶ Another interviewee indicated more generally that the small size of the target group of Consumer Champion content was a limitation and that other groups could be involved to make it |

more successful;

- ▶ Interviewees agreed that local courses were very successful and one suggested to speed up the setting up process for local courses, including by training people in the Member States to become trainers;
- ▶ One official also noted that while the content offer is currently the same for all MS [on online courses], this should be differentiated in the future.

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)

- National ▶ Most interviewees assessed training activities in the area of enforcement to be effective, with some interviewees stating that the E-Enforcement Academy should include more advanced training courses.
- EU-level ▶ One interviewee indicated that the informal feedback on this activity was that participants were very happy and that demand was increasing for the various sessions.

IX. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in: improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations / in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice / in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N= 36, 26, 22)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>	3.0*	4.2	3.9	3.7	-	3.9
<i>E-Enforcement Academy (CPC)</i>	-	-	4.0*	4.0	4.0	4.0
<i>E-Enforcement Academy (GPSD)</i>	-	-	-	4.2	5.0*	4.2

*Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

X. Conclusions

- ▶ The Consumer Champion was assessed by stakeholders to be an effective activity, with a rating of 4.2 by consumer organisations (ministries and authorities provided a rating of 3.7);
- ▶ While the local courses conducted in selected priority countries are considered to be valuable and highly appreciated, the online learning courses and interactive platform are under-used;
- ▶ There is a broad consensus that capacity of consumer organisations at the national level often remained insufficient, mostly due to a lack of resources;
- ▶ The effectiveness of the E Enforcement Academy received a high assessment (an effectiveness rating of 4.0, of a scale from 1 to 5) by the target group, i.e. officials from ministries and authorities, but participation has so far remained rather low, especially in webbased modules.

XI. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
<i>Annual reports</i>	-
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	<p>b) <u>Draft final report, Request for specific services 2015 85 03 "Organisation of local training courses, translation of e-learning modules, website promotion, moderation, hosting and maintenance" under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAEA (2017)</u></p> <p>c) Final report, Request for specific services 2014 85 01 – under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAEA (2015)</p> <p>d) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)</p> <p>e) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016)</p>
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	<p>f) <u>BEUC, Consumer Champion evaluation and way forward - Concept note (2017)</u></p> <p>g) Consumer Champion website report (July-August 2017)</p> <p>h) http://www.consumerchampion.eu/ (Accessed 2017-12-19)</p> <p>i) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016SC0164 (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>j) Commission documents on e-enforcement academy participation (2017)</p> <p>k) CHAFAEA, Participation in interactive deliverables - E-Enforcement Academy (2017)</p>

10. ANNEX I: Indicators provided in the Regulation

Indicators provided in Regulation	<i>No indicators for measuring objectives are provided in the Regulation for the relevant activities.</i>
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Case study: Facilitating access to ADR/ODR (Action 9)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective III — Rights and redress: to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution.
Eligible actions	<p>Defined in Article 4(c) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and maintenance of relevant IT tools, and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development and maintenance of IT tools; (b) support for the development of a Union-wide online dispute resolution system and its maintenance, including for associated services such as translation; (c) support for networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, and for their exchanging and disseminating good practice and experiences; (d) development of specific tools to facilitate access to redress for vulnerable people who are less inclined to seek redress.

II. Description of activities

<i>Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform</i>	<p>To enable easily accessible and efficient out-of-court redress for consumer disputes, including in disputes arising from cross-border e-commerce, a comprehensive legal framework on ADR Directive 2013/11/EU on Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumers^{b)} and ODR Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumers^{c)} was adopted at EU level in 2013 and has been in place since 2016.</p> <p>The European Online Dispute Resolution platform is established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes. The Online Dispute Resolution platform (hereinafter the "ODR platform") is an online platform that channels complaints to ADR bodies. The ODR platform was launched in January 2016 and opened to the public on 15 February 2016. The platform's aim is to facilitate the online resolution of disputes between consumers and traders over online transactions, in particular cross-border transactions. The platform has the following key characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumers and traders can choose any of the EU official languages for their interaction with the platform (e.g. submitting their complaints, receiving notifications). An automatic translation tool is available for free text communication; ▶ The platform identifies which notified ADR bodies are competent to handle the case and refers the dispute to the ADR body on which the parties agree; ▶ ADR bodies can use the platform's case management system to conduct
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the ADR procedure entirely online;

- ▶ The parties can request that the outcome of the ADR procedure is translated by a professional translator;
- ▶ Clear deadlines are built into the platform to ensure a fast process.

The platform's functions have been designed and developed in compliance with Article 5 paragraph 4 of the ODR Regulation, to allow the parties to conduct the dispute resolution procedure online through electronic case management. The ODR platform allows consumers to initiate a procedure by submitting a complaint electronically to a trader, allows the trader to identify the competent ADR entity and, in case of agreement of both parties on the ADR body, transmits the complaint to that body. See Figure 1 in Annex II of this case study for an illustration of the complaint process on the ODR platform.

The platform does not address disputes between consumers (C2C) or between traders (B2B), nor does it provide a technical framework for direct negotiation between the parties, settlement attempts made by a judge in the course of judicial proceedings, or disputes concerning health services or public providers of further or higher education.

The ODR Regulation provides that Member States should designate ODR contact points to provide one-to-one support to users of the ODR platform when necessary. Online traders are required to provide a link to the ODR platform and state their e-mail address, on which they can be reached via the platform, on their website.

On 1 July 2017 the ADR/ODR legislation became applicable to the EEA/EFTA States (Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein). In order to facilitate the submission of complaints from these States the interfaces of the platform are also available in the Norwegian and Icelandic languages. ADR bodies from those states can also be electronically registered with the ODR platform.^{e)}

Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR

Between 2015 and 2017 the Commission has carried out communication activities to promote the ODR platform amongst consumers and traders. In addition, the Commission organised two high-level events in 2017 with traders active in the top online retail sectors, the clothing and footwear and the airlines sector, to discuss the potential that ADR and ODR hold for increasing consumer confidence in online trading.^{e)}

The ODR regulation provides that in order to ensure broad consumer awareness of the existence of the ODR platform, traders established within the Union engaging in online sales or service contracts should provide, on their websites, an electronic link to the ODR platform.^{c)} In order to check traders' compliance with this obligation, the Commission conducted a scraping of more than 20,000 web shops across the EU in 2017 [see below].^{e),f)}

Networking and events

Although support for networking and events such as expert group meetings is part of the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 9, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 9.

An Expert Group on ADR was established in 2013 in order to assist the Commission in the preparation of implementation guidelines, following the adoption of the ADR/ODR legislation.^{m)}

An Expert Group on ODR was established in 2013 in order to provide technical advice and expertise to the Commission in relation to the development of the European ODR Platform.ⁿ⁾

The Commission also established a network of ODR contact points to facilitate their cooperation and work and provide, in cooperation with

Member States, appropriate training for ODR contact points.^{c)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)						
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform*	104.0	1 300.0	651.4	0	2 990.7	3.1%
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	0	1 177.8	1 540.3	354.5	3 072.6	3.2%
Networking and events	115.0	40.5	27.0	720.0	902.5	< 0.1%

*The 2015 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Work Programme has also contributed to the deployment of the ODR platform and to its operation and maintenance in the key years after its launch. As indicated in the 2015 Work Programme for CEF Telecommunications, the core platform would be procured for a duration of 3 years and generic services would be funded through grants, and the indicative total budget for 2015 was EUR 5.2 million (EUR 1 million for generic services and EUR 4.2 million for the core platform). As a results, and as indicated by DG Justice and Consumers, the Consumer Programme only provides a partial view of the cost of the ODR Platform.

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)	
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of the ODR platform ▶ Translation work for the ODR Platform by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union ▶ ODR Platform - Hosting ▶ Services related to the online dispute resolution platform
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Platform: communication campaign targeting traders ▶ Christmas communication campaign on Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Branding ▶ Study on online dispute resolution: web scraping of EU traders website ▶ Ex-ante evaluation of the target audiences, channel and tools, and the optimal use of resources for a campaign in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution ▶ Intra-muros communication consultants for ODR
Networking and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ADR - Expert Group Meetings ▶ ADR Assembly (summit) 2018 ▶ ODR Technical Meetings ▶ ODR - Meetings of Contact Points

V. Outputs and results of activities

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform

Since the launch of the platform on 15 February 2016, over 55 000 consumer complaints have been registered,^{ab)} of which more than a third concerned cross-border purchases within the EU.^{f)} The number of ADR bodies connected to the platform has grown from 208 in the second quarter of 2016 to 347 at the end of 2017.^{ab)}

In the first year after the launch of the platform, from 15 February 2016 to 15 February 2017, 1.9 million people visited the platform. On average the website received over 160,000 unique visitors per month, and more than 2,000 complaints were submitted per month on average. Current statistics show a steady increase in unique visitors from February 2017 – August 2017 to over 180,000 per month, with over 2,300 complaints being filed per month.

The most complained about sectors were consumer clothing and footwear (11.5%), airline tickets (8.5%), and information and communication technology goods (8%). These also represent the main e-commerce sectors in EU. Germany and UK, where the proportion of e-shoppers is the highest in EU, are the two countries where most complaints have been lodged and also where most traders concerned are located.

The following table shows the complaint life-cycle (outcome) of cases submitted between 15 February 2016 and 15 February 2017.

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>% of cases</u>
Automatically closed within 30 calendar days	85%
Refused by the trader	9%
Both parties withdrew before going to ADR	4%
Complaint submitted to ADR body	2%

A specific Commission survey of consumers whose cases were automatically closed within 30 days revealed that, although a large number of traders did not follow through using the ODR platform, 40% of consumers who submitted a complaint on the ODR platform that was automatically closed after 30 days had been contacted directly by the trader to solve the problem without any further progression of the complaint on the platform.

In 2/3 of the cases where the trader refused the complaint, traders indicated that they made direct contact with the consumer and solved the issue or were planning to do so.

In around half of the cases where the complaints were submitted to ADR bodies, the ADR bodies refused to deal with the case on procedural grounds such as lack of competence or the consumer's failure to attempt to contact the trader first. Furthermore, either consumers or traders in some instances withdrew from the procedure before it was completed. This explains why the ADR procedure reached a final outcome in less than 1% of the total cases submitted to the platform. Nevertheless, in 2/3 of the cases in which the ADR procedure reached a final outcome, the final outcome was reached within the 90-day deadline.

A user feedback survey conducted in July and August 2017 indicated that 71% of visitors to the ODR platform found it useful. Furthermore, available information reveals that 44% of the total cases submitted to the platform were settled bilaterally outside the platform.^{e)}

Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR

The communication activities around ODR in 2016 were concentrated around 2 separate social media campaigns focused on bringing attention to the ODR Platform managed by the European Commission.^{p)}

- ▶ Campaign number 1 (promoting the platform and a video) came in two waves, between May and November;
- ▶ Campaign number 2 took place before and during the Christmas period and came in the form of a banner campaign, again with paid promotion.

By the end of 2016, awareness-raising campaigns on ADR/ODR had a Facebook reach of 21 million users and a Twitter reach of 9 million users compared to an overall target of 10 million people reached.^{q)}

The two waves of the ODR video campaign achieved a total of 12 842 899 views (compared to a campaign forecast of 3 million views) and 285 623 website clicks (compared to a campaign forecast of 132 000 views).

The Facebook video campaign achieved the following social media results:^{q)}

- ▶ 23 060 post likes;
- ▶ 3 534 shares;
- ▶ 789 comments;
- ▶ 311 new fans.

There were four times more shares than comments. Shares were considered to be the most engaging form of action, as it means that the user is endorsing the message and broadcasting it to friends.^{q)}

The Twitter video campaign achieved the following social media results:^{q)}

- ▶ 1633 tweet likes;
- ▶ 584 retweets;
- ▶ 127 replies;
- ▶ 383 new followers.

For a detailed breakdown of costs, views, clicks and costs per view and per click related to the ODR video campaign see Figures 2 and 3 in Annex II of this case study.

In 2017, the Commission contracted a web-scraping study of EU traders' websites^{f)} to examine the current state of compliance of online traders in the EU with the ODR Regulation, which requires online traders to make the link to the ODR platform and their e-mail address available on their website.

The findings of the web-scraping show that only 28% of the investigated traders include a link to the ODR platform on their website.^{f)}

- ▶ Large traders (42%) and marketplaces (48%) tended to be most compliant. In contrast, fewer medium-sized (26%) and small traders (14%) provide the ODR link on their websites;
- ▶ Online traders in Germany (66%) are most likely to present a link to the ODR platform on their websites, followed by Austrian (47%) and Danish (44%) e-traders. In contrast, compliance with this requirement is the lowest in Cyprus (2%), Malta (1%) and Latvia (1%);
- ▶ The three biggest sectors in the study, 'Clothing, shoes and accessories' (34%), 'Electronics and computer hardware' (31%) and 'Beauty, health and wellness goods' (24%) perform close to the average compliance level.

Networking and events

The Expert Group on ADR met twice in 2015.^{m)} The Expert Group (technical group) on ODR held four meetings in 2014, in addition to a hands-on exercise with stakeholders to test the platform in November 2014.^{n),t)} The ODR contact points have met twice a year since 2015.^{aa)}

VI. Potential wider effects of activities

Consumer trust in redress mechanisms

An indicator for potential wider effects of actions related to ADR/ODR can be consumer trust in redress mechanisms, i.e. whether consumers agree that obtaining redress through out-of-court bodies is easy. Consumers consistently consider it easier to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies than through the courts; overall, about half (52%) of consumers in 2016 agreed that it is easy to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies. The percentage of consumers agreeing that it is easy to settle disputes with traders through out-of-court bodies has also increased over time, from 39% in 2008 to 52% in 2016.^{ac)}

VII. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform

Impact assessment - Proposal for a Directive on Consumer ADR and Proposal for a Regulation on Consumer ODR (2011)^{l)}

“ADR/ODR will make a real difference for consumers. More consumer problems will be raised and solved, thus leading to a reduction in consumer losses. The recovered losses can be then re-used in the internal market for the purchase of goods and services. Similarly the savings by introducing quality ADR will be important, accounting for about 0.17% of EU GDP (€20 billion). The creation of a consumer-friendly EU web-based platform will enable consumers to solve their disputes by electronic means and consequently increase their confidence to buy goods and services online and cross-border.”

Optimal integration of the European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012)^{j)}

“In order to ensure an optimal integration of the ODR Platform with regard to consumer oriented websites on EU level, some requirements should be followed in any case:

- The implementation of the ODR Platform should rely and benefit from the experience of the existing tools (ECC-Net, for instance) ;
- The ODR Platform should be closely linked to the webpages providing consumers with information on their rights ;
- Necessary information shall be provided on the ODR Platform itself as well as on other kinds of redresses (judicial procedure or out-of-court settlement procedures);
- Measures should be taken so that consumers are obviously aware of the existence of the Platform.”

EC Report on the functioning of the European ODR platform (2017)^{e)}

“Overall, the platform's structural functionality and its impressive reach among consumers in its first year of operation is very positive. The platform's main functions work properly, it operates as an interactive multilingual web-based IT tool, it provides a user-friendly means to submit complaints online, it contains a multilingual register of ADR entities, and it offers information on consumer redress. However, it is mainly due to its incentive effects that it contributes to solving cases outside of the platform.”

Communication

Online dispute

“The current findings show that only 28% of EU online

<i>campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR</i>	resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites (2017) ^{f)}	traders present a link to the ODR platform on their websites, while an e-mail address is provided by the majority of traders. Traders' compliance with the ODR link depends on the size, country and sector of a trader. When the ODR link is made available, it is often moderately to easily accessible for consumers. In 91% of the cases, the ODR link is presented as the exact link to the ODR platform and it is mainly included in the "Terms and conditions"-section of a website."
	Ex-ante evaluation for a communication campaign on ADR and ODR (2015) ^{p)}	<p>"In focus group research, consumers were interested in learning that online help is available if they encounter a problem when buying goods and services online. For most focus group participants, it mattered even more if the help available applied to cross-border purchases in the EU and was backed by the EU so that any potential disputes could be resolved easily online. For some, this information was suggested to make them more likely to buy from a trader in another country. Consumers thought that the platform's key features were that the platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Has Commission backing (representing a guarantee for the quality of the service); and ▶ Does not require specific legal knowledge or involving lawyers." <p>"There is uncertainty with regard to the extent that traders will actually make use of the ODR platform. Trade associations are pessimistic that businesses will use the platform, many large companies use their own automated dispute resolution systems, and most disputes with consumers are resolved. This means that for some traders the platform does not offer a clear benefit."</p>
<i>Additional information on activities</i>	European Parliament (DG Internal Policies), Assessing the scope of European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012) ^{k)}	<p>"The extension of the ODR Platform to domestic contracts would be consistent with the requirement of competence, subsidiarity and proportionality. Moreover, this extension would provide substantial advantages with regard to consumers' protection, consumers' trust, and promotion of the Internal Market and would entail very limited additional costs, namely, only those involved in using, for a larger set of case, the same ODR Platform, in the framework already provided for by the ADR Directive. Thus the benefits of the extension of the Platform to domestic contracts do clearly outweigh the costs. Also the extension to the ODR Platform to the offline contract would provide considerable consumer benefits and entail very limited costs."</p>
	Jorge Morais Carvallo and Joana Campos Carvallo, Evaluation of the ODR platform in a legal commentary in The Implications of the Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer information: "On the basis of research conducted on company websites at the end of May 2016, it can be concluded that the information is not 'easily accessible'. (...) The majority of consumers – not to say all – will not realise that the platform exists." ▶ Mandatory ADR: "Despite the reference in some rules of the Regulation to the possibility of the trader being committed to, or obliged to use, a specific ADR entity to resolve disputes with consumers, the platform is clearly not set up for these types of cases. (...) The solution to this problem could be a change in procedure, whereby the ADR entity would screen cases after the claim has

Revolution (2016)^{o)}

been submitted and before transmitting it to the trader and giving him the opportunity to state whether he agrees or refuses to take part in the procedure. In cases where his participation in the procedure is mandatory, the question would not even be raised. The claim would be transmitted to the trader merely to inform him that the procedure has been initiated and what the subsequent stages will be.”

- Persuasive effect of the ADR entity’s intervention: “Closely connected to the previous question, we think that the main obstacle to the success of the platform is the fact that the ADR entity is not able to intervene in the early stages of the procedure. (...) If the ADR entity were able to intervene early on, right after the submission of the claim, it could play a significant role in persuading the trader to take part in the procedure. Merely providing information on how ADR works can be decisive in many cases. A reminder of the possibility to reply to the invitation stating whether or not he is willing to make use of ADR would certainly drive more traders to take part.”

VIII. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform

National

- Opinions were significantly divided regarding the ODR platform;
- Most of the interviewees with an opinion on the ODR platform considered that the platform was underutilised. While several interviewees considered that it had good potential and would become more effective over time as consumers become more aware of it, others pointed out a number of issues with the platform that contributed to its lack of effectiveness, e.g. consumer dissatisfaction with the automatic closing of complaints within 30 days if the consumer and trader do not agree on an ADR body.

EU-level

- Interviewed EC officials noted that the ODR platform is a very recent tool, which is therefore early to assess, and which results are expected to take some time to materialise in the Member States;
- Most interviewees also noted the issue related to traders participation not being mandatory, as set out in the legislation.

Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR

National

- Although a few interviewees commented that communication activities on ODR/ADR had been effective in their country, most considered that the platform had a low level of awareness among consumers.

►

IX. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer

rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N=78, 71, 76).

Note that for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the area of consumer rights and redress and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present case study (listed above in section V).

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform	2.7	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3
Networking and events	3.0	3.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6

X. Conclusions

- ▶ Main activities funded under Action 9 have been assessed as moderately effective by stakeholders, who expressed divided opinions on the ODR Platform and communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR;
- ▶ The ODR platform has been relatively successful in attracting consumers to register their complaints, especially when considering the early stage of implementation.
- ▶ However, in practice the platform has been less effective in reaching its aim to improve access to ADR. Possible reasons include the apparent reluctance of traders to settle their disputes via an ADR and limitations of the legal basis. There is also reportedly confusion and a limited awareness of the ODR platform among consumers and traders, in spite of relevant awareness raising efforts under the Programme.

XI. Key sources

Legislation

- a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
- b) Directive 2013/11/EU of the European parliament and of the Council on Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumers ('ADR Directive')
- c) Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumers ('ODR Regulation')
- d) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1051 of 1 July 2015 on the modalities for the exercise of the functions of the online dispute resolution platform, on the modalities of the electronic complaint form and on the modalities of the cooperation between contact points provided for in Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes

Annual reports

- p) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report
- q) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- r) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report
- s) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- t) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report

Studies/reports/ EC documents

- e) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the European Online Dispute Resolution platform established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes (2017)
- f) Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites - Final report (2017)
- g) Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017
- h) Single Market Scoreboard - European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 -

	12/2016)
	i) European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report, Deloitte (2017)
	j) European Parliament (DG Internal Policies), Optimal integration of the European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012)
	k) European Parliament (DG Internal Policies), Assessing the scope of European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012)
	<u>l) Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive on Consumer ADR and Proposal for a Regulation on Consumer ODR (2011)</u>
	<u>p) European Commission, Ex-ante evaluation for a communication campaign on ADR and ODR (2015)</u>
	q) BeConnect, Online Dispute Resolution Video Campaign (30/06/16 to 03/10/16) - Wave 1&2 Final Report (2016)
	u) The new EU regulation on online resolution for consumer disputes (Michael Bogdan)
	v) The Impact of EU Law in the ADR Landscape in Italy, Spain and the UK: Time for Change or Missed Opportunity? (Pablo Cortes)
	w) Redress for free internet services under the scope of the EU and UNCITRAL's ODR regulations (Dusko Martić)
	x) Online Dispute Resolution for Consumers in the European Union (Pablo Cortes)
	y) Consumer Dispute Resolution Goes Online: Reflections on the Evolution of European Law for Out-of-Court Redress (Pablo Cortes and Arno Lodder)
	z) Redress & Alternative Dispute Resolution in Cross-Border E-commerce Transactions (Lilian Edwards and Caroline Wilson)
	ac) Flash Eurobarometer 397: Consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection
Other documents/ websites	m) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2879&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1 (Expert Group Register Entry on ADR Expert Group) (Accessed 2018-01-13)
	n) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2878&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1 (Expert Group Register Entry on ODR Expert Group) (Accessed 2018-01-13)
	o) Jorge Morais Carvallo and Joana Campos Carvallo, Evaluation of the ODR platform in a legal commentary in <i>The Implications of the Digital Revolution</i> (2016)
	aa) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)
	ab) Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), CEF Digital monitoring dashboard – Online Dispute Resolution (https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Monitoring+dashboard) (Accessed 2018-03-16)
	ad) Eurostat (2018)

ANNEX I: Indicators provided in the Regulation

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform

Indicators provided in Regulation

According to Article 3(1)(c), this objective will be measured in particular through the recourse to alternative dispute resolution to solve cross-border disputes and through the activity of a Union-wide online dispute resolution system, and by the percentage of consumers taking action in response to a problem encountered.

As specified in Annex II of the Regulation, relevant indicators are:

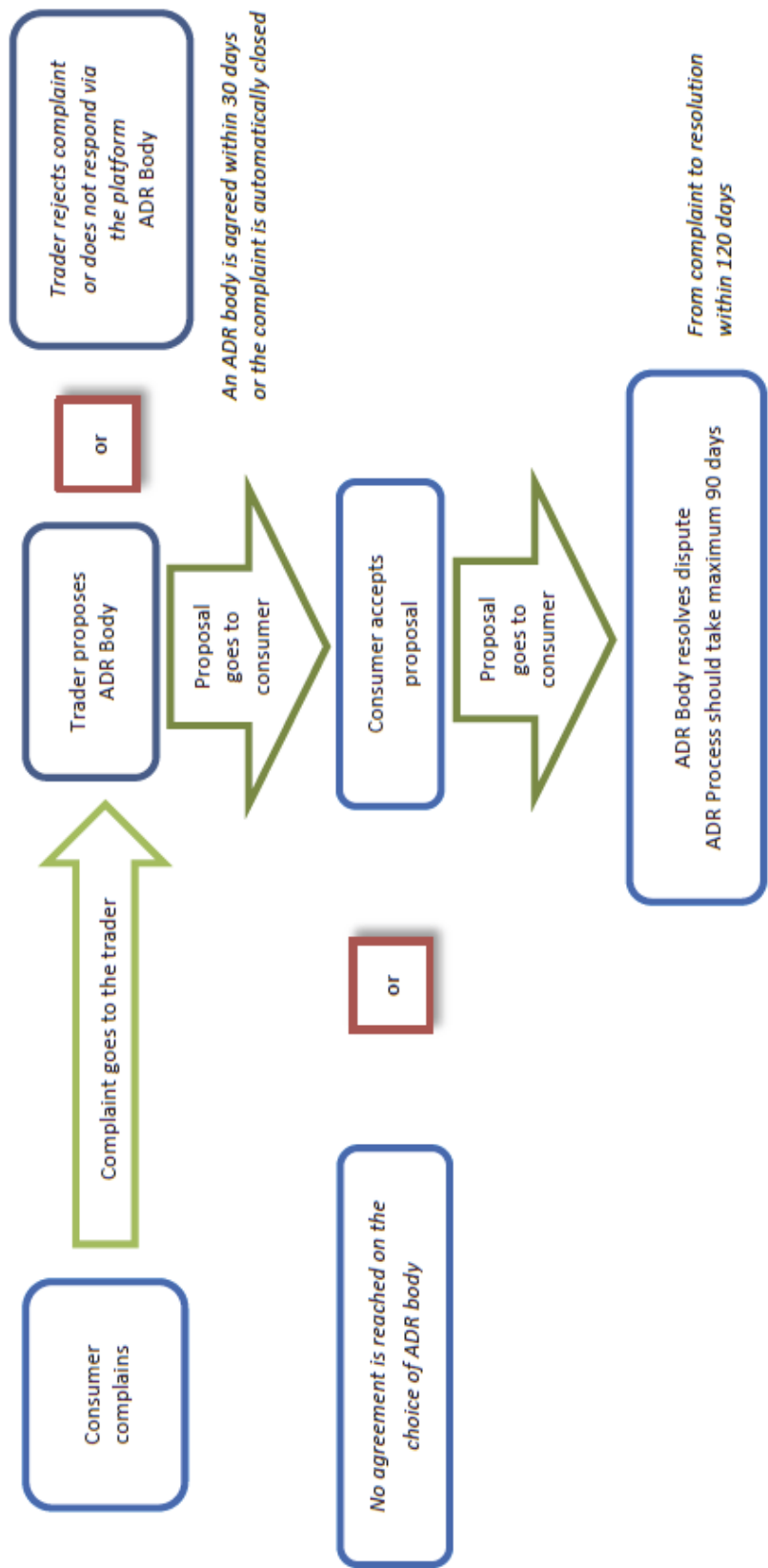
<u>Indicator:</u>	<u>Baseline (2010) provided in Regulation</u>	<u>Target in Regulation (by 2020)</u>	<u>Interim status *</u>
Number of cases dealt with by a Union-wide online dispute resolution (ODR) system	17 500 (complaints received by ECCs related	100 000	55 002 (2017)

	to e-commerce transactions)		
% of those cases dealt with by the ECCs and not resolved directly with traders which were subsequently referred to alternative dispute resolution (ADR)	9%	75%	18% (2016) ⁱ⁾
% of consumers who took action in response to a problem encountered in the past 12 months	83%	90%	69% (2016) ^{g)}

**Note for core experts: Updated 2017 figures are still outstanding*

Annex II: Additional information

Figure 1: Process on the ODR platform



Source: European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the European Online Dispute Resolution platform established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes (2017).

Figure 32: Overview of the Online Dispute Resolution video campaign on Facebook by Country – Waves 1 & 2

Country	Spent	Views (3s)	CPV (3s)	Website clicks	CPC (website)	CTR (website)
Austria	5 287.46 €	219 896	0.03 €	4 410	1.87 €	0.24%
Belgium	7 201.95 €	384 494	0.02 €	5 879	1.71 €	0.24%
Bulgaria	4 462.70 €	565 035	0.01 €	14 504	0.46 €	0.31%
Cyprus	1 155.26 €	125 615	0.01 €	2 825	0.50 €	0.34%
Czech Republic	5 289.30 €	302 636	0.02 €	5 744	1.38 €	0.28%
Denmark	3 940.23 €	132 869	0.04 €	2 425	3.01 €	0.35%
Estonia	866.45 €	49 298	0.02 €	761	1.34 €	0.34%
Finland	3 074.86 €	90 508	0.04 €	1 666	3.04 €	0.33%
France	26 474.77 €	1 364 494	0.02 €	28 305	1.44 €	0.32%
Germany	32 730.67 €	991 247	0.04 €	22 162	2.35 €	0.30%
Greece	8 664.09 €	965 082	0.01 €	21 648	0.54 €	0.33%
Hungary	6 738.81 €	529 300	0.02 €	12 071	0.84 €	0.25%
Ireland	4 804.41 €	259 933	0.02 €	4 278	1.43 €	0.24%
Italy	43 801.60 €	3 081 307	0.02 €	81 385	0.73 €	0.33%
Latvia	889.06 €	85 088	0.01 €	1 410	0.91 €	0.29%
Lithuania	2 019.08 €	158 967	0.02 €	3 693	0.87 €	0.28%
Malta	513.52 €	44 246	0.01 €	1 239	0.53 €	0.55%
The Netherlands	9 236.23 €	998 000	0.01 €	27 979	0.43 €	0.40%
Portugal	3 272.32 €	208 660	0.02 €	4 008	1.11 €	0.27%
Slovakia	1 584.22 €	122 833	0.02 €	2 294	0.92 €	0.26%
Slovenia	6 251.84 €	202 995	0.04 €	4 809	2.75 €	0.42%
Sweden	12 033.99 €	477 356	0.03 €	8 422	2.03 €	0.28%
United Kingdom*	34 707.18 €	1 483 042	0.04 €	23 706	2.05 €	0.38%
TOTAL	225 000.00 €	12 842 901	0.02 €	285 623	1.40 €	0.32%

Source: BeConnect, Online Dispute Resolution Video Campaign (30/06/16 to 03/10/16) - Wave 1&2 Final Report (2016). Note: UK was added on July 7, 2016. "Views" in the above table represents the number of views of at least 3 seconds. CPV = Cost Per View, CPC = Cost Per Click, CTR = Click-Through Rate.

Figure 3: Overview of the Online Dispute Resolution video campaign on Twitter by Country – Waves 1 & 2

Country	Spent	Impressions	Views	CPV	Clicks
Austria	1 372.35 €	206 388	57 748	0.03 €	20
Belgium	2 379.10 €	363 390	103 285	0.02 €	42
Bulgaria	560.15 €	90 546	28 414	0.02 €	37
Cyprus	230.50 €	38 943	11 650	0.02 €	9
Czech Republic	1 064.25 €	165 147	61 923	0.02 €	34
Denmark	1 456.40 €	233 865	86 409	0.02 €	29
Estonia	259.40 €	36 644	15 127	0.02 €	11
Finland	1 707.90 €	280 061	92 942	0.02 €	23
France	10 642.95 €	1 874 898	559 907	0.02 €	112
Germany	7 561.57 €	1 157 355	340 931	0.02 €	71
Greece	1 400.40 €	283 581	100 414	0.01 €	103
Hungary	588.20 €	92 630	32 210	0.02 €	21
Ireland	3 303.31 €	553 271	175 968	0.02 €	40
Italy	5 489.50 €	900 413	256 955	0.02 €	63
Latvia	403.40 €	73 826	25 920	0.02 €	27
Lithuania	288.20 €	35 280	12 246	0.03 €	14
Malta	144.10 €	19 664	6 560	0.02 €	0
Netherlands	7 758.15 €	1 205 803	415 457	0.02 €	85
Portugal	1 344.35 €	273 806	120 972	0.01 €	64
Sweden	2 660.75 €	480 497	170 537	0.02 €	39
United Kingdom*	8 802.28 €	1 188 103	341 141	0.03 €	54
Total	59 417.21 €	9 554 111	3 016 716	0.02 €	898

Source: BeConnect, Online Dispute Resolution Video Campaign (30/06/16 to 03/10/16) - Wave 1&2 Final Report (2016). Note: UK was added on July 7, 2016. CPV = Cost Per View.

Case study: Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004 (Action 10)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3 (1) (d) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective IV — Enforcement: to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice
Eligible actions	Defined in Article 4 (d) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development and maintenance of IT tools, such as databases, information and communication systems; (b) actions to improve cooperation between authorities as well as coordination of monitoring and enforcement such as exchanges of enforcement officials, common activities, trainings for enforcement officials and for members of the judiciary; (c) organisation of seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings of stakeholders and experts on enforcement; (d) administrative and enforcement cooperation with third countries which are not participating in the Programme and with international organisations.

II. Description of activities

<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	<p>The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) is a network of authorities responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries set up on basis of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004.^{b)} The CPC Regulation provides a cooperation framework between national authorities of the EU and EEA countries so that their action can overcome national jurisdictional boundaries to incorporate the full dimension of the Single Market.ⁱ⁾ The Regulation covers situations involving the collective interests of consumers and facilitates collaboration between authorities to put a stop to consumer regulation violations when the business and the consumer are located in different countries.^{j)}</p> <p>The CPC network functions as follows:^{b)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any authority in a country where consumers' rights are being violated can ask its counterpart in the country where the trader is based to take action to stop the breach of law. The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation sets a list of minimum powers which each authority must have to ensure a smooth cooperation. These include power to obtain the information and evidence needed to: tackle infringements within the EU, conduct on-site inspections, require cessation or prohibition of infringements committed within the EU, obtain from traders undertakings and payments into the public purse. ▶ Authorities can also alert each other to malpractices that could spread to other countries. ▶ Authorities, with the Commission's support, can also coordinate their approaches to applying consumer protection law so as to tackle widespread infringements. <p>The CPC network is also regularly carrying out EU-wide screenings of websites ("sweeps") to check whether a given sector is complying with</p>
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consumer rules.^{m)}

Participating Member States systematically and simultaneously check for practices on different websites where consumer protection law is not respected. Examples of such malpractices include:^{g)}

- ▶ Incomplete information on the trader, lack of contact details;
- ▶ Incorrect and misleading information about the price (hidden costs, such as tax, delivery fee);
- ▶ Insufficient information on the products characteristics;
- ▶ Advertising that a product is free of charge, and afterwards tying the consumer to a long term subscription;
- ▶ Unclear information on the right of withdrawal from the agreement, return or reimbursement of the product.

Following such investigation, the **relevant national authorities take proper enforcement actions**: they contact companies about suspected irregularities and ask them to take corrective action or face legal action.^{g)}

In 2014, a further step was made with coordinated positions in areas of common interest **requiring traders** concerned by widespread problematic practices to change them across the Union (for example, in the field of car rental or "in-app" offers in online games).^{m)}

The CPC is also a mechanism for developing **exchange of best practices**.^{j)} A 2016 Impact Assessment by the European Commission highlights that the Commission developed **interpretative guidelines** to further facilitate enforcement and compliance as EU consumer protection and policy expanded. The Commission has also reviewed the Operating Guidelines of the CPC network, which is aimed at providing enforcers a reference to the main principles, best practices and key documents related to the network's operation and the best use of the IT-tool. A new IT tool developed in 2014-2015 – the CPC **knowledge exchange platform** – serves to support collaborative work and to disseminate results to the wider CPC network.^{j)}

The CPC Network has the possibility of seeking cooperation with enforcement authorities in third countries, on the basis of international agreements. Potential candidates for such agreements are authorities in neighbouring countries, such as Switzerland, and those from countries with strong economic relations with the EU. No international agreements have been concluded yet, but the Network cooperates in other ways with its international partners, for instance the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) or Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).ⁿ⁾

Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)

The objective of the exchange of officials is to share best practices and knowledge among the different countries and to create a synergy at the European level in support of consumers' safety and protection. Exchanges include mainly 3 to 5 working day missions of one or a few participants in a host organisation but as of the 2016 programme, applicants are encouraged to implement other options, e.g. one-day workshops with a group of participants.ⁿ⁾

Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')

Consumer markets studies funded under Action 10 have focused on issues relevant for enforcement, see below for more details.

Networking and events

The Commission and the CPC network are organizing legal workshops to promote the common understanding of EU consumer law and emerging threats for consumers in key priority areas.^{j)}

The Consumer Policy Network (CPN) connects the European Commission with General-Directors of national administration of the EU Member States

and EEA competent for consumer policy. The Consumer Policy Network's mission is to facilitate exchange of information and good practice between consumer policymakers in the Member States, in particular by assisting the Commission in relation to the implementation of existing Union legislation, programmes and policies, and assisting the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives.^{w)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	282.7	197.8	182.8	1 300.0	1 963.3	2.1%
<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	70.0	70.0	78.0	100.0	318.0	0.3%
<i>Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	498.7	0	0	0	498.7	0.5%
<i>Networking and events</i>	995.0	17.0	32.0	120.0	268.5	0.3%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	137.0	91.0	185.0	565.0	978.0	1.0%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Protection Co-operation System (CPCS) - CPC IT Tool maintenance and technical support ▶ Workshops in connection with the modernisation of the functioning of the CPC Regulation and logistic support to CPC joint activities and capacity building ▶ Grants for joint actions to improve cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws
<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exchange of CPC officials
<i>Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provision of a consumer market study on misleading "free" trials and subscription traps for consumers in the European Union
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings of CPC authorities ▶ Meetings of the Consumer Policy Network Group
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ IT fiches for Sweeps and CPC notifications of competent authorities ▶ Collaborative websites of the CPC network

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Consumer Protection</i>	Key outputs of the CPC Network relate to the information flow in the CPC-
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*Cooperation (CPC)
Network*

System, the common IT-tool maintained by the European Commission and designed to provide a secure system for the exchange of information between competent authorities (CAs) in the Member States for the performance of their mutual assistance obligation under the CPC Regulation. This obligation implies three cooperation mechanisms:^{b)}

- ▶ *Information requests* when a competent authority is requested to provide information to establish whether an intra-Union infringement has occurred or whether there is a reasonable suspicion it may occur;
- ▶ *Requests for enforcement measures* when a competent authority is requested to take all necessary enforcement measures to bring about the cessation or prohibition of the intra-Union infringement without delay;
- ▶ *Alerts*, an information exchange without request, that takes place when a competent authority gets warned or suspects that intra-Union infringement is occurring (or may occur) and informs the competent authorities in other Member State(s) and the European Commission.

The number of information requests, enforcement request and alerts from 2014-2016 are presented in the following table. In addition to the number of enforcement requests made within the CPC Network, the percentage of such requests handled within 12 months is also indicated, used as an indicator in the Regulation, see Annex below.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Information requests made within the CPC Network^{d)}</i>	132	122	68	80
<i>Enforcement requests made within the CPC Network^{d)}</i>	130	138	194	198
<i>% of enforcement requests handled within 12 months</i>	53 ^{s)}	46% ^{x)}	26% ^{x)}	24% ^{x)}
<i>Alerts raised within the CPC Network^{d)}</i>	35	45	57	78

The CPC Network, under the coordination of the Commission, has also undertaken several enforcement actions. Every year the Commission consolidates the available market information to propose a topic for the screening of websites, prepares legal analysis and questionnaire to carry the screening phase, consolidates and publishes the results. Since 2007 more than 3,600 websites have been checked. These actions permitted for instance to correct about 700 websites in the tourism sector alone – this is the area with most cross-border complaints received by European Consumer Centres. An overview of Sweeps conducted since 2014 is provided in the following table.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>EU-wide screening of websites (Sweeps)</i>	Consumer electronics (437 websites checked) ^{e)}	Quality of information available to consumer online	Online comparison tools (mainly in the travel sector, 352)	Telecommunication and other digital services

		before making a purchase (743 websites checked) ^{d)}	websites checked) ^{d)}	
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Sweeps have increased the level of compliance among traders with EU law, as indicated by the following data:^{h),g)}

- 2014: 46% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep; 82% in compliance after sweep
- 2015: 37% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep, 88% in compliance after sweep
- 2016: 33% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep^{y)}

In addition, the CPC Network has concluded two coordinated enforcement actions on the in-app purchases in online games in 2014 and on the car rental in 2015. These two actions in fact concerned many traders (game developers selling through Google, Apple and Amazon which were the three parties in the action and local car rental companies, franchisees and brokers working with the five major car rental companies). The market share covered by CPC enforcement action, rather than a mere number of cases, counts most in the CPC context: for example, it was 65% of all private rentals in the EU in the CPC coordinated action on car rentals (i.e. one CPC case but with significant economic impacts).ⁱ⁾ A third coordinated enforcement action on contract terms of social media service providers was concluded in 2016. It was reported to have succeeded in obtaining an undertaking from some of the main actors in the social media sector – Facebook, Google and Twitter – to change part of their terms of services to make them customer-friendly and compliant with EU rules.^{z)}

CPC workshops are also held for specific subjects, typically six times per year. Members of these workshops are CPC contact points in Member States, though sometimes MS delegate specialists to attend.^{x)}

Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Number of exchanges (CPC)	37 ^{t)}	54 ^{t)}	72 ^{f)}	33 ^{t)}

Since 2009, Chafea has supported exchanges of enforcement officials in charge of consumer protection and product safety in the Member States and EEA/EFTA countries. The exchanges give the opportunity to participants to share experience and knowledge on the practical implementation of Directive 2001/95 EC (General Product Safety) and Regulation 2006/2004 (Consumer Protection Cooperation). With the aim of increasing the interest of the potential participants, in 2015, some concrete actions were undertaken to promote the exchange of officials programme. Chafea presented the programme and invited the relevant authorities during the Consumer Protection Cooperation and General Product Safety Directive Committees. In addition, a dedicated web page on the Chafea website was developed in order to facilitate the organisation of exchanges between officials. This page contains a Frequently Asked Questions and forum for interaction between the potential applicants and hosts.^{f)}

<i>Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	<p>► Consumer Market Study on Misleading "Free" Trials and Subscription Traps for Consumers in the European Union (2014). Scope: To prepare enforcement actions to reduce the exposure of consumers to the misleading marketing of online free trials. The study aimed to help the CPC network better understand the issues, format, and prevalence of these frequent misleading practices involving many traders. ^{q)}</p>
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VI. Potential wider effects of activities

<i>Consumer trust in retailers</i>	<p>The proportion of consumers agreeing that retailers in their country generally respect consumer law has increased from 59% in 2008 to 76% in 2016, with the largest increase occurring in the period between 2012 and 2016. These results can be compared with those from the 2017 Consumer Market Study for the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law, which found that 63% of consumers agreed that traders selling in shops in their own country complied with their obligations towards consumers, versus 47% who agreed that the same was true of traders selling in shops in other EU countries. ²⁾</p>
<i>Prevalence of problems and unfair practices encountered by consumers in the internal market</i>	<p>The percentage of consumers indicating that they have encountered at least one problem that they considered legitimate to complain about within the last 12 months has varied substantially over time, from a high of 25% in 2012 to a low of 14% in 2009, but decreased between 2012 and 2016 (25% in 2012, 22% in 2014 and 20% in 2016). This can be compared with the results of the EU's biannual Market Monitoring Survey, which found that the percentage of consumers reporting problems in the surveyed markets decreased slightly from 12% in 2010 to 10% in 2015. ²⁾</p> <p>The prevalence of misleading/deceptive and fraudulent advertisements or offers, as reported by consumers, remained generally stable over time between 2008 and 2012, except for a brief increase in 2009. In both cases, however, the prevalence of these UCPs did increase slightly between 2008 and 2012 (from 42% to 44% for misleading and deceptive advertisements or offers and from 27% to 32% for fraudulent advertisements or offers). ²⁾</p>

VII. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	<p>EC Impact Assessment (2016) based on external CPC Evaluation (2012) ¹⁾</p> <p>"In 2012, the European Commission contracted an external evaluation of the CPC Regulation. It concluded that the CPC Regulation had been beneficial for the competent authorities, consumers and traders, thereby confirming the appropriateness and relevance of its objectives. It however also pointed out that these objectives had not been fully achieved and that the CPC Regulation had not been exploited to its full potential. Specifically, the external evaluation found that there remained a number of practical and legal barriers to effective cooperation between CPC authorities, which ultimately undermined the efficiency and effectiveness of the CPC Regulation, most notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► differences between CPC competent authorities in terms of their capabilities, capacities and understanding of the CPC Regulation and the tools available; ► tendency among CPC competent authorities to prioritise domestic over cross-border cases; ► no formalised systems for recording, storing and exchanging
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	<p>intelligence, and organising cooperation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ insufficient minimum investigative and enforcement powers mandated by the CPC Regulation under Article 4(6); ▶ differences in national judicial systems and procedural rules causing delays and difficulties in cross-border cooperation; and ▶ lack of recognition of the notion of “EU relevant” infringements.”
Commission report on the functioning of the CPC Regulation (2014) ¹⁾ as summarised in EC Impact Assessment (2016) ¹⁾	<p>“The Commission report of 2014 on the functioning of the CPC Regulation stressed the need to increase the rapidity, agility, and consistency of CPC enforcement cooperation and consumer protection, in particular in relation to online purchases and to ensure adequate consumer protection in the digital sphere and across borders. In line with the principles of better regulation, the report also confirmed the commitment of the Commission to study the possible improvements to the CPC Regulation on the basis of a thorough impact assessment.”</p>
EC Impact Assessment (2016) based on external CPC Evaluation (2012) ¹⁾	<p>“The problems identified make the cross-border enforcement cooperation ineffective and inefficient, resulting in low deterrence in enforcement actions, legal uncertainty for traders, authorities and consumers and in duplication of enforcement efforts and cost. The identified shortcomings also partly contribute to the malfunctioning of consumer markets and to a persistently high non-compliance rate (other factors include lack of traders' awareness or understanding of key consumer rules, insufficient market transparency, impact of dominant traders, etc.).”</p>
Commission Proposal for the reform of the CPC Regulation ^{b)}	<p>“On 25 May 2016 the Commission put forward a proposal for the reform of the CPC Regulation. The reform addresses the need to better enforce EU consumer law, especially in the fast evolving digital sphere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enforcement authorities will get the powers they need to work together in a quicker and more efficient manner. Authorities will be able to request information from domain registrars and banks to detect the identity of the responsible trader, carry out mystery shopping to check geographical discrimination or after-sales conditions, and order the immediate take-down of websites that host scams. ▶ The Commission will be able to launch and coordinate common actions by consumer protection authorities in the Member States to address EU-wide problematic practices. A one-stop-shop approach to consumer law is proposed where enforcement authorities will notify the businesses concerned of the issues, asking them to change their bad practices. ▶ To detect market problems earlier, organisations with an interest in consumer protection such as consumer organisations and European Consumer Centers will be able to signal bad cross-border practices to enforcers and to the European Commission. ▶ Finally, the list of laws to which this modernised framework

applies will be updated to ensure that all the relevant consumer protection rules are included, especially in the transport and retail financial services sectors.

The Commission's proposal is under discussion in the European Parliament and Council.”

No previous assessment/evaluation available for other activities

VIII. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network

- | | |
|----------|--|
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Most of the interviewees considered that the CPC network was effective and that it had encouraged a good level of cooperation between Member States. However, several interviewees commented that the level of cooperation between Member States in the CPC network needed improvement, with some organisations complaining that the administrative burdens involved in persuading a national authority to deal with cross-border infringements were too high and some interviewees indicating that the CPC System could be improved; ▶ It was suggested that further cooperation could be put in place with other networks, for example with sector-specific stakeholders (e.g. energy regulators, financial supervisors) or competition authorities; ▶ Some interviewees also suggested that the potential synergies between the CPC network and ECC-net could be better exploited; ▶ Most of the interviewees considered sweeps and joint actions to be highly effective, although some interviewees noted that the implementation and results of sweeps were uneven in quality. One national authority also commented that these activities do not always take into account national enforcement traditions or priorities; ▶ Some consumer organisations and national authorities also mentioned a lack of resources available at the national level as a limiting factor. |
| EU-level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some EC officials noted that the level of achievement and results of the CPC Network was notable given the limited funding allocated to it under the Consumer Programme and the very different powers at play in the Member States; ▶ Sweeps are considered to be very helpful in various EC services and one official also indicated that they have showed constant improvement and led to better quality of information on the checked websites; ▶ One consumer organisation noted that a major problem is that a number of authorities in the CPC Network are under-financed and under-staffed and that it is a matter of national budget. In this regard one EC official added that there was a need to move from grants to contracts to better support Member States; ▶ One interviewee indicated that the knowledge management platform for the CPC Network was a positive tool, with considerable traffic and exchange of information. |

<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	National	► Exchanges of officials were generally assessed to be positive, although one national authority commented that the benefits of the program were not worth the costs.
<i>Networking and events</i>	National	► Interviewees also considered other enforcement-related networking and events to be highly effective.

IX. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N=71, 26, 73)

Note that for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the area of enforcement and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to Action 10.

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.3	3.6
<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	--	3.0*	--	3.9	--	3.9
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.7	4.1	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0

*Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

X. Conclusions

- The CPC Network has visibly consolidated and expanded its activity. The two main types of enforcement cooperation have taken shape more clearly: (i) the mutual assistance mechanism in the form of exchange of information and enforcement requests between national competent authorities, and (ii) coordinated actions in the form of sweeps and joint enforcement actions with greater coordinating role of the Commission;
- Still, the mutual assistance has not reached its full potential. The numbers of alerts and requests are still low compared to other networks, and the time for handling such requests is often long;
- In terms of coordinated actions, sweeps are evaluated as effective in both preventing consumer harm and in achieving exchange of knowledge and best practices among national enforcement bodies. The experience with joint action has so far has been largely positive, however, problems are identified in terms of capacity for coordinating the actions across Member States;
- Exchanges of enforcement officials were generally assessed to be positive. While the number of exchanges has increased substantially since the inception of this activity, there has been a certain decrease in the last year.

XI. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 c) Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004
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<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>f) Chafea 2016 Annual Activity report</p> <p>p) Chafea 2015 Annual Activity report</p> <p>q) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity report – Annexes</p> <p>s) Chafea 2014 Annual Activity report</p>
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	<p>h) European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Assessing the effectiveness of Regulation (EC) N° 2006/2004, COM(2016) 284 final</p> <p>i) European Commission, Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, SWD(2016) 164 final</p> <p>k) External Evaluation of the Consumer Protection Regulation, Final Report by the Consumer Policy Evaluation Consortium, 17 December 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/docs/cpc_regulation_inception_report_revised290212_en.pdf</p> <p>l) European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the functioning of Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, COM(2014) 439 final</p> <p>u) Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU, 2015.</p> <p>z) Flash Eurobarometer 397: Consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection</p>
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	<p>b) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/consumer_protection_cooperation_network/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>d) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016),</p> <p>e) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)</p> <p>g) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweeps/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>j) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016SC0164 (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>m) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/cross-border_enforcement_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>n) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/international_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>o) http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/consumers/exchange-of-officials-2016_en.html (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>r) Commission documents on e-enforcement academy participation (2017)</p> <p>t) Commission documents on ExO numbers of exchange 2014-2017</p> <p>v) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5334_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>w) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=861 (Accessed 2017-12-11)</p> <p>x) Correspondence with European Commission</p> <p>y) http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/document.cfm?doc_id=44016 (Accessed 2018-03-15)</p> <p>z) European Commission, Press release of 15 January 2018, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-761_en.htm</p>

ANNEX I: Indicators provided in the Regulation

Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network

Indicators provided in Regulation

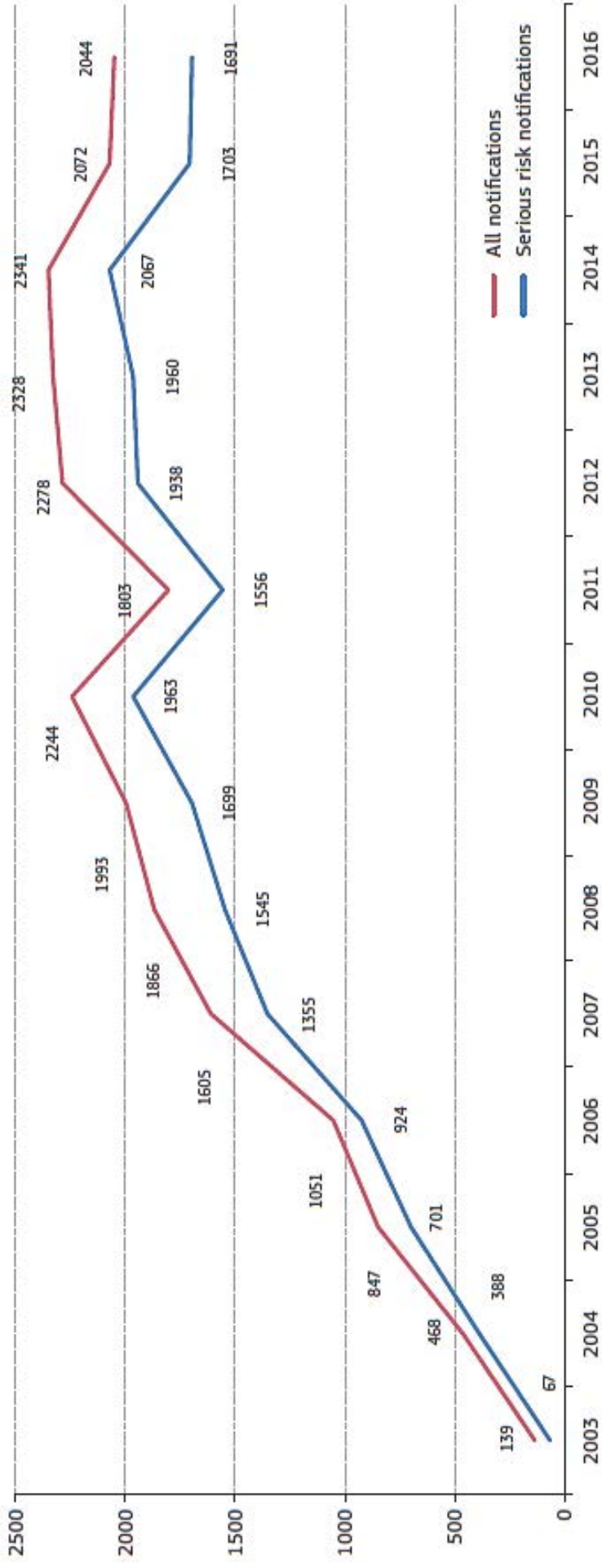
According to Article 3 (1) (d), the objective will be measured in particular through the level of information flow and the effectiveness of the cooperation within the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network. As specified in Annex II of the Regulation, relevant indicators are:

<u>Indicator:</u>	<u>Baseline provided in Regulation:</u>	<u>Target in Regulation (by 2020):</u>	<u>Interim status (2017)</u>
Number of requests to exchange information	129 (annualised average)	Increase of 30 %	80

<i>between CPC authorities</i>	<i>2007-10)</i>		
<i>Number of requests for enforcement measures between CPC authorities</i>	<i>142 (annualised average 2007-10)</i>	<i>Increase of 30%</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>Number of alerts within the CPC Network</i>	<i>63 (annualised average 2007-10)</i>	<i>Increase of 30%</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>% of enforcement requests handled within 12 months within the CPC Network</i>	<i>50% (reference period 2007-10)</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>% of information requests handled within 3 months within the CPC Network</i>	<i>33% (reference period 2007-10)</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>23%</i>

Annex II: Additional information

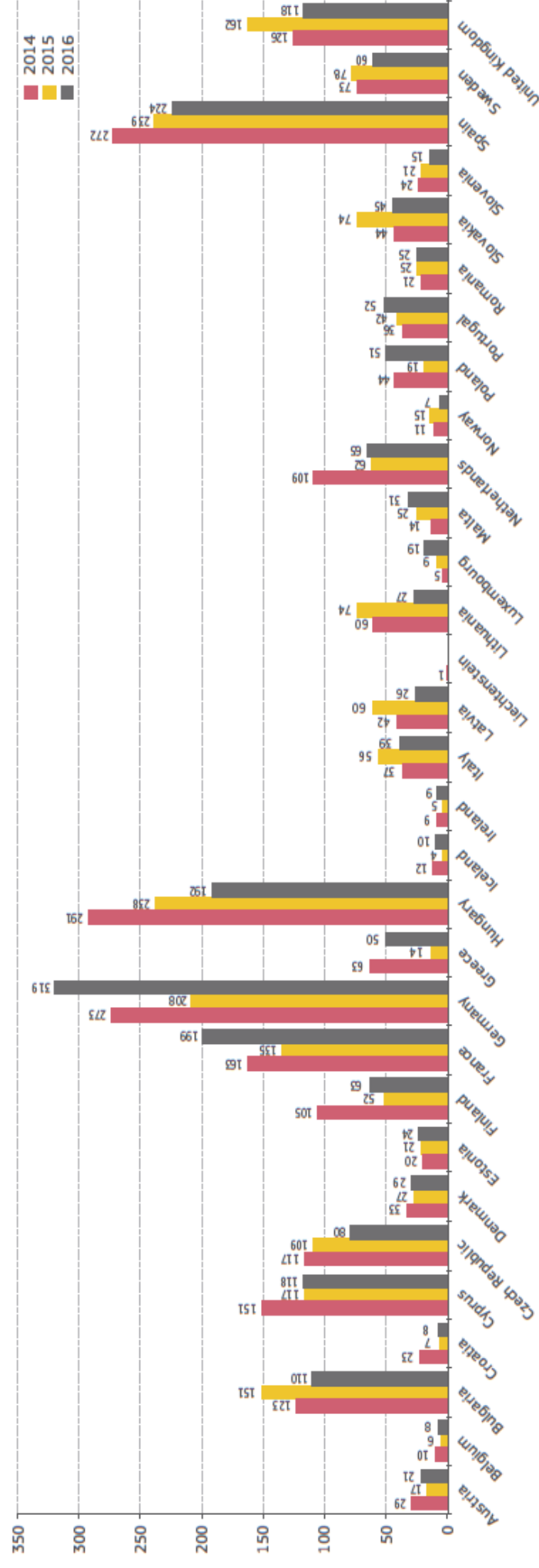
Figure 1: Overview of the total number of notifications and the number of notifications reporting a serious risk (2003-2016)



(²) 2013 data according to statistics retrieved in January 2017

Source: European Commission, Rapid Alert System for dangerous products: Working together to keep consumers safe – 2016 annual report (2017).

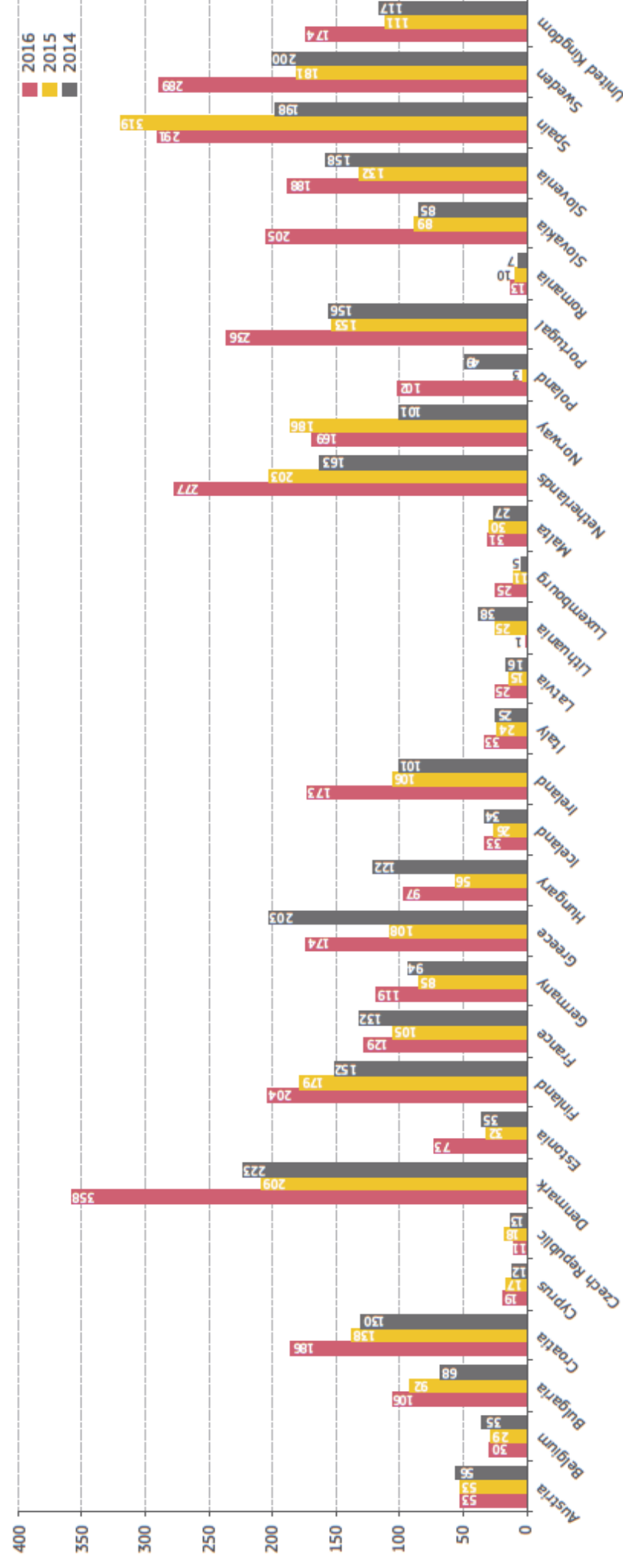
Figure 2: Total number of notifications from 2014 to 2016 by notifying country (absolute values)



⁽¹⁾ National authorities of the 28 EU Member States and the EEA/EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Source: European Commission, Rapid Alert System for dangerous products: Working together to keep consumers safe – 2016 annual report (2017).

Figure 3: Number of reactions from 2014 to 2016 by reacting country



Source: European Commission, Rapid Alert System for dangerous products: Working together to keep consumers safe – 2016 annual report (2017).

Case study: Digital Single Market

I. Description and relevant actions

Description and links to Consumer Programme

The Digital Single Market is a strategy of the European Commission to ensure access to online activities for individuals and businesses under conditions of fair competition, consumer and data protection, removing geo-blocking and copyright issues.^{d)} **A Digital Single Market (DSM) is one in which the free movement of persons, services and capital is ensured and where the individuals and businesses can seamlessly access and exercise online activities under conditions of fair competition, and a high level of consumer and personal data protection, irrespective of their nationality or place of residence.** The Digital Single Market Strategy is built on three pillars:

- ▶ Access: better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe;
- ▶ Environment: creating the right conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish;
- ▶ Economy & Society: maximising the growth potential of the digital economy^{o)}

The commitment to address issues of the digital market in the Consumer Programme is set out in paragraph 7 of the preamble to the Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20: “This Regulation takes into account the economic, social and technical environment and the concomitant emerging challenges. In particular, actions funded under the Programme will seek to address issues linked to globalisation, digitalisation, the growing level of complexity of decisions that consumers have to make, the need to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption, population ageing, social exclusion and the issue of vulnerable consumers.”^{a)}

Relevant actions

Defined in Article 4 in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation:

- ▶ **Action 4:** Building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers’ needs, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies;
- ▶ **Action 5:** Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise;
- ▶ **Action 7:** enhancing consumer education as a life-long process, with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers;
- ▶ **Action 8:** Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets;
- ▶ **Action 9:** facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers’ needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and

maintenance of relevant IT tools, and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States;

- ▶ **Action 10:** coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council

II. Description of activities

Consumer market studies (Action 4)

Consumer market studies explore various areas and issues that have impact on functioning of the market for consumers, such as choice, quality, safety, health, sustainability, prices and information, as well as consumer understanding, behaviour and decision making. These findings are then used as a basis to improve or change existing policies.^{p)}

The following **consumer market studies related to the DSM** have been carried out under the Consumer Programme:^{ak)}

- ▶ Study on the sharing economy;
- ▶ Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union;
- ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union;
- ▶ In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit; and
- ▶ Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market.

Consumer scoreboards and surveys (Action 4)

The Consumer Scoreboards monitor how the single market is performing for EU consumers and signal potential problems. Scoreboard findings are used by national policymakers and stakeholders to assess the impact of their activities over time and benchmark the situation against other Member States. Scoreboards also serve as a key reference for evaluations and impact assessments for policy development and orientations, including in the context of the European Semester.^{ar)}

Scoreboards provide an **evidence base for the DSM** by collecting data on market performance, rates of (cross-border) online shopping, consumer trust in (cross-border) online shopping, and other key DSM indicators.

Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) (Action 5)

BEUC (Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs) is an international non-profit making association based in Brussels and established by consumer organisations in EU countries and other European countries.

The objective of the organisation, as stated in its statutes is 'to bring together consumer organisations of the European Union and other European countries in order to promote, defend and represent the interests of European consumers in the elaboration and implementation of European Union policies with the European Union institutions and with other bodies.' BEUC's members include 43 independent national consumer organisations from 31 European countries (EU, EEA and applicant countries).^{y)}

BEUC **contributes to policy work on the DSM** by providing evidence for studies, partly by involving their member organisations, and through its management of **capacity building activities which include DSM-related components** (see below). 'Digital Rights' is also one of BEUC's current priority areas.^{f)}

<p><i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) (Action 5)</i></p>	<p>Consumer Champion is a capacity building programme for consumer professionals providing training, resources and networking opportunities. It was launched in 2014^{m)} and is designed for the management teams of consumer entities, consumer professionals, consumer experts and professional volunteers. The global objective is to provide capacity building activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of consumer organisations (including other actors and stakeholders in consumer policy).^{ag)}</p> <p>The Consumer Champion online platform includes a module on digital services which is available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish.^{al)}</p> <p>See the case study fact sheet on capacity-building activities (Action 5) for more details.</p>
<p><i>Consumer Classroom (Action 7)</i></p>	<p>Consumer Classroom is a community website for teachers bringing together an extensive library of consumer education resources from across the EU, along with interactive and collaborative tools to help prepare and share lessons with students and other teachers.</p> <p>The Consumer Classroom website, available in EU official languages, is dedicated to secondary school teachers of students aged 12-18 years old in all European Member States. The website's strength lies in the quality of its teacher resources and its collaborative tools such as the Lesson Builder, Forums and Live Chat.^{t)} The website includes sections on the DSM and internet safety as well as digital literacy.ⁱ⁾</p>
<p><i>Behavioural studies (Action 8)</i></p>	<p>Behavioural economics studies how people make choices using insights from psychology and economics. Understanding the reasons behind people's behaviour is essential for policy-making. Behavioural insights may be applied to any policy where individuals' response to it helps determine its effectiveness. Application of behavioural insights could help understand how consumers process information.^{u)}</p> <p>Behavioural studies have been commissioned by the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) to test policy options in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour.^{b)} The evidence from studies on consumer behaviour feeds into the policy development providing necessary data and ensures smart regulation and better reinforcement of consumer rights.^{j)}</p> <p>Two behavioural studies related to the DSM have been conducted under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020:^{ak)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media; ▶ Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms.
<p><i>Consumer Summit (Action 8)</i></p>	<p>The European Consumer Summit is an annual forum gathering key European and international policy-makers and stakeholders, including representatives from the European Parliament, governments and national authorities, consumer organisations, academia and business. Over the years, the European Consumer Summit has become a valuable occasion to increase awareness on consumer policy and a key tool to mainstream consumer interests in EU policies.^{v)}</p> <p>The 2014 edition of the Consumer Summit was entirely dedicated to the DSM, and the 2015 edition also included a number of DSM-related seminars.^{w),x)}</p>
<p><i>Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)</i></p>	<p>The European Commission committed to establish an EU-wide online dispute resolution platform under the 'Access' pillar of its Digital Single</p>

<i>platform (Action 9)</i>	<p>Market strategy in order to improve enforcement of consumer rules for online and digital purchases, with the overarching objective to break down barriers to cross-border online activity.^{d)}</p> <p>To enable easily accessible and efficient out-of-court redress for consumer disputes, including in disputes arising from cross-border e-commerce, a comprehensive legal framework on ADR Directive 2013/11/EU on Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumers and ODR Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumers^{c)} was adopted at EU level in 2013 and has been in place since 2016.</p> <p>The European Online Dispute Resolution platform is established under the ODR Regulation. The Online Dispute Resolution platform (hereinafter the "ODR platform") is an online platform that channels complaints to ADR bodies. The ODR platform was launched in January 2016 and opened to the public on 15 February 2016. The platform's aim is to facilitate the online resolution of disputes between consumers and traders over online transactions, in particular cross-border transactions.^{k)} See the case study fact sheet on ODR (Action 9) for more detail.</p>
<i>Communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR (Action 9)</i>	<p>Between 2015 and 2017 the Commission has carried out communication activities to promote the ODR platform amongst consumers and traders. In addition, the Commission organised two high-level events in 2017 with traders active in the top online retail sectors, the clothing and footwear and the airlines sector, to discuss the potential that ADR and ODR hold for increasing consumer confidence in online trading.^{k)}</p> <p>The ODR regulation provides that in order to ensure broad consumer awareness of the existence of the ODR platform, traders established within the Union engaging in online sales or service contracts should provide, on their websites, an electronic link to the ODR platform.^{p)} In order to check traders' compliance with this obligation, the Commission conducted a scraping of more than 20 000 web shops across the EU in 2017.^{k)} See the case study fact sheet on ODR (Action 9) for more detail.</p>
<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network (Action 10)</i>	<p>The European Commission committed to review the CPC Regulation under the 'Access' pillar of its Digital Single Market strategy in order to clarify and develop the powers of enforcement authorities and improve the coordination of their market monitoring activities and alert mechanisms to detect infringements faster, with the overarching objective to break down barriers to cross-border online activity.^{d)}</p> <p>The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network is a network of authorities responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries set up on basis of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004.^{ac)} The CPC Regulation provides a cooperation framework between national authorities of the EU and EEA countries so that their action can overcome national jurisdictional boundaries to incorporate the full dimension of the Single Market.^{ag)} The Regulation covers situations involving the collective interests of consumers and facilitates collaboration between authorities to put a stop to consumer regulation violations when the business and the consumer are located in different countries.^{ad)} The CPC Network is also regularly carrying out EU-wide screenings of websites ("sweeps") to check whether a given sector is complying with consumer rules.^{ae)} See the case study fact sheet on the CPC Network (Action 10) for more detail.</p>
<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-</i>	<p>In 2015 the Commission developed an initiative to support an "e-enforcement training academy", catering for both the CPC network and the</p>

<i>Enforcement Academy) (Action 10)</i>	product safety area where similar needs exist to strengthen enforcement of consumer legislation in online businesses-to-consumers trade. ^{ae)}
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p>The Consumer Safety Network (CSN) is a consultative experts group chaired by the European Commission and composed of national experts from the administrations of the EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The CSN has a sub-group on the safety of products sold online.^{an)}</p> <p>In order to improve compliance with the UCPD Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, in 2012 the European Commission launched the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) on Comparison Tools.^{at)} The mission of the MSG on Comparison Tools is to develop a set of principles to ensure the compliance and transparency of comparison tools (websites and apps) and to develop an action plan to ensure the uptake of these principles and monitor its implementation.^{am)}</p> <p>The European Consumer Consultative Group is the Commission's main forum to consult with national and European consumer organisations. It advises and guides the Commission in the creation of policies and activities affecting consumers. It also informs the Commission of developments in consumer policy in EU countries, and acts as a source of information on community action for other national organisations.^{w)} The ECCG has a sub-group on DSM.</p> <p>An Expert Group on ODR was established in 2013 in order to provide technical advice and expertise to the Commission in relation to the development of the European ODR Platform.^{z)} The Commission also established a network of ODR contact points to facilitate their cooperation and work and provide, in cooperation with Member States, appropriate training for ODR contact points.^{c)}</p> <p>The Commission and the CPC network are organizing legal workshops to promote the common understanding of EU consumer law and emerging threats for consumers in key priority areas.^{ad)}</p> <p>Support is provided for events concerning consumer policy of the Union which are organised by the Member State holding the Presidency of Council configurations on issues in line with established Union policy priorities.^{b)}</p> <p>Additionally, the European Commission supports stakeholder consultation groups, expert workshops and expert participation in meetings related to current legislative initiatives.^{ak)}</p>

IV. Specific relevant activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on the sharing economy ▶ Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union ▶ In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit ▶ Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provision of two online consumer surveys as support and evidence base to a Commission study: "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most." ▶ Survey: consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer

	<p>protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Survey: business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations representing consumer interests (Operating grants)
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) notably through: local training, e-learning courses, exchange of best practices and expertise
<i>Consumer Classroom</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer education interactive platform - hosting, on-going development, on-going research, website promotion, moderation and translation. ▶ Consumer education actions: Ongoing collection of teaching resources, partnership research, translation, SEO improvements and identification of future website improvements. ▶ Enhancing consumer education (Consumer Classroom) including the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education, the development of education measures and materials and promotional activities (specific service contracts based on a FWC or direct contracts).
<i>Behavioural studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media ▶ Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms
<i>Consumer Summit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisation of the European Consumer Summit
<i>ODR platform</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of the ODR platform ▶ Translation work for the ODR Platform by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union ▶ ODR Platform - Hosting ▶ Services related to the online dispute resolution platform
<i>Communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Platform: communication campaign targeting traders ▶ Christmas communication campaign on Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Branding ▶ Study on online dispute resolution: web scraping of EU traders website ▶ Ex-ante evaluation of the target audiences, channel and tools, and the optimal use of resources for a campaign in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution ▶ Intra-muros communication consultants for ODR
<i>CPC Network</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Protection Co-operation System (CPCS) - CPC IT Tool maintenance and technical support ▶ Workshops in connection with the modernisation of the functioning of the CPC Regulation and logistic support to CPC joint activities and capacity building ▶ Grants for joint actions to improve cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws

<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ E-Enforcement Training Academy for consumer legislation
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CSN sub-group on products sold online ▶ Ad hoc meeting of experts on the draft guidelines for market surveillance of products sold online ▶ Multi-stakeholder group on comparison tools ▶ ECCG sub-group on Digital Single Market ▶ ODR Technical Meetings ▶ ODR - Meetings of Contact Points ▶ Meetings of CPC authorities ▶ EU Presidency Events ▶ Workshop with experts on the Consumer Digital Competencies Framework
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Services in support of estimating macro-economic impacts of contract law barriers in the Digital Single Market

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	<p>Linkage to policy at the EU level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The study on the sharing economy is expected to generate policy options to deal with legal uncertainty and lack of transparency in P2P transactions, in particular via platforms. Early results were reflected in European Agenda on Collaborative Economy (May 2016)^{q)} ▶ The consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union is expected to provide evidence base for enforcement of existing competition and consumer protection rules and feed into the follow-up to the fitness check of EU consumer and marketing law (input to impact assessment)^{r)} ▶ The Digital Contracts Proposals are underpinned by evidence from the Commission studies on the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market (also feeding into assessment of macro-economic impact of removing contract law barriers)^{s)} ▶ The Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market provided key evidence for the Commission's proposed Regulation on addressing geo-blocking^{q)}
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<p>Linkage to policy at the EU level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Digital Contracts Proposals are underpinned by evidence from the Commission studies on the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market (also feeding into assessment of macro-economic impact of removing contract law barriers)^{s)}
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	<p>‘Digital Rights’ is one of BEUC’s key priority areas. The table below shows BEUC’s key outputs related specifically to its priority area of digital rights, e.g. position papers on digital rights topics only.</p>

	<u>2014</u> ^{h)}	<u>2015</u> ^{g)}	<u>2016</u> ^{f)}
<i>Number of</i>	9	24	27

<i>position papers</i>			
<i>Number of letters</i>	12	38	62
<i>Number of interviews given</i>	6	20	23
<i>Number of press releases</i>	8	10	22
<i>Number of media quotes</i>	235	1400+	2500+
<i>Number of conferences participated in</i>	32	55	88
<i>Number of working groups participated in</i>	1	4	2
<i>Number of meetings with Commission services</i>	N/A	30	29

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)

The Consumer Champion online platform currently consists of 6 modules, which include one module on digital services. These modules are each available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish.^{j)} The **digital services module** has been accessed 83 times between February 2015 and August 2017.^{al)}

Local courses are the most appreciated services within the programme. Participants noted that more local courses would be useful for their countries, for instance on **telecom, digital**, energy or banking issues, but also **e-commerce**, market surveillance, project development and funding.^{ap)} See the case study fact sheet on capacity-building activities (Action 5) for more details.

Consumer Classroom

As of the end of 2017, the Consumer Classroom website had 277 241 unique users, 25 048 registered users (out of which 6 721 were teachers), 223 ready-to-use teaching resources collected from across the EU, 544 lessons created by users, and had built 78 partnerships across Europe with consumer organisations, school associations and other interested NGOs.

From December 2014 to 14th December 2016, the Forum Moderator created 246 topics and 45 replies for a total of 291 posts. New topics created by moderation team have reached good results in terms of posts' views (40 533 views). These new topics were focused on different themes related to consumer education and teacher's needs.^{t)} These include, among others:

- ▶ **Digital Single Market;** and
- ▶ **Internet safety, cyberbullying and media literacy.**

Behavioural studies

- ▶ **The study on advertising market practices in online social media** is expected to support the enforcement of consumer protection rules in the online environment.^{r)}
- ▶ **The study on the transparency of online platforms** is expected to inform policy options to enhance consumer protection in the online environment

(as follow-up to REFIT of consumer and marketing law).^{r)}

<i>Consumer Summit</i>	<p>The 2014 edition of the Consumer Summit was held on 1-2 April 2014 and dedicated to “Ensuring that consumers reap the benefits of the digital economy”. It brought together some 400 participants representing the European Parliament, the Commission, national governments, consumer and business associations, enforcement and regulatory authorities, the European Consumer Centres and the European Data Protection Supervisor.^{w)}</p> <p>Targeted workshops at the 2014 Consumer Summit were held on the following topics:^{w)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connectivity; ▶ EU rights for online consumers; ▶ Online payments; ▶ Digital literacy; ▶ Trust online; ▶ New and fairer deals. <p>The 2015 edition of the Consumer Summit was dedicated to “Shaping the consumer policy of the future” and held on 1-2 June 2015 in Brussels. The focus was on the most topical consumer policy issues which link with the political priorities of the European Commission led by President Juncker.^{v)}</p> <p>The 2015 Consumer Summit included the following DSM-related seminars:^{x)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Information in the Digital Single Market; ▶ Effective Enforcement in the Digital Environment;
<i>ODR platform</i>	<p>Since the launch of the platform on 15 February 2016, over 55 000 consumer complaints have been registered,^{aq)} of which more than a third concerned cross-border purchases within the EU.^{k)} See the case study fact sheet on ODR (Action 9) for more detail on outputs and results.</p>
<i>Communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR</i>	<p>The communication activities around ODR in 2016 were concentrated around 2 separate social media campaigns focused on bringing attention to the ODR Platform.^{e)} Additionally, in 2017, the Commission contracted a web-scraping study of EU traders’ websites^{aa)} to examine the current state of compliance of online traders in the EU with the ODR Regulation. See the case study fact sheet on ODR (Action 9) for more detail on outputs and results.</p>
<i>CPC Network</i>	<p>Key outputs of the CPC Network relate to the information flow in the CPC-System, the common IT-tool maintained by the European Commission and designed to provide a secure system for the exchange of information between competent authorities (CAs) in the Member States. In 2017, there were 80 information requests, 198 enforcement requests, and 78 alerts raised within the CPC Network.^{ac)}</p> <p>The CPC Network, under the coordination of the Commission, has also undertaken several enforcement actions known as “sweeps”. Sweeps were carried out on consumer electronics in 2014, the quality of information available to the consumer online before making a purchase in 2015, online comparison tools in 2016, and telecommunication and other digital services in 2017.^{af),ah),ai)}</p> <p>See the case study fact sheet on the CPC Network (Action 10) for more detail on outputs and results.</p>
<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-</i>	<p>The following resources/activities delivered during the first year of the E-Enforcement Academy are listed below:</p>

<i>Enforcement Academy)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 112 blog posts ▶ 4 newsletters ▶ 6 wiki-pages ▶ 3 E-Enforcement tools reports ▶ 6 knowledge sharing webinars ▶ 8 basic/intermediate coaching webinars ▶ 4 advanced trainee webinars ▶ Assistance to basic-level trainees forum ▶ 3 Master class meetings in Brussels ▶ Organisation of 2 CPC e-enforcement group workshops in Brussels ▶ 5 e-learning modules ▶ 1 promotion video and 4 additional online tutorials <p>Total participation at on-site and virtual events (webinars) in 2017 amounted to 120 for CPC participants.^{aj)}</p>
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p>The CSN sub-group on the safety of products sold online met four times in 2014 and 2015.^{an)}</p> <p>The Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools presented a report with its main findings and recommendations at the 2013 European Consumer Summit and a dedicated Commission study commissioned by the group was published in 2015 on Comparison Tools and Third-Party Verification Schemes. It concluded its work in 2016 with agreed Key Principles for Comparison Tools. These Principles have fed into the UCPD Guidanceⁿ⁾ and have also been referenced in the Communication on Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market also published on 25 May 2016.^{ao)}</p> <p>The ECCG sub-group on DSM met three times in 2015.^{ak)}</p> <p>The Expert Group (technical group) on ODR held four meetings in 2014, in addition to a hands-on exercise with stakeholders to test the platform in November 2014.^{z)} The ODR contact points have met twice a year since 2015.^{ab)}</p> <p>The following consumer events were carried out during the Programme period by the Member States holding the Presidency of the Council.^{ak)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Italy: “EU Cooperation for the Enforcement of Consumer Legislation”, 7-8 July 2014 ▶ Latvia: “Future Priorities of Consumer Policy in the Digital Era”, April 2015 ▶ Luxembourg: “Consumer and Competition Day”, 21 Sept. 2015 ▶ Netherlands: “European Consumer and Competition Day”, 18 April 2016 ▶ Malta: “Consumer and Competition Day”, 23-24 April 2016 ▶ Estonia: “Consumer and Competition Day: Paradigm shift in consumer and competition environments – embracing the new reality”, 20 Sept. 2017

VI. Key themes from stakeholder interviews

<i>General</i>	<table> <tr> <td>EU-level</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official considered that product safety was linked with the DSM regarding e-commerce (especially with third countries) and the Internet of Things; ▶ An EC official commented that the DSM was relevant for social inclusion and convergence objectives, considering the emerging ‘digital divide’. </td></tr> <tr> <td>National</td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered the DSM to be very relevant for consumer policy and a key emerging priority; </td></tr> </table>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official considered that product safety was linked with the DSM regarding e-commerce (especially with third countries) and the Internet of Things; ▶ An EC official commented that the DSM was relevant for social inclusion and convergence objectives, considering the emerging ‘digital divide’. 	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered the DSM to be very relevant for consumer policy and a key emerging priority;
EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official considered that product safety was linked with the DSM regarding e-commerce (especially with third countries) and the Internet of Things; ▶ An EC official commented that the DSM was relevant for social inclusion and convergence objectives, considering the emerging ‘digital divide’. 				
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered the DSM to be very relevant for consumer policy and a key emerging priority; 				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many interviewees considered that the new Consumer Programme did a much better job of integrating DSM-related concerns than the previous program, although some interviewees considered that the DSM was still in its infancy and that policy initiatives were lagging behind the market; ▶ The geo-blocking study and regulation was cited by numerous interviewees as an important step forward for the DSM; ▶ A number of interviewees emphasised the need for further regulation on online platforms; ▶ Some interviewees considered that there was a need to better integrate product safety concerns into the DSM, particularly regarding the Internet of Things.
<i>Evidence base (Consumer market studies, behavioural studies, and consumer scoreboards/surveys)</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official considered that the evidence base was important for e-commerce as a cross-cutting issue, and stated that data collected under the Consumer Programme was often used in the preparation of DSM-related policy initiatives; ▶ Another EC official cited the geo-blocking study and study on obstacles to the DSM as studies that had significantly influenced DSM policy.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered the evidence base to be a useful source of data for policymaking; ▶ A number of interviewees mentioned the consumer market studies on the sharing economy and geo-blocking and the behavioural study on online platforms as examples of useful market studies that have fed into national policy initiatives. ▶ A national business association considered that there should be more behavioural studies focused on e-commerce.
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No specific comments related to DSM.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two interviewees commented that BEUC had played an important role in advocating for DSM policies such as the geo-blocking regulation and the portability regulation.
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No specific comments related to DSM.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No specific comments related to DSM.
<i>Consumer education resources</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official commented that consumer education was relevant for DSM with respect to digital skills development and improving trust in e-commerce.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An interviewee stated that they saw a need for more digital skills education for consumers at the EU level, citing the “DigiComp for Consumers” initiative as an example.
<i>ODR platform and communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EC officials generally considered the ODR platform to be a good concept but provided different opinions on the effectiveness of the platform, with some stating that it was too early to assess the platform’s results; ▶ A couple of EC officials pointed out that the ODR platform played a role in bringing together consumers and traders, even if problems were then resolved outside the platform; ▶ An EC official considered that there was a good level of visibility of links to the ODR platform on traders’ websites. ▶ An EU-level consumer organisation commented that there had been problems with the ODR platform early on but that it was

		<p>too early to assess the platform's effectiveness;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EU-level business association considered the ODR platform to be ineffective and redundant as many e-commerce traders operate their own online complaints systems.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered that the ODR platform was underutilised; ▶ Several interviewees considered that the idea had good potential and could be more effective over time as consumers become more aware of it; ▶ Some interviewees pointed out issues with the functioning of the platform that limited its effectiveness (e.g. automatic closing of complaints within 30 days); ▶ A number of interviewees cited the lack of (voluntary) participation from traders as a serious problem that prevented the ODR platform from being effective; ▶ While some interviewees commented that communication activities on ODR had been effective in their country, most considered that the ODR platform had a low level of awareness among consumers.
<i>CPC Network</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EC official commented that the CPC Network was very relevant for DSM and noted sweeps as a particularly helpful activity in this regard.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Most interviewees considered that the CPC network was effective and that it had encouraged a good level of cooperation between Member States; ▶ Interviewees generally considered sweeps to be very effective enforcement tools for e-commerce.
<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EU organisation commented that participants seemed to be very happy with the training.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally assessed training activities (e.g. the e-Enforcement Academy) to be effective; ▶ Some interviewees stated that training activities should be more frequent and conducted in-person; ▶ A few interviewees considered that the e-Enforcement Academy should include more advanced training courses.
<i>Networking and events, including the Consumer Summit</i>	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No specific comments related to DSM.
	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An interviewee from a national authority commented that the CPC workshops and events had been helpful in addressing challenges related to the DSM; ▶ An interviewee from an ECC commented that they had participated in a workshop on platform liability at the 2015 Consumer Summit; ▶ An interviewee from an ECC indicated that they found the Presidency Event hosted by Estonia to be a useful opportunity to get more information on the DSM.

VII. Stakeholder assessments of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations / developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action

and improving access to simple and low-cost redress / supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=76,77,51,36,39,53,85,78,71,71,58,26,26)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Consumer market studies	3.8	3.5	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.8
Consumer scoreboards and surveys	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)	3.5	4.5	4.2	3.6	4.0	4.2
Consumer Champion	3.0	4.2	3.9	3.7	--	3.9
Consumer Classroom	--	3.6	3.1	3.2	--	3.3
Behavioural studies	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.8	3.3
Consumer Summit	3.4	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.0	3.2
ODR platform	2.7	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0
Communication campaigns and actions on ADR/ODR	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3
CPC Network	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.3	3.6
Sweeps	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.4	3.7
Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)	--	3.0	--	3.9	--	3.9
Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)	--	--	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

Question: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=115)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4

VIII. Conclusions

- ▶ The available evidence shows that there has been considerable use of the evidence base (consumer market studies, behavioural studies, and Consumer Scoreboards) for DSM policy initiatives, with interviewees citing the studies on geo-blocking and online platforms as particularly useful sources;
- ▶ The DSM forms one of the priorities in the work of BEUC. It has provided consumer-side policies and evidence on main issues pertaining to the DSM, including pro-active advocacy leading to the new (anti) geo-blocking regulation, as well as positions and advocacy on copyright, data protection, digital content, etc.;
- ▶ There is not enough evidence available to assess the effectiveness of consumer education resources related to the DSM;
- ▶ Evidence on the early results of the ODR platform suggests that it has been less effective in reaching its aim to improve access to ADR in e-commerce disputes, both due to the lack of traders willingness to engage in ADR and some procedural and legal limitations, but may have provided an incentive for traders to respond to complaints outside the platform. See the case study fact sheet on ODR for more details.
- ▶ Evidence on the CPC network and related sweeps and joint actions show that these are essential enforcement tools in the e-commerce context. See the case study fact sheet on the CPC network for more details.
- ▶ Overall, stakeholders considered that the effectiveness of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 for addressing challenges for consumers related to the DSM had significantly improved over the previous Programme. In our interviewees, effectiveness of the Consumer Programme was assessed as most improved regarding challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market, with an average assessment of 3.4 for the 2014-2020 Programme compared to 2.9 for the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme. Interviewees cited product safety, online platforms, and digital skills development in particular as areas where more could be done to enhance consumer protection in the DSM.

IX. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>b) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme</p> <p>c) Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumers ('ODR Regulation')</p> <p>d) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, COM(2015) 192 final</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>e) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>f) BEUC 2016 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>g) BEUC 2015 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>h) BEUC 2014 Annual Activity Report</p>
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	<p>i) Consumer Classroom Consortium, Take-over, hosting, web maintenance and incident management, moderation and web updates of the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education - Final & SLA Implementation Report (2017)</p> <p>j) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>k) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the European Online Dispute Resolution platform established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes (2017)</p> <p>l) European Commission, Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, SWD(2016) 164 final</p> <p>m) Final report, Request for specific services 2014 85 01 – under the framework contract EAH/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAA (2015)</p> <p>n) European Commission, Staff Working Document, Guidance on the implementation/application of Directive 2005/29/EC (UCPD), SWD/2016/0163 final (2016)</p>

*Other documents/
websites*

- o) <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/shaping-digital-single-market>
- p) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/market_studies/index_en.htm
- q) Activity report 18th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) , Thursday 29th September 2016
- r) Activity report 19th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th June 2017
- s) Activity report 17th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Wednesday 17th February 2016
- t) <https://www.consumerclassroom.eu/>
- u) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/behavioural_research/index_en.htm
- v) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/european-consumer-summit/2015/index_en.htm
- w) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-353_en.htm
- x) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/european-consumer-summit/2015/files/european-consumer-summit_general_02a.pdf
- y) <http://www.beuc.eu/> (Accessed 2017-12-19)
- z) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2878&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1> (Expert Group Register Entry on ODR Expert Group)
- aa) Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites - Final report (2017)
- ab) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)
- ac) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/consumer_protection_cooperation_network/index_en.htm
- ad) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016SC0164>
- ae) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/cross-border_enforcement_cooperation/index_en.htm
- af) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweeps/index_en.htm
- ag) <http://www.consumerchampion.eu/> (Accessed 2017-12-19)
- ah) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016)
- ai) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)
- aj) Commission documents on e-enforcement academy participation (2017)
- ak) Annual monitoring tables 2014-2017, DG JUST (2018)
- al) Consumer Champion website report (July-August 2017)
- am) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3325> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- an) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=935> (Accessed 2018-01-19)
- ao) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_rights/unfair-trade/comparison-tools/ (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- ap) Draft final report, Request for specific services 2015 85 03 "Organisation of local training courses, translation of e-learning modules, website promotion, moderation, hosting and maintenance" under the framework contract EAH/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFEA (2017)
- aq) Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), CEF Digital monitoring dashboard – Online Dispute Resolution (<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Monitoring+dashboard>) (Accessed 2018-03-16)
- ar) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-15)

Case study: Energy consumers and sustainable consumption

I. Description and relevant actions

Description and links to Consumer Programme

On 15 July 2015, the European Commission adopted a Communication on Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers.^{c),d)} The New Deal for Energy Consumers] is one of several consumer-related actions envisaged in the Energy Union strategy, and is designed to inform future actions in this field, including proposed legislation. The New Deal for Energy Consumers] highlights the need for greater transparency around energy prices. It] emphasises the importance of easy switching between energy suppliers and calls for the phasing out of regulated retail prices. The New Deal for Energy Consumers also] calls for new measures to address vulnerable consumers and energy poverty in the EU.^{d)}

In December 2015,] the European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Package including the EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy] to help European businesses and consumers to make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way. The proposals cover the full lifecycle: from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials. The proposed actions are intended to] contribute to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, and bring benefits for both the environment and the economy.^{j)}

The commitment to address issues of vulnerable consumers and sustainable consumption in the Consumer Programme is set out in] paragraph 7 of the preamble to the Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20: "This Regulation takes into account the economic, social and technical environment and the concomitant emerging challenges. In particular, actions funded under the Programme will seek to address issues linked to globalisation, digitalisation, the growing level of complexity of decisions that consumers have to make, the need to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption, population ageing, social exclusion and the issue of vulnerable consumers."^{a)}

Relevant actions

Defined in Article 4 in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation:

- ▶ **Action 4:** Building and improving access to the **evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs**, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies;
- ▶ **Action 5:** Support through **financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level**, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise;
- ▶ **Action 6:** Enhancing the **transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data**, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services;
- ▶ **Action 7:** **Enhancing consumer education** as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers;
- ▶ **Action 8:** Preparation by the Commission of **consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives**, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring

the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets.

II. Description of activities

<i>Consumer market studies (Action 4)</i>	<p>Consumer] market studies explore various areas and issues that have impact on functioning of the market for consumers, such as choice, quality, safety, health, sustainability, prices and information, as well as consumer understanding, behaviour and decision making. These findings are then used as a basis to improve or change existing policies.^{k)}</p> <p>The following consumer market studies related to energy and sustainable consumption have been carried out under the Consumer Programme:ⁱ⁾</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provision of a Consumer Study on Precontractual Information and Billing on the Energy Market - Improved Clarity & Comparability; ▶ Study on Residential Prosumers in the European Energy Union.
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) (Action 5)</i>	<p>BEUC (Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs) is an international non-profit making association based in Brussels and established by consumer organisations in EU countries and other European countries.</p> <p>The objective of the organisation, as stated in its statutes is ‘to bring together consumer organisations of the European Union and other European countries in order to promote, defend and represent the interests of European consumers in the elaboration and implementation of European Union policies with the European Union institutions and with other bodies.’ BEUC’s members include 43 independent national consumer organisations from 31 European countries (EU, EEA and applicant countries).^{y)}</p> <p>BEUC contributes to policy work on energy and sustainable consumption by providing evidence for studies, partly by involving their member organisations, and through its management of capacity building activities which include energy and sustainable consumption-related components (see below). It has notably been involved in the policy development of the EU Ecolabel as well as the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling measures. ‘Sustainability’ is also one of BEUC’s current five priority areas.^{y)}</p>
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Action 5)</i>	<p>Consumer Champion is a capacity building programme for consumer professionals providing training, resources and networking opportunities. It was launched in 2014^{f)} and is designed] for the management teams of consumer entities, consumer professionals, consumer experts and professional volunteers.^{o)} The global objective is to provide capacity building activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of consumer organisations (including other actors and stakeholders in consumer policy). It also intends to promote exchange of practices between Consumer Professionals.</p> <p>Building on the previous “TRACE” programme (see the fact sheet for Action 5 under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013), Consumer Champion is divided into 5 main activities complementing each other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ web networking platform; ▶ e-learning courses; ▶ class teaching courses; ▶ local training; and ▶ expert courses.^{o)} <p>The Consumer Champion online platform includes a module on energy that</p>

	is] available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish. ^{m)}
<i>EU consumer information and awareness campaigns (Action 6)</i>	<p>A key part of the EU consumer rights information effort has focused on the Member States that have joined the EU recently. This type of campaign has been carried out in all new Member States that joined the EU on or after 1 May 2004.^{b)} Awareness-raising campaigns have been developed and launched on a country by country basis, introducing citizens to their newly acquired rights. This has been done through multi-media advertising and public and media relations activities, including social media.^{s)}</p> <p>EU information/awareness raising campaigns have also been carried out for] new consumer rights that are subject to harmonised rules, or sectors with significant cross-border trade or high consumer detriment.^{s)}</p> <p>An awareness raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy-poor households is carried out under Action 6 of the Consumer Programme. An ex-ante evaluation for this campaign was also carried out in 2016.^{j)}</p>
<i>EU consumer education resources (Action 7)</i>	<p>Consumer Classroom is a community website for teachers bringing together an extensive library of consumer education resources from across the EU, along with interactive and collaborative tools to help prepare and share lessons with students and other teachers.</p> <p>The Consumer Classroom website, available in EU official languages, is dedicated to secondary school teachers of students aged 12-18 years old in all European Member States. The website's strength lies in the quality of its teacher resources and its collaborative tools such as the Lesson Builder, Forums and Live Chat.^{t)} The website includes sections on sustainable consumption and energy.^{h)}</p>
<i>Behavioural studies (Action 8)</i>	<p>Behavioural economics studies how people make choices using insights from psychology and economics. Understanding the reasons behind people's behaviour is essential for policy-making. Behavioural insights may be applied to any policy where individuals' response to it helps determine its effectiveness. Application of behavioural insights could help understand how consumers process information.^{ae)}</p> <p>In 2012, the EC's Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) and the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) set up a framework contract to facilitate the outsourcing of behavioural studies in support of EU policy. To date, multiple] behavioural studies have been, or are being, conducted under this framework contract. The Joint Research Centre [JRC, the EC's in-house science service], in turn, has provided scientific support to the design and implementation of these studies.^{ah)}</p> <p>Behavioural studies have been commissioned by the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) to test policy options in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour.^{af)} The evidence from studies on consumer behaviour feeds into the policy development providing necessary data and ensures smart regulation and better reinforcement of consumer rights.^{ag)}</p> <p>In 2016, the European Commission launched a call for a behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy.ⁱ⁾</p>
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum (Action 8)</i>	<p>The European Commission established the Citizens' Energy Forum in 2007. The Forum meets on an annual basis in London and is organised with the support of Ofgem, the UK regulatory authority for electricity and gas. The overall aim of the Forum is to explore consumers' perspective and role in a</p>

competitive, 'smart', energy-efficient and fair energy retail market.^{y)}

The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group and Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors were also established within the framework of the Citizens' Energy Forum. See below for the description of these activities.

*Networking and events
(Actions 5 and 8)*

The **European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG)** is the Commission's main forum to consult with national and European consumer organisations. Since its establishment in 1973, the ECCG assists the Commission by providing expert advice on EU consumer related issues, issuing opinions and participating in different fora.^{p)} The ECCG has a **sub-group on energy**.ⁱ⁾

At the 2012 **Citizens' Energy Forum**, it was clearly stated that the consumer should have a central role in energy retail markets, and that the 'vulnerable customer concept' be urgently defined by Member States. The **Vulnerable Consumer Working Group (VCWG)** was established by DG Energy (ENER) in close collaboration with DG Health and Consumers (SANCO) to address these needs, feed the discussions in the Citizens' Energy Forum, and thus support the implementation of EU energy legislation.^{w),x)}

The **Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors** was established at the Sixth Citizens' Energy Forum in 2013. Its members were selected among existing Commission Expert Groups and networks (ECCG, CPC, CPN) as well as via a call for interest during the Citizens' Energy Forum. Its mission is to:^{z)}

- ▶ Assess the implementation and enforcement of consumer rights in the energy sector;
- ▶ Review the existing legislative framework to assess whether the conditions are in place for energy consumers to participate actively in energy markets and for the energy industry and network to be able to provide them with the necessary services;
- ▶ Analyse new forms of active energy usership by which consumers, individually and collectively, seek better deals and consume in a sustainable manner; and
- ▶ Highlight good (national) practices and produce recommendations.

In order to improve compliance with the UCPD Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, in 2012 the European Commission launched two multi-stakeholder dialogue processes bringing together industry representatives, NGOs and national authorities: the **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims** and the **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools**.^{ai)}

- ▶ The mission of the Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims is to build a better understanding of the use of environmental claims in different markets and to assess the scope of the problem of misleading environmental claims;^{aa)}
- ▶ The mission of the Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools is to develop a set of principles to ensure the compliance and transparency of comparison tools (websites and apps) and to develop an action plan to ensure the uptake of these principles and monitor its implementation.^{ab)}

Additionally, the European Commission supports stakeholder consultation groups, expert workshops and expert participation in meetings related to current legislative initiatives.ⁱ⁾

IV. Specific relevant activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

Consumer market studies ▶ Provision of a Consumer Study on Precontractual Information and Billing on

	the Energy Market - Improved Clarity & Comparability
	▶ Study on Residential Prosumers in the European Energy Union
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	▶ Financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations representing consumer interests (Operating grants)
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations</i>	▶ Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) notably through: local training, e-learning courses, exchange of best practices and expertise
<i>EU consumer information and awareness campaigns</i>	▶ Awareness Raising on Energy Efficiency - Communication Campaign targeting energy poor households ▶ Ex-Ante Evaluation for awareness raising campaign on switching and energy efficiency
<i>EU consumer education resources</i>	▶ Enhancing consumer education (Consumer Classroom) including the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education, the development of education measures and materials and promotional activities
<i>Behavioural studies</i>	▶ Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	▶ Organisation of the London Citizens' Energy Forum
<i>Networking and events</i>	▶ ECCG sub-group on energy ▶ Meetings of the Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors ▶ Meetings of the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group (co-organised with DG ENER) ▶ Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims ▶ Support for expert participation in the meetings of the Steering Group for Vulnerability Study

V. Outputs and results of the relevant activities

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	▶ The study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union will contribute to the adoption of the Clean energy for all Europeans package. ¹⁾ ▶ Results of the consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability should support the inter-institutional negotiations of the Clean Energy for all Europeans package and later on Member States in transposing and implementing the new provisions, in particular as regards the recast Electricity Directive. ¹⁾
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	Energy is one of BEUC's thematic priorities. The table below shows BEUC's key outputs related specifically to energy , e.g. position papers on energy topics only.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<i>Number of position papers</i>	3	6	12
<i>Number of letters</i>	5	5	17
<i>Number of</i>	0	1	2

<i>interviews given</i>			
<i>Number of press releases</i>	1	4	1
<i>Number of media quotes</i>	6	--	--
<i>Number of conferences participated in</i>	14	27	36
<i>Number of working groups participated in</i>	2	3	4
<i>Number of meetings with Commission services</i>	N/A	23	23

‘Sustainability’ is one of BEUC’s key priority areas. The table below shows BEUC’s key outputs **related specifically to its priority area of sustainability**, e.g. position papers on sustainability topics only.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<i>Number of position papers</i>	16	28	29
<i>Number of letters</i>	96	142	135
<i>Number of interviews given</i>	3	15	10
<i>Number of press releases</i>	2	12	3
<i>Number of media quotes</i>	99	800+	464
<i>Number of conferences participated in</i>	12	8	13
<i>Number of working groups participated in</i>	18	23	10
<i>Number of meetings with Commission services</i>	N/A	18	33

Capacity building for consumer organisations

Including non-eligible countries, Consumer Champion has seen 35,536 website visitors since the launch of the platform, with 220 news items published, 53 blogs written including 41 from users, and 126 events published. 542 e-learners are using the online modules.^{q)}

The Consumer Champion online platform currently consists of 6 modules, which include one module on energy. These modules are each available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish.^{m)} The energy module has been accessed 98 times between February 2015 and

	<p>August 2017 and is the second-most accessed module on the platform after Consumer Law.^{m)}</p> <p>Local courses are the most appreciated services within the programme. Participants noted that more local courses would be useful for their countries, for instance on telecom, digital, energy or banking issues, but also e-commerce, market surveillance, project development and funding.ⁿ⁾</p>
<i>EU consumer information and awareness campaigns</i>	<p>An awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy-poor households is carried out during the Programme period.ⁱ⁾ As the campaign is ongoing, outputs and results of the campaign are not yet available.</p>
<i>EU consumer education resources</i>	<p>As of the end of 2017, the Consumer Classroom website had 277 241 unique users, 25 048 registered users (out of which 6 721 were teachers), 223 ready-to-use teaching resources collected from across the EU, 544 lessons created by users, and had built 78 partnerships across Europe with consumer organisations, school associations and other interested NGOs.</p> <p>From December 2014 to 14th December 2016, the Forum Moderator created 246 topics and 45 replies for a total of 291 posts. New topics created by moderation team have reached good results in terms of posts' views (40 533 views). These new topics were focused on different themes related to consumer education and teacher's needs.^{h)} These include, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Climate change, energy and environment; and ▶ Circular economy and sustainable consumption.
<i>Behavioural studies</i>	<p><i>Information on outputs and results of activities relating to the "evidence base" more generally are presented in the fact sheet for Action 4 as well as the cross-cutting fact sheet on the evidence base.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The study on consumers engagement in the circular economy is expected to contribute to the implementation of the Action plan on the Circular Economy (including possible future work on Ecodesign). It will contribute to activities by different Commission services (e.g. DG ENV, GROW, ENER, JRC).^{l)}
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	<p>The Seventh Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 12-13 March 2015. The seventh edition of the Forum attracted a record number of stakeholders and discussed a wide range of issues including energy consumer empowerment, roll-out of smart meters, self-generation, consumer vulnerability and energy poverty.^{y)}</p> <p>The Eighth Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 23-24 February 2016. Key topics included a socially responsible and inclusive Energy Union, market design in the retail sector, empowering consumers through accessible information, smart and innovative services for consumers/prosumers, and the roles of DSOs distribution system operators in facilitating consumers' market participation.^{y)}</p> <p>The Ninth Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 30-31 May 2017. The 2017 meeting was dedicated to discussing the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' legislative package. Breakout sessions included the following topics:^{y)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Empowering consumers to make better choices on the energy market; ▶ The role of local energy communities in the energy transition;

- ▶ New energy technologies and data management;
- ▶ Encouraging active consumers through new products and services.

The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group and the Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors were established within the framework of the Citizens' Energy Forum in 2012 and 2013, respectively. These working groups have met at least annually during the Citizens' Energy Forum. See below for a description of their outputs.^{y),w),x),z)}

Networking and events

The **ECCG** met twice a year in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. As of 2017 it has 34 members, 26 alternate members and 4 observers. It has issued an Opinion on the Clean Energy for All Europeans package in June 2017.ⁿ⁾

The **Vulnerable Consumer Working Group** met 12 times between March 2012 and January 2016. It released a Guidance Document on Vulnerable Consumers in November 2013^{x)} as well as a Working Paper on Energy Poverty, which was presented to the Citizens' Energy Forum at its meeting on 23-24 February 2016.^{v),y)}

The **Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors** has been meeting approximately twice per year in the context of the Citizens' Energy Forum in order to prepare a Report on new forms of active energy use.^{ac)} Part 1 of the Report was presented and endorsed by the CEF in its meeting on 23-24 February 2016.^{z)}

The **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims** presented a report with its main findings and recommendations at the 2013 European Consumer Summit and a dedicated Commission study commissioned by the group was published in 2015 on EU consumer markets and environmental claims for non-food products.^{ad)}

The Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims concluded its work in 2016 with agreed Compliance Criteria on Environmental Claims to support the application and enforcement of the UCPD against misleading and unfounded environmental claims. These Compliance Criteria have fed into the UCPD Guidance^{ai)} and have also been referenced in the EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy published in 2015.^{ad)}

VI. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

<i>General</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A number of interviewees considered that there was still much to be done on energy and sustainable consumption and to integrate these areas into EU consumer policy; ▶ Some interviewees commented that progress on sustainable consumption at the EU level was too slow; ▶ Some interviewees were also unsure how the Consumer Programme contributed to sustainable consumption.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some EC officials commented that sustainable consumption and environmental aspects should be better integrated into EU consumer policy, and vice versa.
<i>Consumer market studies and behavioural studies</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered the evidence base including market studies and behavioural studies to be useful inputs into EU and national policy making, but did not single out any of the energy or sustainable consumption studies for comment.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EC officials considered that the consumer market studies were a useful input into EU energy policy.

<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	National	▶ No comments related specifically to energy or sustainable consumption.
	EU-level	<p>▶ An EC official considered that BEUC was one of their biggest stakeholders regarding sustainable consumption and that BEUC played an important role in promoting environmental aspects of consumer policies.</p> <p>▶ BEUC noted that they work on the Ecodesign initiative in cooperation with DG Environment.</p>
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations</i>	National	▶ Interviewees generally considered capacity building activities to be effective, but did not comment specifically on the energy or sustainable consumption modules.
	EU-level	▶ An EC official considered that sustainable consumption and the environmental aspects of consumer policy should be better included in capacity building for consumer organisations.
<i>EU consumer information and awareness campaigns</i>	National	▶ An interviewee at a consumer organisation commented that more resources should be devoted to raising consumer awareness about sustainable consumption in Eastern Europe.
	EU-level	▶ EC officials noted that consumer information and awareness campaigns are particularly important in the context of sustainable consumption, with one official citing the Ecolabel as an example.
<i>EU consumer education resources</i>	National	▶ A number of interviewees considered consumer education activities to be effective, but did not comment specifically on the energy or sustainable consumption modules.
	EU-level	▶ An EC official considered that there could be more focus on sustainable consumption in educational initiatives, and pointed out that this was already the case e.g. with waste prevention.
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	National	<p>▶ Interviewees generally considered the Citizens' Energy Forum to be a useful forum for detailed discussion and exchange of policy views between stakeholders;</p> <p>▶ A number of interviewees mentioned the contribution of the Citizens' Energy Forum to the policy development of the Clean Energy Package.</p>
	EU-level	<p>▶ A few EC officials commented that they perceived the Citizens' Energy Forum to be a very useful forum for dialogue and an important input into EU energy policy;</p> <p>▶ An EU-level consumer organisation considered that consumer interests had been well-integrated into the Clean Energy Package, as a result of work in the Citizens' Energy Forum.</p>
<i>Networking and events</i>	EU-level	<p>▶ An EC official commented that bringing a consumer element into the framework of the Citizens' Energy Forum through the associated working groups was very useful in informing EU energy policy;</p> <p>▶ An EC official considered that the work on environmental claims was an important input into policy-making.</p>

VII. Stakeholder assessments of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to

consumer organisations / developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N=76,51,36,53,39,53,31)

Notes: for each activity, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present case study (listed above in section V)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Consumer market studies	3.8	3.5	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.8
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)	3.5	4.5	4.2	3.6	4.0	4.2
Capacity building for consumer organisations	3.0	4.2	3.9	3.7	--	3.9
EU consumer information and awareness campaigns	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.0	3.4
EU consumer education resources	--	3.6	3.1	3.2	--	3.3
Behavioural studies	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.8	3.3
Citizens' Energy Forum	--	4.0	--	3.5	3.5	3.8

Question: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=57)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Addressing challenges related to energy/sustainable consumption	3.7	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.7	3.1

VIII. Conclusions

- ▶ Two consumer market studies related to energy and sustainable consumption have been carried out under the Consumer Programme (on Precontractual Information and Billing in the Energy Market and Residential Prosumers in the European Energy Union). The available evidence shows that there has been policy uptake of the market studies related to energy (and expected uptake of the upcoming behavioural study on circular economy) by various Commission services;
- ▶ There is limited evidence available on the use or effectiveness of the energy- and sustainability-related elements of capacity building (the Consumer Champion includes a module on energy) and consumer education (the Consumer Classroom website includes sections on sustainable consumption and

- energy). An awareness raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy-poor households is ongoing;
- ▶ The Citizens' Energy Forum and associated working groups have been assessed to be effective by interviewees at the EU and national levels, who emphasise its usefulness as a forum for detailed discussion and highlight its role in integrating consumer interests in the Clean Energy Package;
 - ▶ Overall, interviewees rated the effectiveness of the Consumer Programme in addressing challenges related to energy and sustainable consumption with an average rating of 3.1 out of 5 (i.e. moderately effective), with the highest average assessments provided by business associations (3.7) and the lowest by ministries, national authorities and other organisations (2.7). This rating is below other assessments regarding the effectiveness of the Programme in addressing cross-cutting challenges (such as safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union, creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general and addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market);
 - ▶ Interviewees at both the EU and national levels suggested that the Consumer Programme could be doing more to address challenges related to energy and sustainable consumption (in particular with respect to the integration of energy and sustainable consumption aspects in consumer education and awareness raising activities), and to increase the synergies between EU consumer policy and energy and environment policies, and vice versa.

IX. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>af) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>b) CHAFAE 2015 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>ag) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report</p>
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	<p>c) European Commission, Communication of 15 July 2017 on Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers, SWD(2015) 141 final</p> <p>d) European Parliament, Briefing: A New Deal for Energy Consumers (2016)</p> <p>e) European Commission, Communication of 2 December 2015 on an EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy, COM(2015) 614 final</p> <p>f) Draft final report, Request for specific services 2015 85 03 "Organisation of local training courses, translation of e-learning modules, website promotion, moderation, hosting and maintenance" under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAE (2017)</p> <p>g) Final report, Request for specific services 2014 85 01 – under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAE (2015)</p> <p>h) Consumer Classroom Consortium, Take-over, hosting, web maintenance and incident management, moderation and web updates of the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education - Final & SLA Implementation Report (2017)</p> <p>ai) European Commission, Staff Working Document, Guidance on the implementation/application of Directive 2005/29/EC (UCPD), SWD/2016/0163 final (2016)</p>
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	<p>i) Annual monitoring tables 2014-2017, DG JUST (2018)</p> <p>j) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6203_en.htm</p> <p>k) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/market_studies/index_en.htm</p> <p>l) Activity report 19th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th June 2017</p> <p>m) Consumer Champion website report (July-August 2017)</p> <p>n) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=849&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1</p> <p>o) http://www.consumerchampion.eu/</p> <p>p) https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/consumers/consumer-protection/our-partners-consumer-issues/european-consumer-consultative-group-eccg_en</p> <p>q) BEUC, Consumer Champion evaluation and way forward - Concept note (2017)</p> <p>s) European Commission, Staff Working Document on knowledge-enhancing aspects of consumer empowerment 2012-2014 (2012)</p> <p>t) https://www.consumerclassroom.eu/</p>

- v) Conclusions, 8th meeting of the Citizens' Energy Forum, London, 23-24 February 2016 (see t) below)
- w) Vulnerable Consumer Working Group, Terms of Reference (see t) below)
- x) Vulnerable Consumer Working Group, Guidance Document on Vulnerable Consumers (2013)
- y) <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/citizens-energy-forum-london>
- z) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3329&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1>
- aa) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3327&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1>
- ab) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3325>
- ac) https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/Draft_WG_report_consumers_market_agents_TC_110315_web_version3.pdf
- ad) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_rights/unfair-trade/environmental-claims/index_en.htm
- ae) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/behavioural_research/index_en.htm
- ah) Joint Research Centre, Seven Points to Remember when Conducting Behavioural Studies in Support of EU Policy-making, JRC Scientific and Policy Reports (2015)

Case study: Evidence base for EU consumer policy

I. Description and relevant actions

Description and links to Consumer Programme

Knowing consumer markets and consumer behaviour in the EU helps the European Commission make better policies. The evidence base for EU consumer policy comprises consumer scoreboards, consumer market monitoring surveys, consumer and retailer surveys relating to cross-border trade and consumer protection, market studies, behavioural research, and consumer complaints statistics.^{b)}

The importance of developing an evidence base for EU consumer policy is reflected in Objective II of the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme: Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, **to develop the evidence base for consumer policy** and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.^{a)}

Relevant actions

Defined in Article 4 in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation:

- ▶ **Action 4:** Building and improving access to the **evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs**, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies;
- ▶ **Action 6:** enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, **ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data**, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services;
- ▶ **Action 8:** Preparation by the Commission of **consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives**, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets;
- ▶ **Action 10:** Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council

II. Description of activities

Consumer market studies (Action 4 and 10)

Through the Consumer Markets Scoreboard described below, the Commission monitors the functioning of the most important goods and services markets in the EU. Based on these results, the Commission identifies markets that do not function well for consumers and which require further in-depth research. **Consumer market studies** explore various areas and issues that have an impact on functioning of the market for consumers, such as choice, quality, safety, health, sustainability, prices and information, as well as consumer understanding, behaviour and decision making. These findings are then used as a basis to improve or change existing policies.^{c)}

Consumer markets studies specifically funded under Action 10 have focused on issues relevant for enforcement, see below for more details.

Consumer scoreboards

The **Consumer Scoreboards** monitor how the single market is performing for

*and surveys
(Action 4)*

EU consumers and signal potential problems. Published since 2008, they aim to ensure better monitoring of consumer outcomes and provide evidence to inform policy.

Scoreboard findings are used by national policymakers and stakeholders to assess the impact of their activities over time and benchmark the situation against other Member States. Scoreboards also serve as a key reference for evaluations and impact assessments for policy development and orientations, including in the context of the European Semester.

There are two types of Scoreboards, published in alternate years: the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard. Note that between 2010 and 2012 they were published every half year – in spring the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard, in autumn the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.

The main data sources for the Scoreboards are the following EU-wide surveys:

- ▶ Market Monitoring Survey, which feeds into the Consumer Markets Scoreboard
- ▶ Consumer and retailer surveys, which feed into the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard^{d)}

Detailed data from the Consumer Scoreboards are disseminated through a user-friendly database (extractions can be saved in spreadsheet format).^{e)}

The **Consumer Conditions Scoreboard** monitors national conditions for consumers in 3 dimensions (knowledge and trust, compliance and enforcement, complaints and dispute resolution) and examines progress in the integration of the EU retail market based on the level of business-to-consumer cross-border transactions and the development of e-commerce.^{d)}

The Scoreboard mainly draws from two regular surveys of consumers and retailers. It combines, where relevant, the two perspectives since they are likely to cross-validate and complement one another. This helps to increase the reliability of the measurements. The surveys' results are complemented by data from other sources such as the results of compliance checks coordinated by the Commission or complaints received by the European Consumer Centres.

Scoreboard findings are of interest to consumer and business stakeholders and to policymakers, at both EU and national level. Scoreboard data is unique in that it can be used to compare consumer conditions across countries and across time. It informs a broad range of EU and national policies, with immediate relevance for consumer and single market policies (in particular the Digital Single Market). Moreover, Scoreboard indicators are correlated with key social, economic and governance indicators monitored by international organisations. This highlights the relevance of the consumer perspective across policy areas.^{f)}

The **Consumer Markets Scoreboard** surveys consumers with recent purchasing experiences to track the performance of over 40 consumer markets on key indicators such as trust that seller respect consumer protection rules, comparability of offers, the choice available in the market, the extent to which consumer expectations are met, and detriment caused by problems that consumers encounter. Other relevant indicators are also monitored and analysed, such as switching and prices.^{d)}

*Behavioural studies (on
consumer decision
making)
(Action 8)*

Behavioural economics studies how people make choices using insights from psychology and economics. Understanding the reasons behind people's behaviour is essential for policy-making. Behavioural insights may be applied to any policy where individuals' response to it helps determine its effectiveness. Application of behavioural insights could help understand how

	<p>consumers process information.ⁿ⁾</p> <p>In 2012, the EC's Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) and the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) set up a framework contract to facilitate the outsourcing of behavioural studies in support of EU policy. To date, multiple behavioural studies have been, or are being, conducted under this framework contract. The Joint Research Centre [JRC, the EC's in-house science service], in turn, has provided scientific support to the design and implementation of these studies.^{o)}</p> <p>Behavioural studies have been commissioned by the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) to test policy options in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour.^{p)} The evidence from studies on consumer behaviour feeds into the policy development providing necessary data and ensures smart regulation and better reinforcement of consumer rights.^{q)}</p>
<p><i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i> (Action 8)</p>	<p>The Consumer Programme provides for studies and smart regulation activities such as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, impact assessment, public consultations, evaluation and simplification of existing legislation.^{a)}</p>
<p><i>European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) and related support measures</i> (Action 6)</p>	<p>In 2010, the European Commission issued a Recommendation on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries.^{b)} The Recommendation calls on third-party complaint bodies to classify complaints according to a common taxonomy and to report the data to the Commission. In order to support the implementation of this methodology, the Commission provides financial support and a European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) IT tool.ⁿ⁾</p> <p>The objective of the EU financial support (grants) is the establishment or improvement of IT systems enabling the transmission of harmonised data concerning consumer complaints to the Commission as well as the transmission of all harmonised data concerning consumer complaints being in the possession of the complaint body concerned to the Commission.ⁿ⁾</p> <p>With respect to IT support, the Commission has developed a two-level approach:ⁿ⁾</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisations that do not have a specific data collection IT system in place are invited to use the European Consumer Complaints Registration System IT Tool. The IT Tool is provided free of charge to complaint bodies that are willing to adopt the methodology and to provide data to the Commission. ▶ Organisations with existing data collection IT systems are invited to apply the harmonised methodology to their local IT systems and to adapt them accordingly. To this end, the Commission has developed technical specifications to facilitate the adaptation of the systems and the transfer of data to the Commission according to the harmonised methodology.
<p><i>Networking and events</i> (Action 4)</p>	<p>The Consumer Markets Expert Group's mission is to discuss the issues which are most relevant at the national level in relation to the Consumer Scoreboards as well as market studies and studies on consumer behaviour. Members are Member States and EEA public authorities^{g)}</p>

III. Specific relevant activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<p><i>Consumer market studies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on measuring consumer detriment in the European Union ▶ Consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union ▶ Study on the sharing economy ▶ Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate for consumers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union ▶ In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit ▶ Provision of a consumer market study on misleading "free" trials and subscription traps for consumers in the European Union ▶ Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer market monitoring survey ▶ Publication (and translation) of the scoreboards ▶ Provision of two online consumer surveys as support and evidence base to a Commission study: "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most." ▶ IT - Consumer Market Scoreboard Database (CSD) ▶ Survey: consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection ▶ Survey: business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services: a behavioural economics perspective ▶ Behavioural study on food choices and eating habits ▶ Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media ▶ Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms ▶ Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy ▶ Behavioural study on digitalisation of financial services
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation ▶ Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU ▶ Foresight study to prepare for the future of EU consumer policy 2020-2030 ▶ Follow-up to the initiatives in the field of retail financial services
<i>ECCRS and related support measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grants for complaint handling bodies to implement Commission recommendation on harmonised registration of consumer complaints ▶ IT - European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS)
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) meetings

IV. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	<p>Ten consumer market studies have been financed between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on measuring consumer detriment in the European Union ▶ Consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability ▶ Study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union ▶ Study on the sharing economy ▶ Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate for consumers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union ▶ In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit ▶ Provision of a consumer market study on misleading "free" trials and subscription traps for consumers in the European Union ▶ Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<p>Surveys of consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection and business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection were carried out in 2014 and in 2016. These surveys fed into the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards that were published in 2015 and 2017.^{d)}</p> <p>The consumer market monitoring survey was carried out in 2015 and fed into the 2016 edition of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.^{d)}</p> <p>In addition to the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard, two online consumer surveys were furthermore conducted to provide support and an evidence base to a Commission study "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most."</p>
<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	<p>Six behavioural studies on consumer decision-making have been carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services: a behavioural economics perspective ▶ Behavioural study on food choices and eating habits ▶ Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media ▶ Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms ▶ Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy ▶ Behavioural study on digitalisation of financial services
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	<p>Five other EU consumer policy studies have been carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation ▶ Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial

guarantees for consumers in the EU

- Foresight study to prepare for the future of EU consumer policy 2020-2030
- Follow-up to the initiatives in the field of retail financial services

ECCRS and related support measures

The number of complaint bodies and countries submitting complaints data to the ECCRS increased from 37 complaint bodies representing 13 countries in 2014^{h)} to 73 complaint bodies representing 20 countries in 2015.^{s)} The total number of complaints, main areas of complaints at EU level, and main reasons for complaints at EU level registered within the system from 2014-2017 are presented in the table below.^{t)}

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total number of complaints</u>	<u>Main area of complaints</u>	<u>Main reason for complaints</u>
2014	351 308	Consumer goods	Other issues
2015	1 236 156	Consumer goods	Contracts and sales
2016	425 505	Consumer goods	Other issues
2017	193 080	Consumer goods	Delivery of goods/ provision of services

Networking and events

The CMEG met twice a year in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and once in 2017. As of 2017 it has 40 member authorities representing the 28 Member States, Iceland and Norway.^{g)}

V. Key themes from stakeholder interviews in the Member States, Norway and Iceland and at EU level

General

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|----------|--|
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The majority of interviewees considered the development of an evidence base for consumer policy to be effective; ► A number of ministries or national authorities commented that EU studies and surveys had been used as a basis for national consumer policy initiatives; ► Several interviewees considered that policymakers at the EU and national level did not sufficiently take the evidence base into account when making consumer policy decisions or suggested that the studies should be better promoted. |
| EU-level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Some EU-level consumer organisations and business associations also commented that the evidence base was not sufficiently taken into account by policymakers; ► Interviewed officials at the European Commission generally considered the evidence base to be effective and that it constituted an important basis for better policy-making; ► Some Commission officials pointed out the large amount of time and work required to produce studies and surveys and indicated that data was not always available quickly enough to respond to current policy needs. |

Consumer market studies

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|-----------------------|---|
| National and EU-level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Interviewees considered the consumer market studies to be useful and relevant sources of information at national and EU level; ► A number of ministries or national authorities indicated that |
|-----------------------|---|

		<p>market studies had informed national consumer policy, noting that the legislative and regulatory suggestions in these studies were particularly helpful as a policy input;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some EC officials pointed out the substantial time and work required for these studies, indicating that the evidence collected was not always available on a timely basis; ▶ Some interviewees considered that the market studies were not as widely known or used by policymakers as they could be.
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered that the Consumer Scoreboards are effective; ▶ A number of interviewees at ministries or national authorities commented that the Scoreboards are useful as a benchmarking or comparison tool to assess the situation in their country from a European perspective; ▶ A handful of interviewees considered EU-wide surveys such as the Consumer Scoreboards to be rather subjective, and stated that they did not think the results reflected the reality in their Member State.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ European Commission officials generally considered the Consumer Scoreboards to be an indispensable part of the evidence base for consumer policy; ▶ Commission officials emphasised the importance of the Scoreboards in providing a harmonised data set that could be used to form comparisons and track progress over time.
<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	National and EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewees generally considered behavioural studies to be effective and helpful as sources of information for policymaking at the national level; ▶ An EU consumer organisation commented that behavioural studies should be reflected better in consumer legislation.
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A number of interviewees specifically mentioned the evaluation of the CPC regulation as an example of an effective consumer policy study.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An EU consumer organisation commented that the policy uptake of these studies could be improved.
<i>ECCRS and related support measures</i>	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some interviewees considered that the ECCRS was or could be a helpful system to facilitate the collection of evidence and monitor consumer conditions; ▶ However, a number of interviewees commented that the ECCRS needed considerable improvement; ▶ Some national consumer organisations stated that the ECCRS was too cumbersome or that the complaint classification system did not suit the national reality.
	EU-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviewed officials at the European Commission considered the ECCRS to be useful.

VI. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations / developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (from top to bottom N=77, 76, 34, 53, 76)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Consumer scoreboards and surveys	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8
Consumer market studies	3.8	3.5	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.8
ECCRS and related support measures	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9
Behavioural studies	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.8	3.3
Other EU consumer policy studies	2.8	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

Question: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=109)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.5	2.9	3.4

VIII. Potential wider effects of activities

General

[Some of the information on outputs and results of activities relate more generally to the "evidence base" and cannot be assigned specifically to consumer market studies, consumer scoreboards and surveys, or to behavioural studies (covered in the Action 8 fact sheet). It is therefore presented here in a more general category.

Uptake at Member State level

- ▶ Sweden mentioned that the Commission's general approach has had an impact in putting consumer issues on the policy agenda. Furthermore, the Commission's evidence-based work has inspired the approach of the Swedish consumer agency.¹⁾
- ▶ Data from the Scoreboards and market studies are regularly provided for Commissioner briefings, e.g. in the context of visits to Member States. DG Justice and Consumers created "country fiches" with up-to-date consumer evidence especially for this purpose.¹⁾
- ▶ The consumer evidence has fed into the EU Semester process, especially for the Single Market Integration report (SMIR) annexed to Annual Growth Survey, whereby DG Justice and Consumers makes suggestions of

contributions – mainly based on the Consumer Scoreboards but also on in-depth market studies – to the lead DGs (e.g. references to Member State specific supporting evidence on poor functioning or improvement in a given market).^{l)}

- ▶ The consumer evidence also provides added value for **DG Justice and Consumers' work** on Justice and monitoring of EU MS justice systems (Justice Scoreboard), Fundamental Rights, Data protection, Equality, Contract law.^{m)}

Consumer market studies

Linkage to **policy at EU level**

- ▶ The findings of the Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU (2017) fed into the REFIT of consumer and marketing law.^{h)}
- ▶ The study on the sharing economy is expected to generate policy options to deal with legal uncertainty and lack of transparency in P2P transactions, in particular via platforms. Early results were reflected in European Agenda on Collaborative Economy (May 2016).ⁱ⁾
- ▶ The consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union is expected to provide evidence base for enforcement of existing competition and consumer protection rules and feed into the follow-up to the fitness check of EU consumer and marketing law (input to impact assessment).^{h)}
- ▶ The consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate market for consumers in the European Union will provide recommendations on e.g. the need for enforcement and awareness raising activities, for Member States' policies (including legislation), and/or for self-regulatory initiatives to be considered by the real estate industry.^{h)}
- ▶ The study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union will contribute to the adoption of the Clean Energy for all Europeans package.^{h)}
- ▶ Results of the consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability should support the inter-institutional negotiations of the Clean Energy for all Europeans package and later on Member States in transposing and implementing the new provisions, in particular as regards the recast Electricity Directive.^{h)}

Uptake at **Member State level**

- ▶ Within the Finnish Competition and Consumers Authority, the Market Research Unit summarizes and pinpoints consumer policy perspectives on the consumer markets studied by the Commission. This material is shared with the whole Authority, which is able to disseminate this information via newsletters, blogs and tweets. The Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority is planning to organize seminars with stakeholders aimed at presenting the results from these studies. The objective is to make these studies popular in Finland in order to allow competition and consumer institutes to gain more importance, credibility and legitimacy.ⁱ⁾

Consumer scoreboards and surveys

Linkage to **policy at EU level**

- ▶ The Digital Contracts Proposals are underpinned by evidence from the Commission studies on the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market (also feeding into assessment of macro-economic impact of removing contract law barriers).^{j)}
- ▶ The Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market provided key evidence for the Commission's proposed Regulation on addressing geo-blocking.ⁱ⁾

Uptake at **Member State level**

- ▶ Concerning the uptake of the EU Consumer Markets Scoreboard in Norway,

in 2016 the Consumer Council issued a press release on the poor outcomes of Norway in food markets. In particular, Norwegian consumers were dissatisfied with the meat and the fruits and vegetables markets. The Consumer Council added a link on their website to the Scoreboard's results.ⁱ⁾

- ▶ A seminar was planned to be held on consumer economy and the consumer markets in November 2016 in Norway and a report partly based on the results from the EU Consumer Scoreboards to be published.ⁱ⁾
- ▶ In 2015 with the objective to develop a Consumer Barometer, Norway constructed its own index to define and distinguish well-functioning markets and well-informed consumers. The index includes elements from both the Consumer Markets and Consumer Conditions Scoreboard. Norway is also closely following the work from the detriment study, which could provide further input.^{j)}
- ▶ Data from the Consumer Scoreboards and from national surveys have been used for policy, especially for the preparation of planning documents and for the assessment of the activity of Lithuania's Consumer Protection Authority.^{j)}
- ▶ Finland uses Scoreboard results for impact assessment. Indicators used are the indicator on trust in e-commerce and the Consumer Conditions Index of the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard, as well as the comparability indicator for services of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.^{k)}
- ▶ Denmark mentioned that the national Scoreboard based on data from the Commission has been released at the end of 2014. It includes an e-commerce chapter, which raised private and public interest.^{k)}

Results of the Scoreboards are used as indicators in the **strategic planning** of DG Justice and Consumers.^{l)}

Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)

- ▶ The study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services is expected to contribute to a better understanding of consumers' behaviour in the market and of the effects of the Insurance Distribution Directive (IMD recast). It will provide evidence of the functioning of the Single Market for insurance products, complementary to the consultation based on the Green Paper on Retail Financial Services and Insurance.^{h)}
- ▶ The study on advertising market practices in online social media is expected to support the enforcement of consumer protection rules in the online environment.^{h)}
- ▶ The study on the transparency of online platforms is expected to inform policy options to enhance consumer protection in the online environment (as follow-up to REFIT of consumer and marketing law).^{h)}
- ▶ The study on consumers engagement in the circular economy is expected to contribute to the implementation of the Action plan on the Circular Economy (including possible future work on Ecodesign). It will contribute to activities by different Commission services (e.g. DG ENV, GROW, ENER, JRC).^{h)}

Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)

- ▶ The consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU served for the proposals on digital contracts and informed the REFIT of CSGD the Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive.^{j)}
- ▶ The study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation was an input in the review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) network

that was conducted between 2012 and 2016.^{r)}

ECCRS and related support measures

There is limited data available on the use of complaints data from the ECCRS database as national authorities are able to consult the data directly without making a request to the European Commission.^{u)}

Within the Commission, the ECCRS data has fed into the preparatory work for various initiatives and studies, often for triangulation purposes. Some of the studies that have used ECCRS data include:^{u)}

- ▶ Studies related to the REFIT of the consumer acquis (e.g. on the Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive);
- ▶ Evaluation of the Consumer Rights Directive (2015/2016);
- ▶ Study on unjustified geo-blocking and other discrimination based on consumers' place of residence or nationality (2016);
- ▶ Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU (2017);
- ▶ Input for the Action plan following the Energy Union Package (2015);
- ▶ Input for the Annual report of the DG FISMA (2015, 2016);
- ▶ Commission Staff Working Document 'Evaluation of EU provisions on metering and billing of the energy consumption' (2016);
- ▶ Preparatory work for the Green Paper on retail financial services Action Plan (2015);
- ▶ Impact study of Liberalisation of Access to Professions on Quality of Services (2017);
- ▶ First screening phase in the framework of the identification of joint enforcement priorities for the CPC authorities (first years of the network);
- ▶ Consumer Scoreboards (since 2012)

VIII. Conclusions

- ▶ The large majority of interviewed stakeholders appreciated the approach of basing consumer policy and legislation on evidence as well as the benefits of an independent and unbiased source of evidence at the EU level;
- ▶ The development of an evidence base for consumer policy through consumer scoreboards and market studies is largely considered to be effective by stakeholders, and also useful for benchmarking purposes at the national level;
- ▶ The European Consumer Complaints Registration System has received the lowest average assessment (2.9) of all activities by stakeholders in terms of its effectiveness. Although it is considered to have good potential for a better evidence base regarding consumer complaints for policy making, it appears that benefits may mostly accrue at EU level;
- ▶ Interviewees considered behavioural studies to be effective and helpful for policymaking, but also suggested that policymakers do not make use of these studies, or that the studies could be better promoted;
- ▶ Several other EU policy studies have fed directly into the development of EU consumer policy initiatives, with the practical value of the studies being confirmed by stakeholders, who found the mentioned EU consumer policy studies to be largely effective in reaching Objective III.

IX. Key sources

Legislation

a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

p) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme

<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>f) Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition, European Commission</p> <p>q) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>s) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report – Annexes</p>
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	-
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	<p>b) https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/consumers/consumer-protection/evidence-based-consumer-policy_en (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>c) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/market_studies/index_en.htm (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>d) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/index_en.htm (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>e) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/dissemination_database/index_en.htm (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>g) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2387 (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>h) Activity report 19th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th June 2017 (see g) above)</p> <p>i) Activity report 18th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th September 2016 (see g) above)</p> <p>j) Activity report 17th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Wednesday 17th February 2016 (see g) above)</p> <p>k) Activity report 15th Meeting of the Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) Thursday 5 February 2015 (see g) above)</p> <p>l) Interviews and communication with European Commission officials, DG Justice and Consumers, 2017</p> <p>m) Activity report 16th Meeting of the Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) Wednesday 30 September 2015 (see g) above)</p> <p>n) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/behavioural_research/index_en.htm (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>o) Joint Research Centre, Seven Points to Remember when Conducting Behavioural Studies in Support of EU Policy-making, JRC Scientific and Policy Reports (2015)</p> <p>r) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/cross-border_enforcement_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>t) http://81.247.254.96/QvAJAXZfc/opendoc.htm?document=Harmonised_Consumer_Complaints.qvw&host=QVS%40vsrv1463&anonymous=true (Accessed 15 January 2018)</p> <p>u) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (2017)</p>

Case study: Convergence to a high level of consumer protection between different Member States

I. Description and relevant actions

Description

The previous Consumer Programme in 2007-2013 “took into account the fact that the internal market will not function properly if consumers are less well protected in some Member States than in others”, and therefore committed to focus on consumer protection and consumer awareness in the Member States that acceded on or after 1 May 2004 in order to ensure a level playing field for all Member States.^{b)}

In the current Consumer Programme 2014-2020, the preamble does not contain any specific reference to convergence, but states that the EU has committed “to ensuring a high level of consumer protection across the Union and to placing consumers at the heart of the internal market by supporting and complementing Member States’ policies in seeking to ensure that citizens can fully reap the benefits of the internal market”.^{a)}

Convergence is also explicitly referred to in Action 5 of the current Consumer Programme, which includes “capacity building... in particular for consumer organisations in Member States where they are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness as evidenced by monitoring of consumer markets and the consumer environment in the Member States.”^{a)}

Relevant actions

In principle, **all actions under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020** can be considered to contribute to the convergence to a high level of consumer protection between different Member States (with the exclusion of Actions 1 and 3). However, as noted above, Action 5 on capacity building for national consumer organisations is the only action which explicitly makes reference to convergence as a policy aim.

II. Convergence indicators by programme area

Note: In this case study, the same regional clusters as in the 2017 edition of the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard are used.^{c)} See the table below for an overview of the Member States included in each regional cluster.

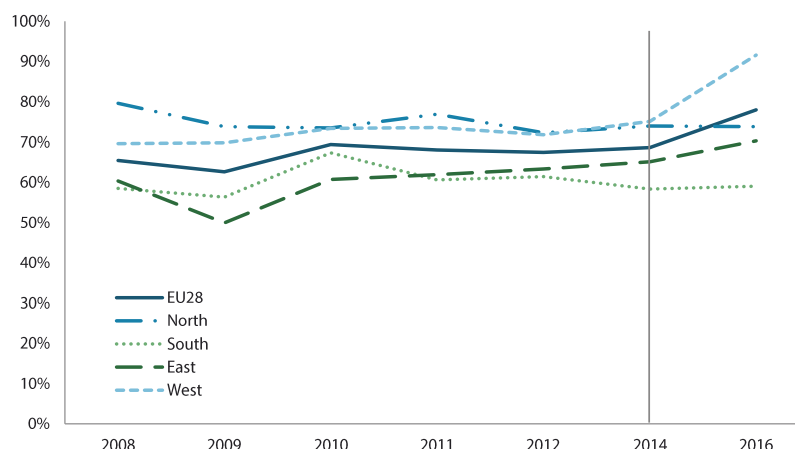
<i>North</i>	DK, FI, SE
<i>South</i>	CY, EL, IT, MT, PT, ES
<i>East</i>	BG, HR, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, PL, RO, SK, SI
<i>West</i>	AT, BE, FR, DE, IE, LU, NL, UK

Objective I: Product safety

In the absence of more objective measures concerning the status of product safety across the EU, consumer perception of the level of product safety in different regional clusters of the EU can provide an indication of potential wider effects of the product safety actions implemented under the Consumer Programme, although no causal relationship can be inferred on this basis.

The following figure shows the development of consumer trust in product safety by regional cluster, as measured by the percentage of EU consumers who agree either that essentially all non-food products are safe or that a small number of non-food products are unsafe.

Figure 1: Percentage of consumers who agree that essentially all non-food products are safe or that a small number of non-food products are unsafe



Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.^{d)} Question text: Thinking about all non-food products currently on the market in (our country), do you think that...? / How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... (Essentially all non-food products are safe / A small number of non-food products are unsafe). The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with these statements. Note that the vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

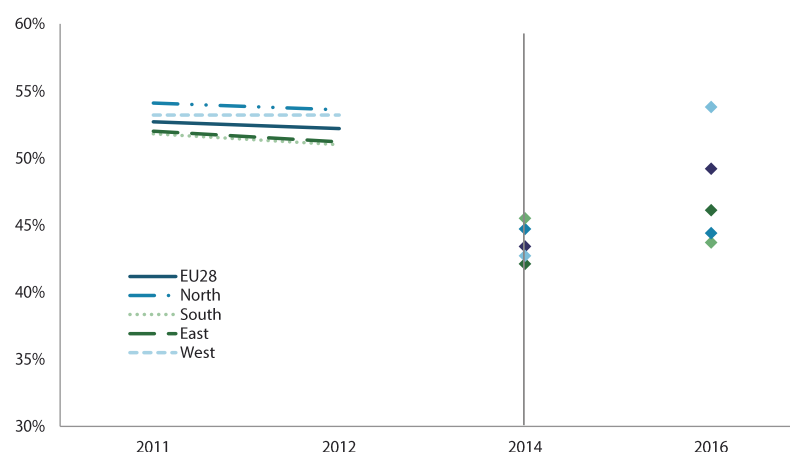
As indicated in the figure above, consumer trust in product safety is generally highest in the North and West regional clusters and lowest in the South cluster. Between 2008 and 2012, the spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of consumer trust in product safety narrowed from 21 percentage points to 11 percentage points, indicating some degree of convergence during this period. However, since 2012, the gap between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of trust in product safety has increased from 11 to 33 percentage points, indicating divergence, even though consumer trust in product safety as a whole increased in almost every region during this period (except in the South, where it declined by 2 percentage points between 2012 and 2016).

*Objective II:
Consumer education,
information and support
to consumer
organisations*

Potential wider effects of the actions under Objective II may relate to consumers' knowledge of their rights as well as the level of consumers' trust in consumer organisations to protect their consumer rights.

The European Commission regularly surveys consumers on three knowledge questions on EU consumer rights concerning unsolicited products, faulty product guarantees and the cooling-off period for distance purchases.^{d)} The figure below shows the average proportion of these questions that EU consumers in different regional clusters were able to answer correctly.

Figure 2: Average proportion of correct responses to three knowledge questions about EU consumer rights



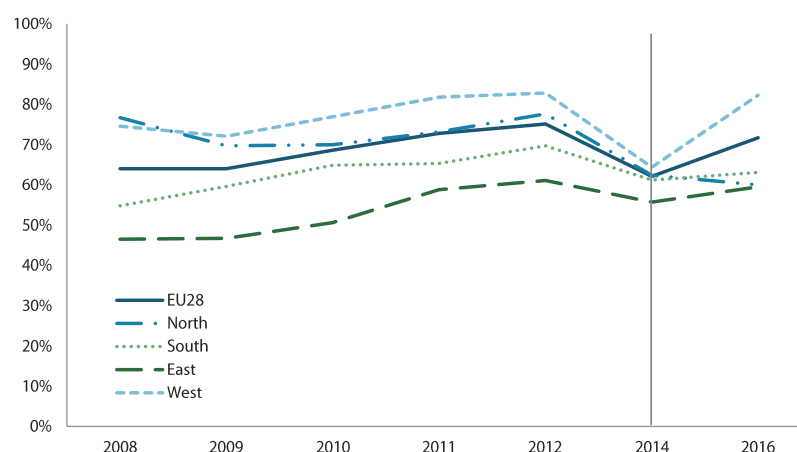
Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.^{d)} The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Breaks in the series indicate changes in question wording or response items.

As the figure above shows, knowledge on EU consumer rights tends to be highest in the North or West clusters and lowest in the South or East clusters (although this was not the case in 2014, when the South regional cluster had the highest proportion of questions answered correctly). The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of knowledge increased by a factor of 5 between 2011 and 2016, from 2 percentage points in 2011 to 10 percentage points in 2016, indicating divergence, even though all regions except the North cluster improved their average scores between 2014 and 2016.

With respect to consumer trust in consumer organisations to protect their rights, this measure is particularly relevant in the context of convergence as capacity building programs for national consumer organisations are an action under the Consumer Programme that explicitly targets convergence between Member States. In the previous Programme in 2007-2013, capacity building activities were concentrated on the 'New Member States';^{b)} however, in the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme, capacity building activities now have a broader focus, concentrating in "Member States where consumer organisations are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness".^{a)}

The following figure shows the percentage of consumers in each of the EU regional clusters who agree that they trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect their consumer rights.

Figure 3: Percentage of consumers who agree that they trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect consumer rights



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... You trust non-governmental consumer organisations to protect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with this statement.

The figure above shows that consumer trust in consumer organisations to protect their rights tends to be highest in the Western regional cluster and lowest in the Eastern regional cluster. Between 2008 and 2014, the spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of trust in consumer organisations decreased from 30 to 9 percentage points, indicating convergence; however, this spread increased again to 23 percentage points in 2016. It can be also noted however that the regional clusters are still on average closer to the EU28 mean in 2016 than they were in 2008.

**Objective III:
Rights and redress**

Potential wider effects of the actions carried out under Objective III may be reflected in the proportion of consumers who take action in response to a legitimate problem as well as consumer trust in redress mechanisms, i.e. whether consumers agree that obtaining redress through out-of-court bodies (such as alternative dispute resolution) is easy.

Additionally, rates of online shopping both domestically and cross-border can be cautiously used as a proxy for consumers' confidence in their rights at the European level. However, as this effect is indirect and overlaps with other areas, e.g. also reflecting consumers' confidence in product safety and enforcement, it cannot be interpreted as a direct causal result of the actions taken under Objective III. Further potential indicators reflecting consumers' level of confidence making online purchases domestically and from other EU countries can be seen in Annex I.

The following figure shows the percentage of consumers who took action (i.e. complained) within the last 12 months in response to a problem they experienced which was legitimate to complain about.

Figure 4: Percentage of consumers who took action (complained) in response to a problem which was legitimate to complain about

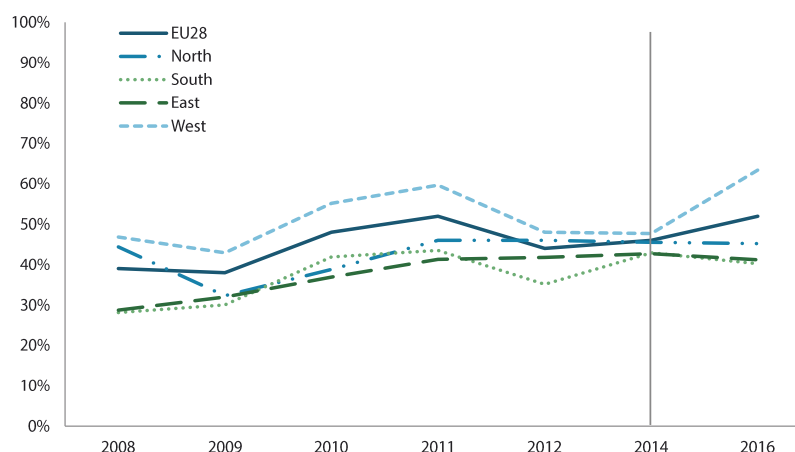


Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 edition.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. The potential answer items were changed between the 2011 and 2012 surveys; this is represented as a break in the series above. Question text in 2012-2014: In the past 12 months, have you experienced any problem when buying or using any goods or services in (our country) where you thought you had a legitimate cause for complaint? Shown are those who replied 'Yes, and you took action to solve the problem'.

The figure above shows that the percentage of consumers taking action after experiencing a legitimate problem has consistently been highest in the Northern cluster. While the Southern and Eastern clusters had the lowest percentage of consumers reporting that they took action after experiencing a problem in 2012 and 2014, it was the Western cluster that reported the lowest percentage of consumers taking action in 2016. The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest percentage of consumers taking action increased from 10 to 17 percentage points between 2012 and 2016, indicating divergence (generally between the Northern regional cluster and the other regional clusters).

The figure below shows the percentage of consumers who agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body, such as alternative dispute resolution.

Figure 5: Percentage of consumers who agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body



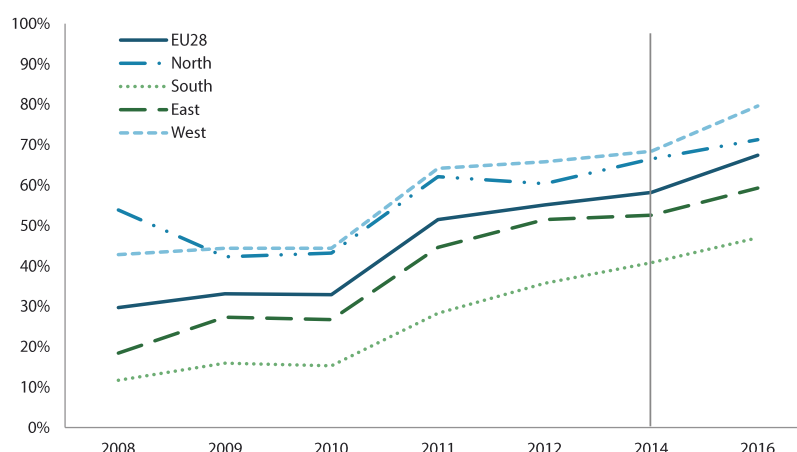
Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... It is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body (i.e. arbitration, mediation or conciliation body). Shown above are

those who 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' with these statements.

As indicated in the figure above, the highest percentage of consumers agreeing that it is easy to settle disputes through an out-of-court body can be found in the Western regional cluster while the lowest levels of agreement are found alternatively in the Southern or the Eastern clusters. The regional clusters experienced relative convergence between 2008 and 2014, with the spread between the regions reporting the highest and lowest levels of agreement decreasing by a factor of 5 over this period, from 25 to 5 percentage points. However, this spread increased again to 23 percentage points in 2016 as agreement that it is easy to settle disputes through out-of-court bodies increased substantively in the Western cluster while decreasing slightly in the other three regions.

The following figure shows the percentage of consumers who have made at least online purchase from a trader located in their own country within the last 12 months.

Figure 6: Percentage of consumers who have made at least one online purchase domestically within the last 12 months

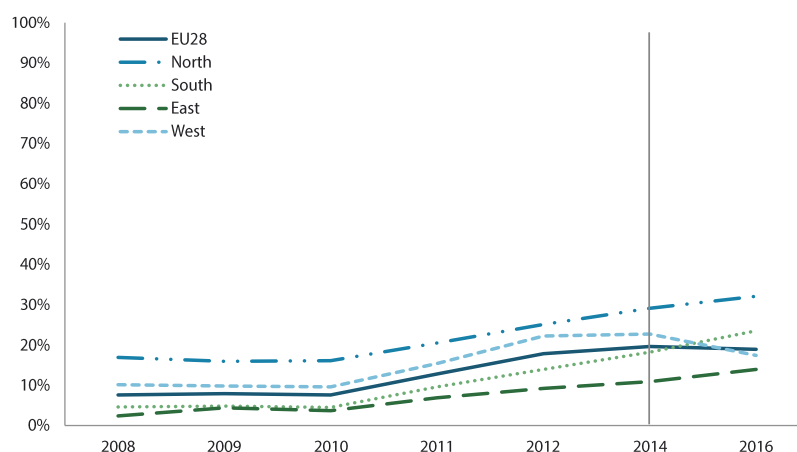


Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) Base is respondents who use the internet for private reasons. Question text: In the past 12 months, have you purchased any goods or services via the Internet? Shown above are those who answered 'Yes, from a retailer or service provider located in (our country)'. The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

As shown in the figure above, levels of domestic online shopping have increased substantively in all regions since 2008, but tend to be highest in the Western cluster and lowest in the Southern cluster. The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of domestic online shopping has decreased from 42 to 33 percentage points between 2008 and 2016. However, most of the observed convergence on domestic online shopping rates has occurred between the North, West and East clusters, with the Southern cluster lagging somewhat behind. Excluding the Southern cluster, the spread between the highest and lowest levels of domestic online shopping between the North, West and East clusters decreased from 36 to 20 percentage points between 2008 and 2016.

The following figure shows the percentage of consumers who have made at least one online purchase from a trader located in another EU country within the last 12 months.

Figure 7: Percentage of consumers who have made at least one online purchase from another EU country within the last 12 months



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) Base is respondents who use the internet for private reasons. Question text: In the past 12 months, have you purchased any goods or services via the Internet? Shown above are those who answered 'Yes, from a retailer or service provider located in another EU country.' The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

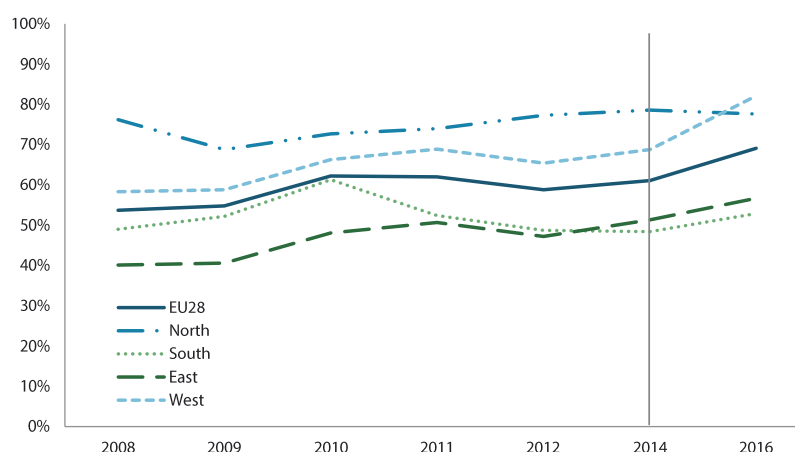
The figure above shows that levels of cross-border online shopping have increased in all regions between 2008 and 2016, generally remaining the highest in the Northern cluster and lowest in the Eastern cluster. However, the spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of cross-border online shopping has increased over this period from 15 percentage points in 2008 to 18 percentage points in 2016, indicating slight divergence.

Objective IV: Enforcement

Possible indicators for the potential wider effects of enforcement actions under the Consumer Programme with sufficient data available might include levels of consumer trust that public authorities protect their rights and that retailers generally respect consumer rights, as well as the prevalence of problems encountered by consumers in the internal market.

The figure below shows the percentage of consumers in each regional cluster who agree that they trust public authorities to protect their consumer rights.

Figure 8: Percentage of consumers who trust public authorities to protect their rights as a consumer

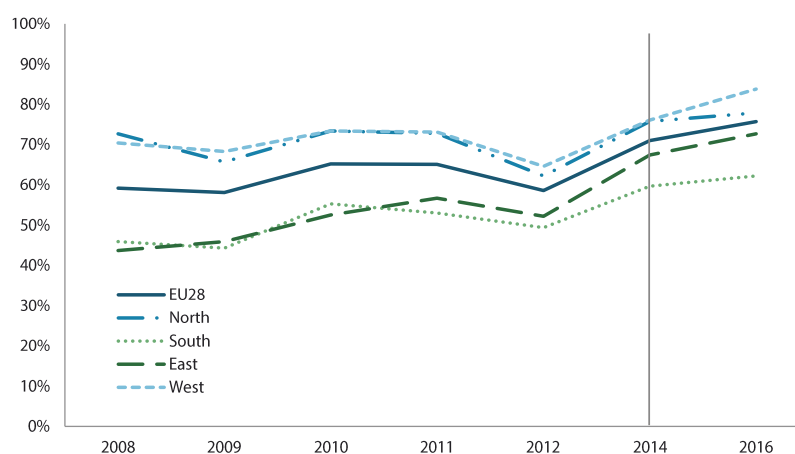


Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... You trust public authorities to protect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with this statement.

As indicated in the figure above, the highest and lowest levels of consumer trust in public authorities to protect consumer rights in 2008 were found in the Northern and Eastern clusters, respectively; however, this situation had changed by 2016, where the highest and lowest levels of trust were respectively found in the Western and Southern clusters. The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of consumer trust in public authorities decreased from 36 to 29 percentage points between 2008 and 2016. Consumer trust in public authorities furthermore increased in all regions between 2008 and 2016.

The following figure shows the percentage of consumers in each regional cluster who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law.

Figure 9: Percentage of consumers who agree that in general, retailers and service providers in their country respect the rules and regulations of consumer law



Source: Own compilation based on the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. In (our country) ... In general, retailers and service providers respect your rights as a consumer. The figure above reports the proportion of consumers who either "Agree" or "Strongly agree".

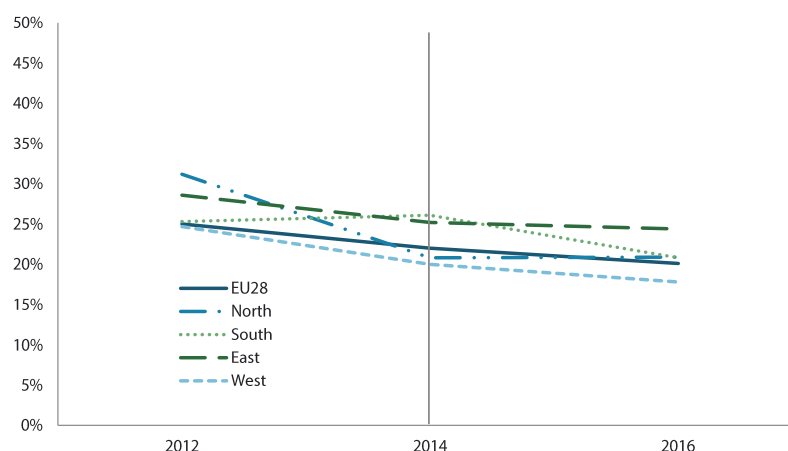
As shown in the figure above, levels of trust in retailers and service providers to respect consumer law are highest in the North and West clusters, which

tracked each other relatively closely up to 2014, and lowest in the South and East clusters, which also tracked each other relatively closely up to 2012, after which the Eastern cluster pulled away more decisively towards the EU28 average.

Therefore, while there has been evidence of convergence on this measure between the North, West, and East clusters (with the spread between these three clusters decreasing by more than half, from 29 to 11 percentage points between 2008 and 2016), convergence has lagged behind with respect to the Southern cluster, where the spread compared to the best performing region only decreased from 27 to 22 percentage points over the same period. However, consumer trust in retailers and service providers has still increased substantively in the Southern cluster between 2008 and 2016, as it has in all regions.

The figure below shows the percentage of consumers in each region who reported encountering at least one problem within the last 12 months that it was legitimate to complain about.

Figure 10 Percentage of consumers who encountered at least one problem within the last 12 months that it was legitimate to complain about



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: 2012: In the last 12 months, have you had legitimate cause for complaint when buying or using any goods or services in (our country)? 2014-2016: In the past 12 months, have you encountered any problem when buying or using any goods or services in (our country) where you thought you had a legitimate cause for complaint?

As indicated in the figure above, the Western cluster has consistently reported the lowest incidence of consumer problems between 2012 and 2016, while the region reporting the highest incidence of problems has changed in each of the three years for which data is available between the North (2012), South (2014) and East (2016) clusters. The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest reported incidence of problems has increased slightly from 6 to 7 percentage points between 2012 and 2016.

III. Average stakeholder effectiveness assessments of activities by programme area and region (results of interviews conducted)

Simple averages of the effectiveness assessments for activities carried out under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by programme area and by regional cluster.

	North	South	East	West	EU28
Product safety	3.4	3.0	4.2	3.6	3.9

<i>Consumer education, information and support to consumer orgs</i>	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.7
<i>Rights and redress</i>	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.4
<i>Enforcement</i>	3.6	3.7	4.1	3.5	3.8
<i>Average across Programme areas</i>	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.7

IV. Key themes from stakeholder interviews

<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees emphasised the importance of working towards a high level of protection across all Member States for consumers in the single market; Some interviewees indicated that substantial disparities in levels of consumer protection still exist between different Member States, with one consumer organisation emphasising the disparity in resources and in consumer awareness across Member States; Several interviewees, particularly from ministries or national authorities, provided examples of EU interventions improving the protection of consumers in their own country.
<i>Product safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some interviewees emphasised that the effectiveness of market surveillance measures depend on resources available at the national level, which vary between Member States; Interviewees considered training activities as well as networking and events to be particularly helpful in providing smaller and/or less well-resourced Member States the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills; Many interviewees commented that product safety activities such as RAPEX had improved product safety for consumers in their country.
<i>Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees generally considered the capacity building activities for national consumer organisations to be effective, with one ECC from a country in the Southern regional cluster commenting that there would not otherwise be financial resources for this kind of training in their country; Consumer organisations at the national and EU level commented that there is a great disparity in (national) financial resources available to consumer organisations which limits their effectiveness; Two consumer organisations from the Southern regional cluster considered that capacity building activities such as Consumer Champion were too focused on Eastern European countries.
<i>Rights and redress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees commented that the networking and events activities were useful forums for sharing best practices between Member States; Some interviewees commented that consumers' access to low-cost redress, particularly through ADR/ODR, varied across Member States.
<i>Enforcement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees considered that training activities, exchanges of officials and other networking and events were useful tools to acquire knowledge and expertise and exchange best practices between Member States; Some interviewees commented that enforcement cooperation (e.g. through the CPC network) was not achieving the maximum benefit due to the lack of resources or understaffing in some Member States.

V. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of the Consumer Programme (results of interviews conducted)

Question: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=121)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union</i>	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.4

VI. Conclusions

- ▶ Indicators of potential wider effects generally do not show evidence of convergence between regional clusters since the start of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, and in some cases show a degree of divergence. However, with only two data points available for the period under the current Consumer Programme (2014 and 2016), it is not possible to draw robust conclusions on trends;
- ▶ Indicators of potential wider effects do show some degree of convergence of the Eastern cluster with the North and West clusters during the period of the previous Consumer Programme 2007-2013. However, for a number of indicators, the Southern cluster remains an outlier under both the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Consumer Programmes;
- ▶ Interviewees from Member States in the Eastern cluster consistently provide the highest average effectiveness scores for activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, while the lowest average effectiveness scores were given by interviewees in the Southern cluster;
- ▶ Interviewees generally commented that the Consumer Programme had improved the level of consumer protection in their Member State, but many noted that disparities still existed between Member States in the level of consumer protection and in financial resources for consumer protection;
- ▶ Interviewees assessed the Consumer Programme to be moderately effective in safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union (average score 3.4), with the highest effectiveness ratings coming from business associations and ministries or national authorities (average score of 3.6 for both) and the lowest coming from consumer organisations (average score of 3.2);
- ▶ Overall, the evidence for convergence between Member States under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 is limited. There is evidence for convergence under the previous Consumer Programme, particularly for Member States in the Eastern regional cluster, but the indicators of potential wider effects as well as stakeholder interviews suggest that there is a potentially a need to focus more convergence-oriented activities on the Southern regional cluster;
- ▶ The available evidence therefore suggests that the change in the focus of capacity building activities for national consumer organisations from the New Member States under the previous Consumer Programme to “consumer organisations in Member States they are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness” under the current Consumer Programme was appropriate.

VII. Key sources

Legislation

- a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
- b) Decision No. 1926/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013)

Annual reports

-

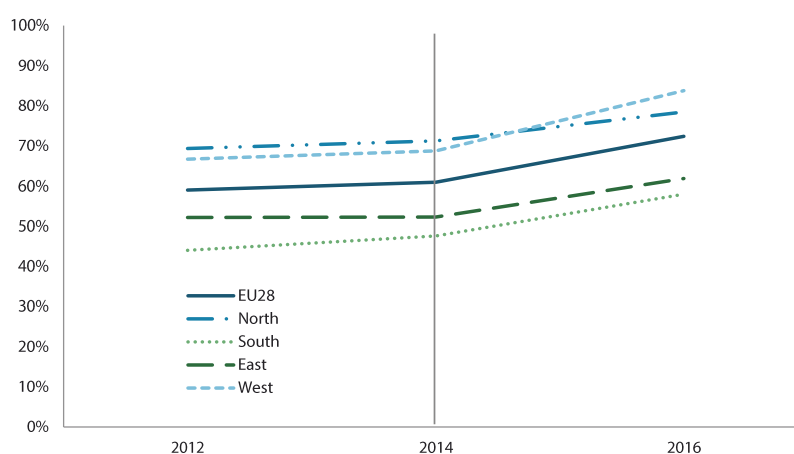
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	c) European Commission, Consumer Conditions Scoreboard (2017 edition) d) European Commission/GfK, Consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2016 – Final report (2017)
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	-

Annex I. Additional data on convergence indicators

Objective III: Rights and redress

The figure below shows the percentage of consumers who indicated that they feel confident shopping online in their own country.

Figure 11: Percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online in their own country



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: You feel confident purchasing goods or services via the Internet from retailers or service providers in (our country). Shown above are those who "Agree" or "Strongly agree".

As indicated in the figure above, the North and West regional clusters show the highest level of confidence in purchasing goods or services online from a trader within their own country, while the South cluster shows the lowest level of confidence. The spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of confidence in shopping online domestically has remained relatively stable between 2012 and 2016, increasing only slightly from 25 percentage points in 2012 to 26 percentage points in 2016.

The figure below shows the percentage of consumers who indicated that they feel confident shopping online in another EU country.

Figure 12: Percentage of consumers who feel confident shopping online in other EU countries



Source: Own compilation based on year-over-year differences indicated in the Commission's 2016 survey of consumers' attitudes toward cross-border trade and consumer protection.d) The vertical line represents the beginning of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020. Question text: You feel confident purchasing goods or services via the Internet from retailers or service providers in another EU country. Shown above are those who "Agree" or "Strongly agree".

The figure above shows considerable divergence after 2014 between the Western region and the three other regions in terms of consumers' levels of confidence in purchasing goods or services online from a trader located in another EU country. Although confidence increased in all regions between 2012 and 2016, it increased substantially more in the Western region compared to the other three, with the spread between the regions with the highest and lowest levels of confidence increasing from 11 to 28 percentage points between 2012 and 2016 as a result. Consumer confidence shopping online in another EU country remains lowest in the South and the East, with the two regions tracking each other quite closely in all three years.

Annex II Fact sheets per action financed under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

1. Scientific advice and risk analysis relevant to consumer health and safety regarding non-food products and services including support for the tasks of the independent scientific committees

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related Defined in Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective I — Safety: to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union.**

Eligible actions Defined in Article 4(a) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Scientific advice and risk analysis relevant to consumer health and safety regarding non-food products and services including support for the tasks of the independent scientific committees** established by Decision 2008/721/EC^{b)}

II. Description of activities

Non-food scientific committees

When preparing policy and proposals related to consumer safety, health and the environment, the Commission relies on independent scientific committees to provide it with sound scientific advice and draw its attention to new and emerging problems.^{p)}

There are two scientific committees currently active:^{c),f),p)}

- ▶ Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS)^{r)}
- ▶ Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER)^{s)}

Additionally, the Inter-Committee Coordination Group (ICCG), composed of the chairs and vice-chairs of the two Committees, helps coordinate the Committees.^{t)}

The SCCS was established in April 2009 by the Commission Decision 2008/721/EC of 5 September 2008.^{b)} The SCCS provides opinions on health and safety risks (chemical, biological, mechanical and other physical risks) of non-food consumer products (e.g. cosmetic products and their ingredients, toys, textiles, clothing, personal care and household products) and services (e.g. tattooing, artificial sun tanning).^{r)}

The SCHEER was established by the Commission Decision C(2015)5383 of 7.8.2015.^{c)} It was created by merging the former Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) with the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR).^{c),f)}

The SCHEER, on request of Commission services, provides opinions on questions concerning health, environmental and emerging risks. In particular, the Committee provides opinions on questions concerning emerging or newly identified health and environmental risks and on broad, complex or multidisciplinary issues that require a comprehensive assessment of risks to consumer safety or public health and related issues not covered by other European Union risk assessment bodies.^{s)}

The advice from the two scientific committees feeds into the work of EU standardisation bodies and into the knowledge base by providing scientific advice in support of actions to further improve consumer product safety in the EU, in particular on cosmetic products, as well as to draw attention to emerging problems.^{d)}

The financial contribution for the advice from the scientific committees consists of expert reimbursement for accommodation, travelling and daily

allowance, of payment of special allowances to the Committee members and external experts, associate members and rapporteurs throughout the year.^{d)}

Moreover, the financial contribution covers also the scientific and technical assistance provided by the Secretariat. This includes organisation of scientific hearings and thematic workshops, as well as direct scientific support for the drafting of documents, such as literature searches, editing, and translation of scientific texts into publications for the general public and updating of the scientific committees' website.^{d)}

The scientific committees are managed by DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) but partly financed under the Consumer Programme.^{e)} Financing for the scientific committees is provided 50% from the Consumer budget and 50% from the Public Health budget.^{e)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
Non-food scientific committees	330.0	231.8	226.0	350.0	1 137.8	1.2%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

Non-food scientific committees ► Support for the tasks of independent scientific committees

V. Outputs and results of activities

Non-food scientific committees All cost figures below appear as reported by the scientific committees. These cost figures represent total costs, which are only partly (up to 50%) financed from the Consumer Programme.

The following table shows a selection of **key figures** for the scientific committees during the reporting period of April 2013 to March 2016.¹⁾

	<u>Nr of adopted documents¹⁾</u>	<u>Nr of meetings¹⁾</u>	<u>Cost (Euro)¹⁾</u>	<u>Cost per opinion (Euro)¹⁾</u>
SCCS	66	107	1 006 122	15 244
SCENIHR	15	143	881 244	58 750
SCHER	6	56	225 011	37 502
Total	87	306	2 112 337	

Additional outputs of the scientific committees' activity during its mandate period from April 2013-March 2016 are:¹⁾

- 15 science fact-sheets and 4 web summaries explaining the opinions in plain language; and
- 33 scientific articles published in scientific journals.

The budget spent for all the activities during this period was around 830 000

EUR a year: 704 000 EUR related to production of opinions and meetings activities, and 126 000 EUR for technical assistance (literature search, editing of opinions, website mastering and dissemination activities).^{l)}

During the term 2013-2016, the **SCCS** adopted 60 opinions in the following areas:^{l)}

- ▶ Hair dyes (23 opinions);
- ▶ Fragrances (3 opinions);
- ▶ Cosmetic ingredients (26 opinions); and
- ▶ Nanomaterial in cosmetics (8 opinions).

In addition, 3 joint opinions were adopted with SCENIHR and SCHER (Synthetic Biology I, II and III) as well as 6 memoranda and statements including the SCCS Notes of Guidance for the testing of the cosmetic ingredients and their safety evaluation.^{l)}

In the period of April 2016 to January 2018, the SCCS has adopted 13 opinions in the following areas:^{u)}

- ▶ Cosmetic ingredients (7 opinions);
- ▶ Hair dyes (5 opinions);
- ▶ Nanomaterials (1 opinion).

Additionally, as of January 2018, the SCCS has adopted 3 preliminary opinions (on cosmetics and fragrances) and 2 additional opinions (on oral hygiene products and sprays) are in the process of being finalised.^{u)}

The focus of the work of **SCENIHR** was on medical devices (6 opinions), physical risks (3 opinions), other areas of interest (Synthetic Biology), nanotechnologies (2 opinions) and on public health (1 opinion – additives used in tobacco products).^{l)}

During its mandate from April 2013 to March 2016, **SCHER** adopted 5 opinions and 1 guidance document. The opinions adopted were:^{l)}

- ▶ Opinion on environmental risks and indirect health effects of mercury from dental amalgam;
- ▶ Opinion on Chromium VI in toys;
- ▶ Opinion on new conclusions regarding future trends of cadmium accumulation in EU arable soils;
- ▶ Opinion on potential risks to human health and the environment from the use of calcium cyanamide as fertiliser; and
- ▶ Opinion on estimates of the amount of toy materials ingested by children.

In the period from April 2016 to January 2017, the newly merged **SCHEER** has adopted 5 opinions in the following areas:^{v)}

- ▶ Non-animal testing (1 opinion);
- ▶ Physical risks (2 opinions);
- ▶ Public health (1 opinion);
- ▶ Toys (1 opinion).

Additionally, as of January 2018, one opinion regarding risks from light-emitting diodes (LEDs) is in the process of being finalised.^{v)}

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

Non-food scientific committees

Second Intermediate Evaluation of the

“The opinions of the Scientific Committees [SCs] have generally been fully responsive to the information needs of the relevant Commission Services, although with some variations between opinions, depending on the nature of the questions addressed and the availability of data and scientific

Functioning of the SANTE non-food Scientific Committees (2016) ^{k)}	<p>literature on the subject.”</p> <p>“A direct impact of the SC activities on the policymaking process is more visible and generally recognised for SCHER and SCCS, while an impact on research policy can be more easily appreciated for SCENIHR, as the two aspects tend to be substitutes for each other.”</p> <p>“The cost of the SCs activities appears adequate overall and aligned with that of comparable risk assessment bodies, but possibly for SCHER after 2013 due to the high incidence of fixed costs on a relatively low number of opinions.”</p> <p>“Most categories of stakeholders showed a clear preference for maintaining the SCs under the Commission management rather than transferring them to an independent agency. The Commission-run model is seemed adding value since, among other things, it is more conducive to impact on EU policy process. However, this close intermingling with policymaking also implies that, while the risk of industry influence is lower than in other work environments, the SC opinions are more subject to the pressure of MS agendas.”</p>
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VII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>b) 2008/721/EC: Commission Decision of 5 August 2008 setting up an advisory structure of Scientific Committees and experts in the field of consumer safety, public health and the environment and repealing Decision 2004/210/EC</p> <p>c) C(2015)5383: Commission Decision of 7.8.2015 on establishing Scientific Committees in the field of public health, consumer safety and the environment</p> <p>d) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme</p> <p>e) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>f) DG SANTE 2016 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>g) DG SANTE 2016 Annual activity report – Annexes</p> <p>h) DG SANTE 2015 Annual Activity Report</p> <p>i) DG SANTE 2015 Annual activity report – Annexes</p> <p>j) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report</p>
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	<p>k) <u>Economisti Associati, Second Intermediate Evaluation of the Functioning of the SANTE non-food Scientific Committees, prepared for the European Commission (2016)</u></p> <p>l) <u>European Commission, Report on the activity of the Scientific Committees term 2013-2016 (2016)</u></p> <p>m) RAND Europe, Intermediate evaluation of Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection non-food scientific committees - Final Report, prepared for the European Commission (2006)</p>

*Other documents/
websites*

- n) Communication with the European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) (2017)
- o) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2017)
- p) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/about_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- q) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/experts/about_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- r) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- s) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/scheer_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- t) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/inter_committee_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- u) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/opinions_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)
- v) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/scheer/opinions_en (Accessed 2018-01-17)

2. Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC, and actions to improve consumer services safety

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective I — Safety: to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union.
Eligible actions	<p>Defined in Article 4(a) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC, and actions to improve consumer services safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development, modernisation and maintenance of IT tools (such as databases, information and communication systems) in particular so that the efficiency of existing systems can be improved by increasing the potential for data export, statistical sorting and extraction, and facilitating the electronic exchange and use of data between Member States; (b) organisation of seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings of stakeholders and experts on risks and enforcement in the area of product safety; (c) exchanges of enforcement officials and training focusing on integrating a risk-based approach; (d) specific joint cooperation actions in the area of the safety of non-food consumer products and services, under Directive 2001/95/EC; (e) monitoring and assessment of the safety of non-food products and services, including the knowledge base for further standards or the establishment of other safety benchmarks, and clarification of the traceability requirements; (f) administrative, enforcement and product traceability cooperation, and development of preventive actions, with third countries other than the ones falling under Article 7 of the Regulation, including with those third countries which are the source of the majority of products notified in the Union for non-conformity with Union legislation; (g) support to bodies recognised by Union legislation for the coordination of enforcement actions between Member States.

II. Description of activities

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<p>In order to ensure that only safe products are placed on the market, the General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC) (GPSD)^{b)} establishes a general safety requirement for all non-food consumer products. According to the GPSD, a safe product is defined as one that “under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use (...), does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use (...) for the safety and health of persons” (GPSD, Article 2).^{b),i)}</p> <p>Article 12 of the GPSD establishes the European rapid alert system for dangerous products (RAPEX) to ensure that information about dangerous products withdrawn from the market and/or recalled from consumers anywhere in Europe is quickly circulated between Member States and the European Commission, so that appropriate action can be taken everywhere in the EU. Thirty-one countries (all countries of the European Union plus the</p>
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EFTA/EEA countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) participate in the system.^{f)}

While RAPEX primarily is a tool of information exchange for competent authorities of Member States and the EU to facilitate market surveillance, it also serves through its website as a source of information for the wider public on products found unsafe. On the RAPEX website, the European Commission publishes information on notified unsafe products on a weekly basis, and since the beginning of 2008 on a daily basis. The website describes in detail the products subject to RAPEX notifications as well as their non-compliance or hazard.^{l)}

Products subject to RAPEX notifications are described using the following classification:^{l)}

- ▶ Product category;
- ▶ Brand and name of the product;
- ▶ Type or number of the model;
- ▶ Batch number or barcode;
- ▶ OECD portal category;
- ▶ Country of origin; and
- ▶ A detailed description of the product with a picture.

Furthermore, information on the reason for the notification is provided, specifying:^{l)}

- ▶ The type and severity of the risk notified;
- ▶ The measures taken;
- ▶ The notifying country; and
- ▶ All countries taking actions in the follow-up.

The purpose of making this information publically available is to enable consumers as well as business operators and other interested stakeholders to identify unsafe products in the market.^{l)}

Related IT tools include the GRAS-RAPEX application for indicating notifications and reactions,^{ab)} the Business Application for manufacturers and distributors to voluntarily report dangerous products,^{aa)} and the Risk Assessment Guidelines (RAG) application,^{y)} which assists authorities in applying the risk assessment guidelines for non-food consumer products.^{z)}

A specific module of the Rapid Alert System has been created to allow for swift flagging of notifications concerning unsafe products from China “RAPEX China”. The Chinese authorities investigate these cases in order to trace back the manufacturers, exporters and businesses concerned with the aim of making them aware of product safety rules in Europe. Where necessary, they take further measures to ensure that those products are no longer produced and shipped to Europe.^{d),s)}

Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety

Each year the European Commission co-finances a number of coordinated market surveillance activities (joint actions) carried out by the network’s Member State authorities.^{d)} The proposed joint actions aim at promotion and coordination of administrative cooperation for the application of Directive 2001/95/EC and ultimately at ensuring a consistent approach towards the effective enforcement of product safety legislation across the internal market.^{c)}

The joint actions cover the following aspects of administrative cross-border cooperation activities:^{c)}

- ▶ Assessment of risks posed by non-food consumer products and product testing;
- ▶ Market surveillance operations and co-operation with customs authorities;

- Exchange of expertise and best practices;
- Meetings and workshops, implementation of an effective communication strategy and collaboration

The activities include a number of product oriented, coordinated, market surveillance actions. On the basis of a list of products agreed by national authorities, specialised laboratories are selected to test the products and assess if they are dangerous. These actions often lead to submission of notifications to the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX).^{d)}

Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)

The exchanges of officials involved in the application of the GPSD contribute to a coordinated and coherent approach to the enforcement of product safety and market surveillance rules across the EU and to exchanging information and best practices between product safety stakeholders.^{c)} Exchanges are open to officials from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.^{x)}

The exchanges may cover visits, coordination of enforcement or investigations, small workshops to tackle common issues among safety and enforcement authorities.^{c)} Generally the exchanges consist of a 3 to 5 days work mission to a host organisation by one visiting fellow (or few) to share/exchange field expertise with their colleagues in other countries. Tailor-made workshops are also organised.^{x)}

E-Enforcement Academy

The E-Enforcement Academy is formally carried out under Action 10 of the Consumer Programme and not under Action 2. However, as product safety officials implementing the GPSD also participate in the E-Enforcement Academy, the data relevant to product safety has been included in this factsheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 2. See the factsheet for Action 10 for more detailed information on the E-Enforcement Academy.

The E-Enforcement Academy started its activities in 2017 (after a preparatory phase and financial commitments since 2015^{n),ac),ae)} to boost the CPC and product safety networks' ability to conduct online investigations.^{m)} It consists of in-person and virtual events, which include webinars, workshops and master classes.^{p)}

Networking and events

Although support for networking and events such as CSN meetings is financed from the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 2, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 2.

The Consumer Safety Network is a consultative experts group chaired by the European Commission and composed of national experts from the administrations of the EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Main areas of discussion are the safety of consumer products (including safety requirements for standardisation), co-ordinated market surveillance activities by Member State authorities, new and emerging issues, relevant data collection, international activities and cooperation, and communication activities.^{s),v),ae)} A permanent CSN subgroup of RAPEX contact points meets on average 1-2 times per year.^{s),v)}

With the globalisation of supply chains and the constant evolution of the markets, the EU works closely with its main trading partners to ensure safety at source, no matter where the product is produced. The International Product Safety Week takes place every 2 years on this basis. It comprises a series of events for non-food, consumer product safety professionals and stakeholders from around the globe, representing regulators, industry, consumer organisations, standard-makers and test laboratories.^{u)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	400.0	852.0	848.4	800.0	2 900.4	3.0%
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	2 000.0	2 185.0	2 026.0	-	6 210.7	6.5%
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	100.0	100.0	52.0	100.0	422.0	0.4%
<i>Networking and events</i>	60.5	453.0	140.0	277.5	930.9	1.0%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	307.8	323.1	98.0	175.0	903.9	1.0%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ RAPEX Total (IT): RAPEX, RAPEX Archive, RAPEX China, RAPEX Publication ▶ IT EU's Rapid Alert System for non-food dangerous products (GRAS-RAPEX) ▶ Risk Assessment Guidelines (IT) ▶ GPSD business application (IT)
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grants for joint cooperation and enforcement actions which aim at improving the effective application of the GPSD
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exchange of GPSD officials
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Safety Network (CSN) Expert Group meetings ▶ CSN sub-group on the safety of ladders ▶ CSN sub-group on products sold online ▶ CSN sub-group on tattoos ▶ CSN sub-group - RAPEX contact points ▶ Market Surveillance Indicators Task Force meeting ▶ Task force for ICSMS internet-supported information and communication system for the pan-European market surveillance of technical products/RAPEX convergence ▶ Organisation and publications for the annual RAPEX media events ▶ RAPEX workshop with businesses ▶ The organisation of the International Product Safety Week 2016
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contribution to the Joint Research Centre research on tattoos: Safety of tattoos and permanent make-up ▶ Contribution to DG Joint Research Center - Injuries and accident data

collection for product safety and market surveillance

- ▶ Online community manager services for consumer product safety platforms
- ▶ Production and dissemination of an awareness-raising video on the functioning of the RAPEX network

V. Outputs and results of activities

Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)

RAPEX statistics are primarily measured in notifications and reactions.

- ▶ A notification consists of information provided by the Rapid Alert System network participating countries concerning measures or actions taken for products presenting risk to the public interests.^{r)}
- ▶ A reaction is information provided by the Rapid Alert System network participating countries in response to a submitted notification. These reactions provide information on whether the notified dangerous product was found also on other network countries and which measures were taken there in order to restrict its marketing and distribution.^{r)}

The following table shows selected indicators related to the number of notifications and reactions during the Programme period.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of notifications</i>	2341 ^{d)}	2072 ^{d)}	2044 ^{d)}	2201 ^{ae)}
<i>Number of notifications (serious risk)</i>	2067 ^{d)}	1703 ^{d)}	1691 ^{d)}	1860 ^{ae)}
<i>% notifications entailing at least one reaction</i>	42% ^{k)}	40% ^{j)}	46% ^{ae)}	46% ^{ae)}
<i>Ratio number of reactions to number of notifications (serious risks)</i>	1.28 ^{k)}	1.56 ^{j)}	1.80 ^{h)}	1.66 ^{ae)}

The five most notified product categories made up 69% of the total notifications in 2016. The most notified product categories in 2016 were:^{d)}

- ▶ Toys (26% of total notifications);
- ▶ Motor vehicles (18% of total notifications);
- ▶ Clothing, textiles and fashion items (13% of total notifications);
- ▶ Electrical appliances and equipment (7% of total notifications); and
- ▶ Childcare articles and children's equipment (5% of total notifications).

The five most notified types of risk in 2016 were:

- ▶ Injuries (25% of total notifications);
- ▶ Chemical (23% of total notifications);
- ▶ Choking (14% of total notifications);
- ▶ Electric shock (11% of total notifications); and
- ▶ Fire (9% of total notifications).

Other risks not listed above made up 18% of total notifications in 2016.^{d)}

China remains the number one country of origin of dangerous products but

figures have gradually been going down since 2013. In 2016, the percentage of notifications for which China (including Hong Kong) was indicated as country of origin went down to 53%, a drop of 9% compared to 2015.^{d)}

Measures in response to notifications can include the withdrawal of dangerous products from the market, sales bans, corrective actions, rejection of imports, etc. When the measures are ordered by national authorities, they are referred to as 'compulsory measures'. Measures initiated by the economic operator (the manufacturer, authorised representative, importer or distributor) are referred to as 'voluntary measures'.^{d)}

The following table shows the breakdown of all reactions per year by the type of measure that was taken by the national authorities in response.

	<u>2014^{f)}</u>	<u>2015^{e)}</u>	<u>2016^{d)}</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Voluntary measures</i>	76%	80%	77%	77% ^{ae)}
<i>Compulsory measures</i>	4%	4%	7%	5% ^{ae)}
<i>Compulsory and voluntary measures</i>	0%	0%	0%	0% ^{ae)}
<i>No measures</i>	20%	16%	16%	18% ^{ae)}

Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety

Five joint actions on product safety have been undertaken each year between 2014 and 2016. The following table shows the focus of these joint actions as well as the participating countries (EU/EEA).^{d)}

	<u>Focus of the joint action</u>	<u>Participating countries (EU/EEA)</u>
2014	<i>Child care articles: safety barriers^{af)}</i>	BE, BG, HR, CZ, FR, EL, IS, LU, MT, ^{af)} NL, PT, ^{af)} SK
	<i>Acoustic toys^{ae)}</i>	AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, FI, DE, IS, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO
	<i>Lighting chains and LED lamps</i>	HR, CZ, DK, FI, DE, LV, NL, NO, PT, SE
	<i>Fireworks</i>	BE, BG, EL, IS, LU, NL, PL, SI
	<i>Power tools: angle grinders^{ag)}</i>	BG, HR, CZ, FI, DE, LV, LU, MT, PL, PT, SK, SI
2015	<i>Childcare articles: soothers and soother holders</i>	BE, BG, CY, DK, FR, EL, IS, IT, LV, LT, MT, NL, RO, SK
	<i>Plastic toys: chemical risks</i>	BE, CY, CZ, EE, DE, EL, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SK, ES, SE
	<i>Household appliances: mixers</i>	BG, CY, CZ, FI, DE, LV, MT, NL, PT, SE
	<i>Playground equipment</i>	BE, CZ, DE, IS, LV, NO, SK, SI
	<i>Power tools (esp. with cutting blades)</i>	BE, CZ, FR, DE, LV, LU, MT, PT
2016	<i>Baby carriers</i>	AT, BE, BG, HR, CZ, IS, LV, LT, MT, PT
	<i>Electric toys</i>	BE, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FR, EL, IS, LV, LT, MT, PL, SK, SE

	<i>Electrical appliances</i>	BG, HR, CY, CZ, FI, FR, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SE
	<i>Power tools: impact drills</i>	BG, HR, DE, LV, LT, MT, PL
	<i>Climbing equipment</i>	BE, BG, HR, DE, IS, LV, LU, MT, NO

Reports are available for the 2014 joint actions on safety barriers, acoustic toys, and power tools. Reports for the remaining 2014 joint actions on lighting chains/LED lamps are expected to become available later in 2017.

- In the 2014 joint action on **fireworks**, 138 products were sampled and tested. The results from the market surveillance exercise were that 40% of the fireworks failed to comply with the physical tests required by the standard, and that 17% failed to comply with the marking and labelling requirements in either the legislation or the standard. Taking both these factors into account a total of 48% of the samples failed to meet the physical requirements or the product information requirements or both.^{ah)}
- In the 2014 joint action on **safety barriers**, 112 products were sampled and tested, including 106 safety barriers, 3 multi-functional barriers and 3 traditional playpens. 77% of the 106 safety barriers failed to meet the requirements of (...) the current standard. All three playpens failed to meet the current relevant standard. Two of the three multifunctional barriers failed to meet all the tests designed by the project participants. Following the results of this exercise, the participating national authorities took enforcement actions on many of the models tested.^{af)}
- In the 2014 joint action on **acoustic toys**, around 2,190 different models of acoustic toys were inspected. 10% of the tested acoustic toys were found non-compliant. The acoustic toy group with the highest non-compliance was cap-firing toys (28%), followed by close-to-the-ear toys (20%) and wind toys (14%). Market surveillance authorities issued 3 recalls, 30 sales-bans and/or withdrawals from the market and 26 RAPEX alerts were notified or are in the process of notification.^{ae)}
- In the 2014 joint action on **power tools (angle grinders)**, 60 grinders were sampled. Sampling took place in the lower end of the market, supposing to find there the most non-compliant grinder-brands. The test results showed (multi) non-conformities in all grinders. Actions taken in response included 20 voluntary market surveillance measures, 15 mandatory market surveillance measures (i.e. sales ban and/or withdrawal from the market) and 34 RAPEX notifications.^{ag)}

Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)

The following table shows the number of exchanges of product safety officials during the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.^{qi)}

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of exchanges</i>	19	31	20	56
<i>Participating countries (beneficiary)</i>	HR, CZ, EE, HU, LT, MT, NL, PL, SI, UK	AT, HR, EE, FR, LV, LI, LT, PL, RO, SI, UK	AT, BG, FR, LU, PL	BE, BG, HR, EE, DE, IS, LT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SI, ES, UK
<i>Participating countries (host)</i>	FI, FR, EL, LT, MT, NL, PL, RO, ES, UK	CZ, DE, HU, IS, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL,	FI, LV, MT, PL, SI, ES, SE	AT, BG, HR, FR, MT, PL, PT, SE

		SI, SE		
		<p>Officials from 21 EU and EEA states took part in exchanges during the Programme Period. The top three Member States of beneficiaries have been Poland (36 officials), Bulgaria (26 officials), and Croatia (10 officials). The top three hosting Member States have been Poland (23 officials), Malta (18 officials), and France (14 officials).^{q)}</p> <p>The countries that have not sent any product safety officials on exchange in this Programme period are Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Slovakia. The following countries have not hosted any exchanges of product safety officials in this Programme period: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway and Slovakia.^{q)}</p>		
<i>E-Enforcement Academy</i>	<p>The following statistics are available for the participation of product safety officials in E-Enforcement Academy activities in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 13 product safety officials from 10 EU/EEA states participated in knowledge webinars; ▶ 4 product safety officials from 2 EU/EEA states participated in coaching webinars; ▶ 6 product safety officials from 5 EU/EEA states participated in advanced webinars; and ▶ 12 product safety officials from 10 EU/EEA states participated in master classes.^{p)} <p><i>For more details on the outputs of the E-Enforcement Academy, see the factsheet for Action 10.</i></p>			
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p>The Consumer Safety Network (CSN) met 13 times between January 2014 and January 2018. The CSN permanent subgroup of RAPEX contact points met 4 times between January 2014 and January 2018.^{v),w)}</p> <p>The European Commission's DG for Justice and Consumers hosted the 2016 edition of the International Product Safety Week from 14 to 18 November in Brussels.^{u)} During the International Product Safety Week 2016, the Commission gathered regulators, manufacturers, e-commerce actors and consumer organisations from more than 40 countries around the globe to exchange about emerging risks and ways forward to address them.^{g)}</p>			

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	<p>Civic Consulting, Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety,</p>	<p>▶ “A survey carried out between December 2014 and July 2015 (...) amongst importers, distributors and retailers in five target sectors (toys, clothing, electrical appliances, cosmetics and childcare articles) in 14 EU Member States found that 66% of the respondents are well aware of RAPEX, as they visit the RAPEX website sometimes, once a month, or once a week. 34% of the survey respondents are less aware of RAPEX, as prior to the study they did not know about RAPEX at all or had heard about RAPEX but had never or only once visited the website before. Amongst small and micro size companies the share of companies less aware of RAPEX</p>
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with a particular focus on SMEs (2015)¹⁾

increases to 49%.¹⁾

- “According to economic operators, the main limitations to currently using the RAPEX website are that it is too time-consuming/not practical to use, the data base is too broad making it cumbersome to identify relevant information, the information is difficult to comprehend or not relevant for the company’s operations, and that national authorities appear to be more trustworthy than European initiatives. A variety of improvements relating to the content and functionality of the RAPEX website would overcome these limitations. Furthermore, research revealed that for the effective promotion of the RAPEX website, general awareness regarding product safety needs to be increased, in particular among micro-sized and small companies.”¹⁾
- Note that in reaction to the results of the study the Commission has improved the RAPEX portal and included the option 'Personalise Your Weekly reports', allowing users to e.g. only receive data on specific product groups, see:

https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/?event=personalisedSubscription.subscribe

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=70, 45, 26, 22, 55)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)</i>	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.1	4.5	3.8
<i>Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety</i>	3.0*	3.2	3.0*	4.2	3.8	3.9
<i>Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)</i>	-	3.0*	-	3.9	4.0*	3.8
<i>E-Enforcement Academy</i>	-	-	-	4.2	5.0	4.2
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.7	3.3	3.5*	4.3	4.3	4.0

*Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

Legislation

- a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
- b) Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 December 2001 on

	general product safety (GPSD)
	c) European Commission, Annex to the Commission implementing decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>d) <u>Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2016 Annual Report</u></p> <p>e) Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2015 Annual Report</p> <p>f) Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2014 Annual Report</p> <p>g) DG JUST Annual activity report 2016</p> <p>h) DG JUST Annual activity report 2016 – Annexes</p> <p>i) DG JUST Annual activity report 2015</p> <p>j) DG JUST Annual activity report 2015 – Annexes</p> <p>k) DG SANCO Annual activity report 2014</p>
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	<p>l) Civic Consulting, Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs (2015)</p> <p>m) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016)</p> <p>n) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)</p> <p>ac) <u>UNE Consortium, Support Services to Develop and Provide Training in Internet Investigations for the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) and Consumer Product Safety Networks (CSN) - E-Enforcement Academy (2017), prepared for the European Commission</u></p> <p>ae) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Acoustic toys (2017)</p> <p>af) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Safety barriers (2017)</p> <p>ag) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Power tools (2017)</p> <p>ah) Prosafe, Joint Action 2014 GPSD – Final technical report, Fireworks 2 (2018)</p>
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	<p>o) BEUC/vzbv, The challenge of protecting EU consumers in global online markets (Nov 2017)</p> <p>p) CHAFAEA, Participation in interactive deliverables - E-Enforcement Academy (2017)</p> <p>q) CHAFAEA, Exchange of officials 2014-2017 (2017)</p> <p>r) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/repository/content/pages/rapex/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>s) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/international_cooperation/bilateral_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>t) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/cooperation_with_stakeholders/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>u) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/international_cooperation/international_product_safety_week/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>v) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=935 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>w) https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/63000727-616d-429d-824d-f689471ee277 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>x) http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/consumers/exchange-of-officials-index_en.html (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>y) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer-safety/rag/ (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>z) https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer-safety/rag/?event=documentation&id=RAG.pdf (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>aa) https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/gpsd-ba/index.do (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ab) http://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register/details.htm?id=42907 (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ad) http://www.prosafe.org/index.php/about-us/contentall-comcontent-views/what-is-prosafe (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>ae) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)</p>

3. Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related Defined in Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective I — Safety: to consolidate and enhance product safety through effective market surveillance throughout the Union.**

Eligible actions Defined in Article 4(a) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics:**
 (a) **maintenance of the Cosmetic Products notification Portal** set up under Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council;^{b)}
 (b) **maintenance of the database on cosmetics ingredients** to support the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009.^{b)}

II. Description of activities

EU databases on cosmetics

COSING is the European Commission database for information on cosmetic substances and ingredients contained in the:ⁱ⁾

- ▶ Cosmetics Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council;^{b)}
- ▶ Cosmetics Directive 76/768/EEC (Cosmetics Directive), as amended;^{c)}
- ▶ Inventory of Cosmetic Ingredients^{d)} as amended by Decision 2006/257/EC establishing a common nomenclature of ingredients employed for labelling cosmetic products throughout the EU;^{e)}
- ▶ Opinions on cosmetic ingredients of the Scientific Committee for Consumer Safety.^{k)}

CAS [Chemical Abstracts Service], ELINCS [European List of Notified Chemical Substances] or EINECS [European Inventory of Existing Commercial Chemical Substances] numbers can be searched for in COSING.ⁱ⁾

The COSING database includes all data since the adoption of the Cosmetics Directive in 1976. Current data is listed as “active”, while historical data is listed as “not active”.ⁱ⁾

The Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP) is a free of charge online notification system created for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 on cosmetic products.^{b)} When a product has been notified in the CPNP, there is no need for any further notification at the national level within the EU.^{j)}

Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 (Article 13) requires that the responsible persons and, under certain circumstances, the distributors of cosmetic products submit some information about the products they place or make available on the European market through the CPNP.^{j)}

The CPNP makes this information available electronically to:

- ▶ Competent Authorities (for the purposes of market surveillance, market analysis, evaluation and consumer information); and
- ▶ Poison Centres or similar bodies established by EU countries (for the purposes of medical treatment).

The CPNP is accessible to:

- ▶ Competent Authorities;
- ▶ European Poison Centres;

- ▶ Cosmetic products responsible persons; and
- ▶ Distributors of cosmetic products.

The CPNP also contains a separate module (Article 16) for cosmetic products containing nanomaterials. This notification has to be done in addition to the notification under Article 13.^{j)}

Notification through the CPNP is a legal requirement while providing information to COSING is not. Cosmetic products are covered to some extent by RAPEX (see the factsheet for Action 2), but this is minor.^{g)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>EU databases on cosmetics</i>	525.0	274.5	281.7	548.1	1 629.3	1.7%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>EU databases on cosmetics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintenance and update of the COSING (Cosmetics Ingredients) application ▶ CPNP (Cosmetic Products Notification Portal) - maintenance and application support
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V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>EU databases on cosmetics</i>	<p>The COSING database includes an inventory of 25 938 cosmetic ingredients, and it was updated with around 6000 new ingredients in the period 2014-2017. COSING has an average of almost 1 200 000 views per month. COSING is by far the most visited DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) database. (For comparison, the second most visited database is NANDO [New Approach Notified and Designated Organisations Information System], with an average of 500 000 views per month.)^{g),h)}</p> <p>As of December 2017 more than 1 600 000 products have been notified in the CPNP by 42 208 organisations (38 864 cosmetic products responsible persons and 3 344 distributors of cosmetic products).^{g)}</p>
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VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>EU databases on cosmetics</i>	No previous assessments/evaluations are available for this Action
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VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=15)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
EU databases on cosmetics	-	3.9	-	3.7	4.0*	3.8

*Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>b) Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on cosmetic products</p> <p>c) Council Directive 76/768/EEC of 27 July 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products (Cosmetics Directive)</p> <p>d) 96/335/EC: Commission Decision of 8 May 1996 establishing an inventory and a common nomenclature of ingredients employed in cosmetic products</p> <p>e) 2006/257/EC: Commission Decision of 9 February 2006 amending Decision 96/335/EC establishing an inventory and a common nomenclature of ingredients employed in cosmetic products</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	f) DG SANCO Annual activity report 2014
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	-
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	<p>g) Communication with the European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) (2017, 2018)</p> <p>h) European Commission, DG GROW internet use report (2016)</p> <p>i) https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/cosmetics/cosing_en (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>j) https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/cosmetics/cnpn_en (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p> <p>k) https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/opinions_en (Accessed 2018-01-19)</p>

4. Building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3 (1) (b) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.
Eligible actions	Defined in Article 4 (b) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Building and improving access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs , providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) union-wide studies and analysis on consumers and consumer markets in order to design smart and targeted regulations, to detect any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs; (b) development and maintenance of databases, in particular to make the data collected available to stakeholders such as consumer organisations, national authorities and researchers; (c) development and analysis of national statistical and other relevant evidence. Collection, in particular, of national data and indicators on prices, complaints, enforcement, redress will be developed in collaboration with national stakeholders.

II. Description of activities

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	Through the Consumer Markets Scoreboard described below, the Commission monitors the functioning of the most important goods and services markets in the EU. Based on these results, the Commission identifies markets that do not function well for consumers and which require further in-depth research. Consumer market studies explore various areas and issues that have impact on functioning of the market for consumers, such as choice, quality, safety, health, sustainability, prices and information, as well as consumer understanding, behaviour and decision making. These findings are then used as a basis to improve or change existing policies. ^{d)}
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	The Consumer Scoreboards monitor how the single market is performing for EU consumers and signal potential problems. Published since 2008, they aim to ensure better monitoring of consumer outcomes and provide evidence to inform policy. Scoreboard findings are used by national policymakers and stakeholders to assess the impact of their activities over time and benchmark the situation

against other Member States. Scoreboards also serve as a key reference for evaluations and impact assessments for policy development and orientations, including in the context of the European Semester.

There are two types of Scoreboards, published in alternate years: the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard. Note that between 2010 and 2012 they were published every half year – in spring the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard, in autumn the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.

The main data sources for the Scoreboards are the following EU-wide surveys:

- ▶ Market Monitoring Survey, which feeds into the Consumer Markets Scoreboard
- ▶ Consumer and retailer surveys, which feed into the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard^{e)}

Detailed data from the Consumer Scoreboards are disseminated through a user-friendly database (extractions can be saved in spreadsheet format).^{f)}

The **Consumer Conditions Scoreboard** monitors national conditions for consumers in 3 dimensions (knowledge and trust, compliance and enforcement, complaints and dispute resolution) and examines progress in the integration of the EU retail market based on the level of business-to-consumer cross-border transactions and the development of e-commerce.^{e)}

The Scoreboard mainly draws from two regular surveys of consumers and retailers. It combines, where relevant, the two perspectives since they are likely to cross-validate and complement one another. This helps to increase the reliability of the measurements. The surveys' results are complemented by data from other sources such as the results of compliance checks coordinated by the Commission or complaints received by the European Consumer Centres.

Scoreboard findings are of interest to consumer and business stakeholders and to policymakers, at both EU and national level. Scoreboard data is unique in that it can be used to compare consumer conditions across countries and across time. It informs a broad range of EU and national policies, with immediate relevance for consumer and single market policies (in particular the Digital Single Market). Moreover, Scoreboard indicators are correlated with key social, economic and governance indicators monitored by international organisations. This highlights the relevance of the consumer perspective across policy areas.^{b)}

The **Consumer Markets Scoreboard** surveys consumers with recent purchasing experiences to track the performance of over 40 consumer markets on key indicators such as trust that seller respect consumer protection rules, comparability of offers, the choice available in the market, the extent to which consumer expectations are met, and detriment caused by problems that consumers encounter. Other relevant indicators are also monitored and analysed, such as switching and prices.^{e)}

Networking and events

Although support for networking and events such as Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) meetings is financed from the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 4, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 4.

The Consumer Markets Expert Group's mission is to discuss the issues which are most relevant at the national level in relation to the Consumer Scoreboards as well as market studies and studies on consumer behaviour.

Members are Member States and EEA public authorities⁸⁾

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Consumer market studies</i>	528.1	2 201.1	1746.8	620.0	5 095.9	5.3%
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	3226.1	1 380.9	2585.4	1 711.0	8 903.4	9.3%
<i>Networking and events</i>	1.3	1.6	0	10.0	12.9	< 0.1%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on measuring consumer detriment in the European Union ▶ Consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability ▶ Study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union ▶ Study on the sharing economy ▶ Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate for consumers in the European Union ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union ▶ In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit ▶ Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer market monitoring survey ▶ Publication (and translation) of the scoreboards ▶ Provision of two online consumer surveys as support and evidence base to a Commission study: "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most." ▶ IT - Consumer Market Scoreboard Database (CSD) ▶ Surveys: consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection ▶ Surveys: business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) meetings

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Consumer market studies</i>	Ten consumer market studies have been financed between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (see list above)
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<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	<p>Surveys of consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection and business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection were carried out in 2014 and in 2016. These surveys fed into the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards that were published in 2015 and 2017.^{d)}</p> <p>The consumer market monitoring survey was carried out in 2015 and fed into the 2016 edition of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.^{d)}</p> <p>In addition to the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard, two online consumer surveys were furthermore conducted to provide support and an evidence base to a Commission study "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most."</p>
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p>The CMEG met twice a year in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and once in 2017. As of 2017 it has 40 member authorities representing the 28 Member States, Iceland and Norway.^{e)}</p>

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition, European Commission ^{b)}	<p>"Between the 2013 and the 2015 editions, the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard has undergone a thorough methodological revision — carried out in close cooperation with the Commission's Joint Research Centre and in consultation with Member States' experts — with a view to further enhancing its quality and policy impact. At the same time, comparability with previous Scoreboards has been preserved as much as possible."</p>
	Consumer Markets Scoreboard 12th edition (2016), European Commission ^{c)}	<p>"The Consumer Markets Scoreboard has also undergone a thorough methodological revision, carried out in consultation with stakeholders and with expert support from the Commission's Joint Research Centre. As part of this revision, a number of methodological changes were introduced in the survey methodology in 2015 with a view to deepening the understanding of the reasons why respondents assess markets as they do."</p>

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=76, 77)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Consumer market studies</i>	3.8	3.5	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.8
<i>Consumer scoreboards and surveys</i>	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
<i>Annual reports</i>	n.a.
<i>Studies/reports/ EC documents</i>	b) Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition, European Commission c) Consumer Markets Scoreboard 12th edition (2016), European Commission Consumer conditions in the EU: Revised framework and empirical investigation (2015), JRC/DG Justice and Consumers Consumer Markets Scoreboard: Refinement, Further development and Analysis of Micro-data (2015), JRC/DG Justice and Consumers
<i>Other documents/ websites</i>	d) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/market_studies/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-15) e) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-15) f) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/dissemination_database/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-15) g) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2387 (Accessed 2018-01-15) h) Activity report 19th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th June 2017 (see g) above) i) Activity report 18th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) , Thursday 29th September 2016 (see g) above) j) Activity report 17th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) , Wednesday 17th February 2016 (see g) above) k) Activity report 16th Meeting of the Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) Wednesday 30 September 2015 (see g) above) l) Activity report 15th Meeting of the Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) Thursday 5 February 2015 (see g) above) m) Interviews and communication with European Commission officials, DG Justice and Consumers, 2017

5. Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related

Defined in Article 3 (1) (b) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.**

Eligible actions

Defined in Article 4 (b) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise:**

- (a) **financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations** representing consumer interests in accordance with Article 5(1) of this Regulation;
- (b) **capacity building for regional, national and European consumer organisations**, notably through training available in various languages and throughout the Union and exchange of best practices and expertise for staff members, in particular for consumer organisations in Member States where they are not sufficiently developed or which demonstrate a relatively low level of consumer confidence and awareness as evidenced by monitoring of consumer markets and the consumer environment in the Member States;
- (c) **greater transparency and more exchanges of good practice and expertise, in particular through enhanced networking**, assisted by the setting up of an online portal for consumer organisations to provide an interactive exchange and networking area and make materials produced during training courses freely available;
- (d) **support to international bodies** promoting principles and policies which are consistent with the objectives of the Programme.

II. Description of activities

Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)

BEUC (Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs) is an international non-profit making association based in Brussels and established by consumer organisations in EU countries and other European countries.

The objective of the organisation, as stated in its statutes is 'to bring together consumer organisations of the European Union and other European countries in order to promote, defend and represent the interests of European consumers in the elaboration and implementation of European Union policies with the European Union institutions and with other bodies.

'To this end, the Association shall, in particular:

- ▶ seek by all legitimate means at its disposal to influence the evolution of European Union policies in the interest of consumers;
- ▶ keep up-to-date documentation and carry out the necessary research;
- ▶ keep its member organisations regularly informed of developments in

	<p>European Union policy which affect consumers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ promote initiatives corresponding to its objectives to be undertaken by the member organisations in their respective countries; ▶ encourage co-operation among member organisations; ▶ take all other useful initiatives as may further its objectives.ⁿ⁾ <p>BEUC's members include 43 independent national consumer organisations from 31 European countries (EU, EEA and applicant countries).^{q)}</p> <p>The EU budget 2014-2019 provides for a budget line that allocates EU operational grants to European consumer organisations. Under this budget, BEUC receives a grant (to be applied for on a yearly basis). In 2016, this EU Operational Grant represented 38 % of the operational BEUC budget and 32% of the total budget.^{q)}</p>
Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)	<p>Consumer Champion is a capacity building programme for consumer professionals providing training, resources and networking opportunities. It was launched in 2014^{m)} and is designed for the management teams of consumer entities, consumer professionals, consumer experts and professional volunteers.^{r)} The global objective is to provide capacity building activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of consumer organisations (including other actors and stakeholders in consumer policy). It also intends to promote exchange of practices between Consumer Professionals.</p> <p>Building on the previous "TRACE" programme (see the fact sheet for Action 5 under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013), Consumer Champion is divided into 5 main activities complementing each other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ web networking platform; ▶ e-learning courses; ▶ class teaching courses; ▶ local training; and ▶ expert courses.^{r)}
Networking and events	<p><i>Although support for networking and events such as ECCG meetings is financed from the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 5, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 5.</i></p> <p>The European Consumer Consultative Group is the Commission's main forum to consult with national and European consumer organisations.</p> <p>Since its establishment in 1973, the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) assists the Commission by providing expert advice on EU consumer related issues, issuing opinions and participating in different fora.</p> <p>It advises and guides the Commission in the creation of policies and activities affecting consumers. It also informs the Commission of developments in consumer policy in EU countries, and acts as a source of information on community action for other national organisations.</p> <p>The ECCG's membership consists of representatives from national and European consumer organisations. The ECCG meets 2-3 times a year in Brussels, as well as on ad hoc basis, depending on the need.^{s)}</p>

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	1 400.0	1 400.0	1 400.0	1 750.0	5 950.0	6.2%
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>	779.9	600.0	500.0	0.0	1 879.9	2.0%
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.2	37.5	61.5	50.0	152.2	< 0.1%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	► Financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations representing consumer interests (Operating grants)
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>	► Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) notably through: local training, e-learning courses, exchange of best practices and expertise
<i>Networking and events</i>	► Meetings of the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) ► Meeting for action “Development and organisation of training courses on financial advice to consumers”

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	In the context of the multi-annual framework programme, BEUC had indicated key performance indicators. The following table presents a selection of these indicators from BEUC’s Annual Activity Reports. ^{b),c),d)}
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	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Web page hits (unique users)</i>	58 812	162 659	185 930	<i>Not yet available</i>
<i>Downloads</i>	20 322	16 283	17 071	-
<i>Twitter followers</i>	3 545	10 975	14 154	-
<i>Press quotations</i>	1 361	4 015	5 374	-
<i>Interviews delivered</i>	101	84	96	-
<i>Press releases</i>	24	53	51	-
<i>Conferences organised</i>	9	3	6	-
<i>Conferences participated in (as speaker)</i>	170	212	261	-
<i>Working</i>	58	56	43	-

<i>groups participated in</i>				
<i>Training sessions organised</i>	9	9	10	-
<i>Commissioner meetings</i>	9	11	9	-
<i>Expert meetings</i>	6	12	23	-

BEUC reports that it has achieved several important objectives defined in its work programme. These achievements can be summarized as follows:^{b)}

- ▶ Adoption of regulatory initiatives, including guidelines having BEUC's recommendations taken into account in the adoption of regulatory initiatives, e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation or Interpretive Guidelines on Air Passenger Rights;
- ▶ Legislation in the making having BEUC's demands taken into account in European Parliament proposals and resolutions, e.g. a proposal to tackle geo-blocking in e-commerce);
- ▶ Policy developments within the EU institutions having BEUC's demands taken into account in European Commission communications such as the Communication on "A European Agenda for the Collaborative Economy";
- ▶ Communications achievements e.g. over 200 000 views on BEUC's geo-blocking video on YouTube in 2016;
- ▶ Acknowledgement of BEUC as a key stakeholder e.g. high-level meetings with Commissioners/Vice Presidents; Director-Generals; appointments of BEUC staff to high-level working groups.

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)

The following table shows the cumulative number of visitors, registered users, and registered organisations on the Consumer Champion online platform. Note that this table contains visitors, users and organisations from eligible countries only (i.e. EU Member States, EEA, candidate countries and potential candidates).^{p)}

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Visitors</i>	1 247	9 041	18 978	40 066
<i>Registered users</i>	212	620	1046	1587
<i>Registered organisations</i>	852	941	898	1096

Including non-eligible countries, Consumer Champion has seen 35,536 website visitors since the launch of the platform, with 220 news items published, 53 blogs written including 41 from users, and 126 events published. 542 e-learners are using the online modules.^{o)}

The Consumer Champion online platform currently consists of 6 modules:

- ▶ Consumer Law I (basic level);
- ▶ Consumer Law II (advanced level);
- ▶ Energy;
- ▶ Financial Services;

- ▶ Telecommunications;
- ▶ Digital Services.

These modules are each available in 14 languages: English, Croatian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Estonian, Greek, and Spanish.^{p)}

BEUC notes that the Consumer Champion platform did not have the success expected. Consumer Professionals were not active and engaged on the platform and the online community is hardly taking off. This might be due to several reasons such as lack of time from Consumer Professionals; the difficulty of navigating the platform; language obstacles; culture in the consumer movement (i.e. face to face networking preferred over online tools); other platforms already used (e.g. BEUC's networking platform).^{o)}

BEUC also stated that the e-learning modules had a low participation rate compared to the considerable efforts put in developing, translating and promoting them. The modules do apparently not respond to the consumer professionals needs and the format suggested might be time-consuming for them. As stated during the ECCG meeting in October 2017 by several members, Consumer Professionals are very often overloaded by work and some of them work on a voluntary basis. They also mentioned the time a module takes to follow. On top of this and despite the very good content, the topics are too EU oriented and difficult to implement on a daily basis. Some other members specified that their needs in terms of training are more face-to-face trainings.^{o)}

Under the Consumer Champion program, 21 local courses, including 6 upcoming courses,^{o)} have been organised in 9 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries: Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Cyprus.^{k)s)} These courses have resulted in 279 trained Consumer Professionals in these countries.^{o)}

Local courses are the most appreciated services within the programme. Evaluations were carried during the local courses and 3 months after. Overall, participants found the courses very useful for their daily work (85% graded the content of the training as being very useful) and could implement the information received for giving better and more effective advice to consumers. Participants noted that more local courses would be useful for their countries, for instance on telecom, digital, energy or banking issues, but also e-commerce, market surveillance, project development and funding.^{k)}

According to BEUC, the local courses are the capacity building tool that works better because they create a unique space/opportunity for networking with all the stakeholders in the consumer movement (ministries, COs, ECCs, regulators, etc.) as it is an opportunity for all the consumer professionals from different sectors of entities to meet for the first time, and the courses are in the national language and considering all the national specificities.^{o)}

Networking and events

The ECCG met twice a year in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. As of 2017 it has 34 members, 26 alternate members and 4 observers.

The ECCG has issued opinions on the following consumer issues:^{t)}

- ▶ Opinion on the Clean Energy for All Europeans package (June 2017);
- ▶ Flash Opinion on the regulatory cooperation in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) (May 2015);
- ▶ Opinion on the TTIP: Opportunities and threats for consumers (June 2014).

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)</i>	Evaluation of financial contributions to EU consumer organisations (BEUC) 2007-2011 (2013) ⁿ⁾	<p>"In January 2013, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) commissioned... an external evaluation of EU 2007-2011 financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations."</p> <p>"The evaluation found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ BEUC made a significant contribution in 2008-12 to EU policy-making and representing consumer interests in contacts with EU institutions, in particular the European Commission and the European Parliament. ▶ There is room to improve BEUC's performance monitoring system, which is predominantly output-based (with no indicators of results or impacts). ... ▶ Based on the available information, BEUC is a reasonably efficient and well-functioning organisation. ... ▶ There is room for improvement in terms of transparency as to how the grant (as distinct from funding from other sources) is actually used. ... ▶ The European added value of EU financial support for BEUC lies in: its dialogue with businesses on the functioning of the Single Market; its effectiveness in defending consumer rights; the coordination of action at EU level; and the economies of scale due to this coordination. ▶ Without EU financial support, BEUC's resources and cost-effectiveness would probably have diminished significantly, with direct consequences for the scale and quality of outputs and impacts. ..." <p>"The evaluation recommended that despite the current budgetary context and stress on spending cuts, an increase of the EU's operating grant to BEUC is justified on several grounds: to take account of inflation; to address the current structural deficit in BEUC's ordinary budget; and to respond to the increase in BEUC's workload resulting from the greater emphasis on representing consumers' interests in EU policy-making."</p>
	Older evaluations	Older evaluations of EU financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) were carried out for the periods of 2000-2003 (in 2006) and 1995-1999 (in 2001). See the Action 5 Fact Sheet under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 for details.
<i>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)</i>		▶ No evaluation conducted during the Programme period.

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=51, 36, 83)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)	3.5*	4.5	4.2	3.6	4.0*	4.2
Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)	3.0*	4.2	3.9	3.7	-	3.9
Networking and events	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5*	4.0

Notes: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of consumer information and education, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV). () The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
<i>Annual reports</i>	b) BEUC Annual report 2016 c) BEUC Annual report 2015 d) BEUC Annual report 2014 e) BEUC Final activity report 2016 f) BEUC Final activity report 2015 g) BEUC Final activity report 2014 h) Chafea 2016 Annual activity report i) Chafea 2015 Annual activity report j) Chafea 2014 Annual activity report
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	k) Draft final report, Request for specific services 2015 85 03 "Organisation of local training courses, translation of e-learning modules, website promotion, moderation, hosting and maintenance" under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAA (2017) l) Final report, Request for specific services 2014 85 10 – under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAA (2016) m) Final report, Request for specific services 2014 85 01 – under the framework contract EAHC/2013/CP/02, presented to CHAFAA (2015) n) Evaluation of EU financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) 2007-2011, prepared by Van Dijk Management Consultants, 16 October 2013
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	o) BEUC, Consumer Champion evaluation and way forward - Concept note (2017) p) Consumer Champion website report (July-August 2017) q) http://www.beuc.eu/ (Accessed 2017-12-19) r) http://www.consumerchampion.eu/ (Accessed 2017-12-19) s) https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/consumers/consumer-protection/our-partners-consumer-issues/european-consumer-consultative-group-eccg_en (Accessed 2017-12-19) t) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=849&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1 (Accessed 2017-12-19)

6. Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective II — Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.
Eligible actions	<p>Defined in Article 4(b) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services</p> <p>(a) awareness-raising campaigns on issues affecting consumers, including through joint actions with Member States;</p> <p>(b) actions enhancing the transparency of consumers markets with regard to, for instance, retail financial products, energy, digital and telecommunications, transport;</p> <p>(c) actions facilitating consumers' access to relevant, comparable, reliable and easily accessible information on goods, services and markets, particularly on prices, quality and sustainability of goods and services, whether this be offline or online, for instance through comparison websites and actions ensuring the high quality and trustworthiness of such websites, including for cross-border purchases;</p> <p>(d) actions enhancing consumers' access to information on sustainable consumption of goods and services;</p> <p>(e) support to events concerning consumer policy of the Union which are organised by the Member State holding the Presidency of Council configurations, other than that of Foreign Affairs on issues in line with established Union policy priorities;</p> <p>(f) financial contributions to national complaint bodies to assist with the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries;</p> <p>(g) support to Union-wide bodies for the development of codes of conduct, best practices and guidelines for price, quality, and sustainability comparison, including through comparison websites;</p> <p>(h) support for communication on consumer issues, including by encouraging the dissemination by the media of correct and relevant information on consumer issues.</p>

II. Description of activities

<i>EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns</i>	A key part of the EU consumer rights information effort has focused on the Member States that have joined the EU recently. This type of campaign has been carried out in all new Member States that joined the EU on or after 1 May 2004. ^{j)} Awareness-raising campaigns have been developed and launched on a country by country basis, introducing citizens to their newly acquired
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rights. This has been done through multi-media advertising and public and media relations activities, including social media.^{l)}

EU information/awareness raising campaigns have also been carried out for new consumer rights that are subject to harmonised rules, or sectors with significant cross-border trade or high consumer detriment.^{l)}

European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) and related support measures

In 2010, the European Commission issued a Recommendation on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries.^{b)} The Recommendation calls on third-party complaint bodies to classify complaints according to a common taxonomy and to report the data to the Commission. In order to support the implementation of this methodology, the Commission provides financial support and a European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) IT tool.ⁿ⁾

The objective of the EU financial support (grants) is the establishment or improvement of IT systems enabling the transmission of harmonised data concerning consumer complaints to the Commission as well as the transmission of all harmonised data concerning consumer complaints being in the possession of the complaint body concerned to the Commission.ⁿ⁾

With respect to IT support, the Commission has developed a two-level approach:ⁿ⁾

- Organisations that do not have a specific data collection IT system in place are invited to use the European Consumer Complaints Registration System IT Tool. The IT Tool is provided free of charge to complaint bodies that are willing to adopt the methodology and to provide data to the Commission.
- Organisations with existing data collection IT systems are invited to apply the harmonised methodology to their local IT systems and to adapt them accordingly. To this end, the Commission has developed technical specifications to facilitate the adaptation of the systems and the transfer of data to the Commission according to the harmonised methodology.

Networking and events

Support is provided for events concerning consumer policy of the Union which are organised by the Member State holding the Presidency of Council configurations on issues in line with established Union policy priorities.^{c)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns</i>	1429.9	155.3	2160.1	5300.5	9045.8	9.5%
<i>ECCRS and related support measures</i>	252.1	144.9	130.0	0	527.0	0.6%
<i>Networking and events</i>	83.4	87.8	50.0	100.0	321.2	0.3%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	26.0	0	0	246.6	272.6	0.3%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

EU consumer ► Information campaign "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out

<i>information/awareness raising campaigns</i>	<p>credit"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer advice services in Croatia in support of an EU information campaign ▶ Awareness raising on energy efficiency - Communication campaign targeting energy poor households ▶ Surveys on information campaign on consumer rights in Croatia ▶ Production of a video presenting consumer rights of an EU citizen ▶ Support for communication on consumer issues - Contribution to SANCO horizontal communication actions ▶ Development of infographics for 4 consumer market studies ▶ Dissemination plan for the digital contracts video ▶ Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs ▶ Evaluation of the information campaign "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit" ▶ Ex-ante evaluation of communication activities to leisure travellers on the Package Travel Directive ▶ Ex-ante evaluation for awareness raising campaign on switching and energy efficiency ▶ Communication/information material specifically for traders ▶ Consumer education/information plan ▶ Awareness-raising campaign in MS related to New Deal for Consumers
<i>ECCRS and related support measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grants for complaint handling bodies to implement Commission recommendation on harmonised registration of consumer complaints ▶ IT - European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS)
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EU Presidency events
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participation in the OECD Statistical Information System Collaboration Community ▶ Update, development, maintenance and hosting of IT systems, including: Dissemination of Consumer Statistics; European Consumer Complaints Registration System ▶ JUST contribution to the mid-term review of CHAFAA

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns</i>	<p>The 'Knowing your consumer rights with regard to credit agreements' campaign was launched in 2013 to raise awareness among the target audience (consumers between the age of 18 and 35) of a specific subset of rights granted by the EU Consumer Credit Directive.</p> <p>The first round of this campaign was funded under the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme (further details are provided in the fact sheet for Action 10 of the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme).</p> <p>A second round of the campaign was launched in 2015 in Austria and the Czech Republic and ran until the end of April 2016.^{e),h),r)} The three rights promoted by the campaign were: the right to be provided with "pre-contractual information" in a standardised format; the right to withdraw from the contract within 14 days without giving any explanation; and the</p>
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right to repay the credit earlier than foreseen in the contract. The campaign messages were: *'It's Your Right: To Get Clarity, To Change Your Mind, To Pay Back Ahead of Time'*. A range of tools were used and included a survey, stakeholder engagement, media relations and social media, online marketing, communication tools, web pages on europa.eu and events. During the campaign period:^{f)}

- ▶ In Austria, 60 articles were published in the media. The number of viewers, listeners, and online and print readers of all media activities (including paid advertorials and screen advertising in the Vienna metro) was 37.8 million;
- ▶ In the Czech Republic, 50 articles were published in the media. The number of viewers, listeners, and online and print readers of all media activities (including paid advertorials) was 37.4 million;
- ▶ The Facebook reach through the European Commission's central channels was 92,000 for Facebook and potentially 3 million for Twitter. The reach of owned social media channels was 754,000 for Facebook and 300,000 for Twitter in Austria and 126,000 for Facebook and 175,000 in the Czech Republic. The reach of the social media channels on which coverage was purchased was 1.9 million for Facebook and 11,000 for Twitter in Austria, and 860,000 for Facebook and 216,000 for Twitter in the Czech Republic;
- ▶ Online advertising on social media produced 20,000 clicks in Austria and 35,000 clicks in the Czech Republic;
- ▶ Dedicated pages on europa.eu drew 6,000 unique visits for the German-language page targeting Austria and 3,500 visits for the Czech-language page.

From October 2014 to October 2015, CHAFEA implemented an **information campaign on consumer rights in Croatia**, whose slogan was "Consumers get to know your rights!". The campaign focused on the issues that are the most problematic for Croatian consumers as online shopping, telecommunications, and consumer credits. The campaign included a TV campaign, social media presence, public events and PR actions.^{j)}

In the twelve month period while the campaign was carried out:

- ▶ 23 press releases were published, which resulted in 351 articles published by the media;
- ▶ The TV campaign was executed in three bursts between 17 October 2014 and 31 May 2015. In total, the display campaign generated 37 923 217 impressions and 33 481 clicks;
- ▶ The Facebook campaign had 4 931 224 impressions and 50 615 clicks. By the end of campaign a community of 16 368 Facebook fans was gathered.

The impact of the campaign can be measured in the increase of the level of knowledge of Croatian consumers in EU consumer rights as demonstrated in the last Eurobarometer results. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the respondents found the information they receive about consumer rights useful. As regards the level of visibility of the campaign, three quarters of the respondents in Croatia had seen or heard information or encountered messages in the media related to the key themes of the campaign.^{j)}

An **awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency** targeting energy poor households has also been launched during the Programme period beginning in 2016 as a pilot campaign. As the campaign is ongoing, outputs and results of the campaign are not yet available.^{o)}

ECCRS and related support measures

The number of complaint bodies and countries submitting complaints data to the ECCRS increased from 37 complaint bodies representing 13 countries in 2014^{h)} to 73 complaint bodies representing 20 countries in 2015.^{g)}

The total number of complaints, main areas of complaints at EU level, and

main reasons for complaints at EU level registered within the system from 2014-2017 are presented in the table below.^{q)}

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total number of complaints</u>	<u>Main area of complaints</u>	<u>Main reason for complaints</u>
2014	351 308	Consumer goods	Other issues
2015	1 236 156	Consumer goods	Contracts and sales
2016	425 505	Consumer goods	Other issues
2017	193 080	Consumer goods	Delivery of goods/ provision of services

There is limited data available on the use of complaints data from the ECCRS database as national authorities are able to consult the data directly without making a request to the European Commission.^{p)}

Within the Commission, the ECCRS data has fed into the preparatory work for various initiatives and studies, often for triangulation purposes. Some of the studies that have used ECCRS data include:^{p)}

- ▶ Studies related to the REFIT of the consumer acquis (e.g. on the Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive);
- ▶ Evaluation of the Consumer Rights Directive (2015/2016);
- ▶ Study on unjustified geo-blocking and other discrimination based on consumers' place of residence or nationality (2016);
- ▶ Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU (2017);
- ▶ Input for the Action plan following the Energy Union Package (2015);
- ▶ Input for the Annual report of the DG FISMA (2015, 2016);
- ▶ Commission Staff Working Document 'Evaluation of EU provisions on metering and billing of the energy consumption' (2016);
- ▶ Preparatory work for the Green Paper on retail financial services Action Plan (2015);
- ▶ Impact study of Liberalisation of Access to Professions on Quality of Services (2017);
- ▶ First screening phase in the framework of the identification of joint enforcement priorities for the CPC authorities (first years of the network);
- ▶ Consumer Scoreboards (since 2012)

Networking and events

The following consumer events were carried out during the Programme period by the Member States holding the Presidency of the Council:

- ▶ Italy: "EU Cooperation for the Enforcement of Consumer Legislation", 7-8 July 2014
- ▶ Latvia: "Future Priorities of Consumer Policy in the Digital Era", April 2015
- ▶ Luxembourg: "Consumer and Competition Day", 21 Sept. 2015
- ▶ Netherlands: "European Consumer and Competition Day", 18 April 2016
- ▶ Malta: "Consumer and Competition Day", 23-24 April 2016
- ▶ Estonia: "Consumer and Competition Day: Paradigm shift in consumer and competition environments – embracing the new reality", 20 Sept. 2017

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

EU consumer information/awareness

Evaluation of the information

- ▶ "There was a consensus that it was difficult to assess the impact of the campaign. From the level of activity, stakeholders perceived that the budget was quite limited

<i>raising campaigns</i>	<p>campaign “Raising consumers’ awareness when they take out credit” (2016) ^{r)}</p>	<p>and that it would therefore have been challenging to make a lasting impact on large numbers of the target group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stakeholders felt that working with partners had been effective overall and stressed the ability of the campaign to bring together consumer associations and credit providers as a contribution to effectiveness, even though the level of commitment of the latter was significantly lower than that of the former. Traders were felt to have been a gap in the partnership approach. ▶ Most stakeholders felt they could have partnered more effectively with the campaign if they had been involved in the design of the campaign longer in advance. More time to plan would have allowed more time to gain a better understanding of who was really committing to the campaign and whether and how they would use their online channels and social media, in particular in relation to this campaign. It was also felt that effectiveness would have been enhanced by developing synergies between and across partners. ▶ Based on the evidence from the focus groups and surveys, the target audience’s knowledge of their credit rights remains low even following the campaign, especially among the Czechs. The focus groups did demonstrate, however, that when it is possible to engage with this audience, they appreciate the information. The messages of the visuals and the relevance of the content to them were not immediately clear to them in all cases, and not necessarily felt likely to be effective with the older members of the target group. Nevertheless, when the content was explained to them, they felt that they had acquired valuable insights.” ▶ Regarding efficiency: "There was a widely held view that it may have been injudicious to try to reach such a large target group using such a wide range of tools and channels with the budget available. Consequently, the reasons why the mix was felt to have shortcomings in terms of effectiveness has implications for the efficiency of the way the budget was used. ▶ The majority of the target group is unlikely ever to take out a personal loan, as the survey carried out for this campaign showed. Thus with a limited budget, it was all the more important to focus on, and engage with, segments most likely to need the information. This implies that a different mix of tools and channels, focusing on engaging with those most in need rather than reach, would have been more efficient."
	<p>Evaluation of the information campaign “Knowing your rights with regard to consumer</p>	<p><i>Further details on this evaluation are provided in the fact sheet for Action 10 of the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme,</i></p>

credit”
(2014)^{m)}

No previous assessment/evaluation available for other activities

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=53, 34, 83).

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns	3.0*	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.0*	3.4
ECCRS and related support measures	3.0*	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9
Networking and events	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5*	4.0

Notes: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of consumer information and education, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV). () The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

Legislation

- a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
- b) Recommendation of 12.5.2010 on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries
- c) European Commission, Annex to the Commission implementing decision on the adoption of a work programme for 2017 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme

Annual reports

- d) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report
- e) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- f) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report
- g) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- h) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report
- i) CHAFAEA 2016 Annual Activity Report
- j) CHAFAEA 2015 Annual Activity Report
- k) CHAFAEA 2014 Annual Activity Report

Studies/reports/ EC documents

- l) European Commission, Staff Working Document on knowledge-enhancing aspects of consumer empowerment 2012-2014 (2012)
- m) ICF, Evaluation of the information campaign "Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit" (2014)
- r) Evaluation of the information campaign "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit" (2016)
- Ex-ante evaluation of communication activities to leisure travellers on the Package Travel Directive [Not available]
- Ex-ante evaluation for awareness raising campaign on switching and energy efficiency [Not available]

Other documents/ websites

- n) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/data_consumer_complaints/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-02-08)

o) Annual monitoring tables 2014-2016, DG JUST (2017)

p) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (2017)

q) http://81.247.254.96/QvAJAXZfc/opensdoc.htm?document=Harmonised_Consumer_Complaints.qvw&host=QVS%40vsrv1463&anonymous=true (Accessed 2018-02-08)

7. Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers.

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related

Defined in Article 3(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective II — **Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations: to improve consumers' education, information and awareness of their rights, to develop the evidence base for consumer policy and to provide support to consumer organisations, including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers.**

Eligible actions

Defined in Article 4(b) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process** with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers:

(a) **development of an interactive platform for exchange of best practices and materials for lifelong consumer education** with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers that have difficulties in accessing and comprehending consumer information, in order to ensure that they are not misled;

(b) **development of education measures and materials in collaboration with stakeholders** such as national authorities, teachers, consumer organisations and those active at grass-roots level, in particular by making use (e.g. collection, compilation, translation and diffusion) of materials produced at national level or for previous initiatives, on various media including digital, on e.g. consumer rights including cross-border issues, health and safety, Union consumer legislation, sustainable and ethical consumption including Union certification schemes, financial and media literacy.

II. Description of activities

EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)

Consumer Classroom is a community website for teachers bringing together an extensive library of consumer education resources from across the EU, along with interactive and collaborative tools to help prepare and share lessons with students and other teachers.

The Consumer Classroom website, available in EU official languages, is dedicated to secondary school teachers of students aged 12-18 years old in all European Member States. The website's strength lies in the quality of its teacher resources and its collaborative tools such as the Lesson Builder, Forums and Live Chat.ⁿ⁾

The portal also offers Inter-school competitions where schools from different Member States can prepare a common project on consumer relevant topic.^{j)}

Consumer Classroom started in 2013. It replaced the DOLCETA and Europa Diary activities under the previous Consumer Programme, after a 2011 evaluation of the education and information tools concluded that the tools were outdated and should be updated.^{g),m)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
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<i>EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)</i>	781.1	781.6	866.9	660.0	3 089.6	3.2%
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IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer education interactive platform - hosting, on-going development, on-going research, website promotion, moderation and translation. ▶ Consumer education actions: Ongoing collection of teaching resources, partnership research, translation, SEO improvements and identification of future website improvements. ▶ Enhancing consumer education (Consumer Classroom) including the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education, the development of education measures and materials and promotional activities (specific service contracts based on a FWC or direct contracts).
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V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)</i>	<i>Note: The following table shows selected website statistics for the Consumer Classroom platform measured in 2015 and 2016. The indicators reported in 2014 and in 2017 were different and are reported separately below.</i>
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	<u>2015^{k)}</u>	<u>2016^{k)}</u>
<i>Signups</i>	2171	9104
<i>Resources submitted by users</i>	99	32
<i>Lessons created</i>	369	497
<i>Sharing on social media</i>	361	435

The following indicators were reported for 2014:

- ▶ By the end of 2014, the Consumer Classroom website had reached 500 000 visitors^{j)} and 18 612 registered users; and
- ▶ Throughout 2014, 318 new resources were uploaded to the website.^{f)}

The following indicators were reported on the Consume Classroom website as of the end of 2017:

- ▶ 277 241 unique users,
- ▶ 25 048 registered users (out of which 6 721 were teachers),
- ▶ 223 ready-to-use teaching resources collected from across the EU,
- ▶ 544 lessons created by users, and
- ▶ 78 partnerships built across Europe with consumer organisations, school associations and other interested NGOs.^{o)}

From December 2014 to 14th December 2016, the **Forum Moderator** created 246 topics and 45 replies for a total of 291 posts. New topics created by moderation team have reached good results in terms of posts' views (40 533 views). These new topics were focused on different themes related

to consumer education and teacher's needs.^{k)} Among them:

- ▶ Climate change, energy and environment;
- ▶ Digital Single Market;
- ▶ Consumer rights and protection;
- ▶ Circular economy and sustainable consumption;
- ▶ Food safety, health and nutritional education;
- ▶ Consumer Classroom features (e.g. Lesson Builder, Resources, Inter-school projects etc.);
- ▶ Consumer Classroom Inter-School Competition;
- ▶ Internet Safety, cyberbullying and media literacy;
- ▶ Consumer education news and events.

At the end of August 2015 on the basis of user feedback, new sections were created on the forum (i.e. Consumers in the digital era, Sustainable consumption and circular economy, Climate change and renewable energy, Consumer rights and protection, Food safety and nutritional education) with themes more in line with teachers' preferences. New sections on the forum were also introduced for strengthening national aspects of consumer education (i.e. Consumer education in your country and Education News & events in your country).^{k)}

User contribution to the forum largely increased starting from February 2016. Posts were focused on financial education, sustainable consumption, digital literacy, consumer choice and protection, health education, childcare and education news. User engagement was highest during the periods of the Inter-School Competition. Between December 2014 and December 2016, the average visitor spent 1:55 minutes on the site while the average registered user spent 36:53 minutes.^{k)}

The most used features for **generating content** on the website have been Lessons (especially the Simple Lesson Builder), Collections and Classes, as they are very much in line with teachers' needs.^{k)}

There were 10 submitted and eligible projects for the **Inter-School Competition 2015**. This edition received less project entries than the past editions: 48 schools in 2013, 40 in 2014 whereas only 20 submitted a project in 2015. This was suggested to be due to the obligation to find a partner class from another European country in only 2 months.^{l)}

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)

Evaluations of the precursors to Consumer Classroom (DOLCETA, Europa Diary) were conducted in 2011 and 2005 (Europa Diary only). See the Action 11 fact sheet for the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 for details.

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=39)

<i>EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)</i>	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
	-	3.6	3.1	3.2	-	3.3

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
<i>Annual reports</i>	b) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report c) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report – Annexes d) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report e) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report – Annexes f) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report g) DG SANCO 2013 Annual Activity Report h) CHAFAEA 2016 Annual Activity Report i) CHAFAEA 2015 Annual Activity Report j) CHAFAEA 2014 Annual Activity Report
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	k) <u>Consumer Classroom Consortium, Take-over, hosting, web maintenance and incident management, moderation and web updates of the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education - Final & SLA Implementation Report (2017)</u> l) <u>Consumer Classroom Consortium, Provision of promotional services for the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education (2015)</u> m) Evaluation of Consumer Education, Information and Capacity Building Actions: Final Report, prepared by Ecorys UK for DG SANCO (2011) o) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	n) https://www.consumerclassroom.eu/ (Accessed 2018-01-08)

8. Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related

Defined in Article 3(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective III — Rights and redress: to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution.**

Eligible actions

Defined in Article 4(c) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets**, including:

- (a) **studies and smart regulation activities** such as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, impact assessments, public consultations, evaluation and simplification of existing legislation;
- (b) **seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings of stakeholders and experts;**
- (c) development and maintenance of easily and publicly accessible **databases covering the implementation of Union legislation on consumer protection;**
- (d) **evaluation of actions undertaken under the Programme.**

II. Description of activities

Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)

Behavioural economics studies how people make choices using insights from psychology and economics. Understanding the reasons behind people's behaviour is essential for policy-making. Behavioural insights may be applied to any policy where individuals' response to it helps determine its effectiveness. Application of behavioural insights could help understand how consumers process information.^{a)}

In 2012, the EC's Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) and the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) set up a framework contract to facilitate the outsourcing of behavioural studies in support of EU policy. To date, multiple behavioural studies have been, or are being, conducted under this framework contract. The Joint Research Centre JRC, the EC's in-house science service, in turn, has provided scientific support to the design and implementation of these studies.^{b)}

Behavioural studies have been commissioned by the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) to test policy options in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour.^{b)} The evidence from studies on consumer behaviour feeds into the policy development providing necessary data and ensures smart regulation and better reinforcement of consumer rights.^{f)}

Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)

The Consumer Programme provides for studies and smart regulation activities such as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, impact assessment, public consultations, evaluation and simplification of existing legislation.^{a),c)}

Other types of studies and surveys financed under the Consumer Programme are described in the fact sheet for Action 4.

<i>Consumer Summit</i>	<p>The European Consumer Summit is an annual forum gathering key European and international policy-makers and stakeholders, including representatives from the European Parliament, governments and national authorities, consumer organisations, academia and business. Over the years, the European Consumer Summit has become a valuable occasion to increase awareness on consumer policy and a key tool to mainstream consumer interests in EU policies.^{u),w)}</p>
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	<p>The European Commission established the Citizens' Energy Forum in 2007. The Forum meets on an annual basis in London and is organised with the support of Ofgem, the UK regulatory authority for electricity and gas. The overall aim of the Forum is to explore consumers' perspective and role in a competitive, 'smart', energy-efficient and fair energy retail market.^{t)}</p> <p><i>The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group and Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors were also established within the framework of the Citizens' Energy Forum. See below for the description of these activities.</i></p>
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p><i>Although support for networking and events such as FSUG meetings and other working groups is financed from the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 8, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 8.</i></p> <p>The Financial Services User Group (FSUG) was set up by the Commission in order to involve users of financial services in policy-making.^{z)} The group was established in 2010 with Decision 2010/C 199/02.^{d)} This decision was recast in 2017 by Decision C(2017) 359.^{e)}</p> <p>The FSUG's tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To advise the Commission in the preparation and implementation of legislation or policy initiatives affecting the users of financial services; ▶ To proactively identify key issues affecting users of financial services; and ▶ To advise and liaise with financial services user representatives and representative bodies at the EU and national level. <p>The FSUG has 20 members. They represent the interests of consumers, retail investors or micro-enterprises, and also include individual experts with expertise in financial services from the consumer perspective.^{z)}</p> <p>At the 2012 Citizens' Energy Forum, it was clearly stated that the consumer should have a central role in energy retail markets, and that the 'vulnerable customer concept' be urgently defined by Member States. The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group (VCWG) was established by DG Energy (ENER) in close collaboration with DG Health and Consumers (SANCO) to address these needs, feed the discussions in the Citizens' Energy Forum, and thus support the implementation of EU energy legislation.^{p),q)}</p> <p>The Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors was established at the Sixth Citizens' Energy Forum in 2013. Its members were selected among existing Commission Expert Groups and networks (ECCG, CPC, CPN) as well as via a call for interest during the Citizens' Energy Forum. Its mission is to:^{aa)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assess the implementation and enforcement of consumer rights in the energy sector; ▶ Review the existing legislative framework to assess whether the conditions are in place for energy consumers to participate actively in energy markets

and for the energy industry and network to be able to provide them with the necessary services;

- ▶ Analyse new forms of active energy usership by which consumers, individually and collectively, seek better deals and consume in a sustainable manner; and
- ▶ Highlight good (national) practices and produce recommendations.

In order to improve compliance with the UCPD Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, in 2012 the European Commission launched two multi-stakeholder dialogue processes bringing together industry representatives, NGOs and national authorities: the **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims** and the **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools**.^{j)}

- ▶ The mission of the Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims is to build a better understanding of the use of environmental claims in different markets and to assess the scope of the problem of misleading environmental claims;^{ab)}
- ▶ The mission of the Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools is to develop a set of principles to ensure the compliance and transparency of comparison tools (websites and apps) and to develop an action plan to ensure the uptake of these principles and monitor its implementation.^{ac)}

Additionally, the European Commission supports stakeholder consultation groups, expert workshops and expert participation in meetings related to current legislative initiatives.^{k)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	667.0	497.9	827.9	400.0	2392.8	2.5%
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	551.4	0	440.2	900.0	1891.6	2.0%
<i>Consumer Summit</i>	282.6	292.3	0	300.0	874.9	0.9%
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	0	0	53.0	0	53.0	0.1%
<i>Networking and events</i>	238.8	166.4	177.0	305.0	887.3	0.9%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services: a behavioural economics perspective ▶ Behavioural study on food choices and eating habits ▶ Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media ▶ Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms ▶ Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy ▶ Behavioural study on the digitalisation of financial services
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation ▶ Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; ex-post

	<p>evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU ▶ Foresight study to prepare for the future of EU consumer policy 2020-2030 ▶ Follow-up to the initiatives in the field of retail financial services
<i>Consumer Summit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisation of the European Consumer Summit
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisation of the London Citizens' Energy Forum
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial Services User Group Meetings ▶ Meetings of the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group (co-organised with DG ENER) ▶ Working group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors ▶ Multi-stakeholder group on comparison tools ▶ Multi-stakeholder group on environmental claims ▶ Informal expert stakeholder group on digital contracts ▶ Stakeholder consultation group for the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law ▶ Stakeholder consultation group on debt advice meetings ▶ Workshop with experts on the Consumer Digital Competencies Framework ▶ Workshop on PAD [Payment Accounts Directive] Transposition ▶ Support for expert participation in the meetings of the Steering Group for Vulnerability Study ▶ Support for expert participation in a meeting on household over-indebtedness ▶ Additional support for stakeholder meetings ▶ Additional support for the Consumer Summit ▶ Commission-led session at the European Market Academy Conference

V. Outputs and results of activities

<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Six behavioural studies on consumer decision-making have been carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (see list above)
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Five other EU consumer policy studies have been carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (see list above)
<i>Consumer Summit</i>	<p>The 2014 edition of the Consumer Summit was held on 1-2 April 2014 and dedicated to “Ensuring that consumers reap the benefits of the digital economy”. It brought together some 400 participants representing the European Parliament, the Commission, national governments, consumer and business associations, enforcement and regulatory authorities, the European Consumer Centres and the European Data Protection Supervisor.^{x)}</p> <p>Targeted workshops at the 2014 Consumer Summit were held on the following topics:^{x)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connectivity; ▶ EU rights for online consumers; ▶ Online payments;

- ▶ Digital literacy;
- ▶ Trust online;
- ▶ New and fairer deals.

The 2015 edition of the Consumer Summit was dedicated to “Shaping the consumer policy of the future” and held on 1-2 June 2015 in Brussels. The focus was on the most topical consumer policy issues which link with the political priorities of the European Commission led by President Juncker.^{u)}

The 2015 Consumer Summit included the following 4 seminars:^{v)}

- ▶ Consumer Information in the Digital Single Market;
- ▶ Energy Union: a New Deal for Energy Consumers;
- ▶ Effective Enforcement in the Digital Environment;
- ▶ Over-indebtedness – the Role of Debt Advice.

General statistics on participation in the 2015 Consumer Summit include the following:^{v)}

- ▶ 440 Participants;
- ▶ 58 Speakers;
- ▶ 2 Plenary Sessions;
- ▶ More than 370 tweets.

The European Commission hosted the 2016 edition of the European Consumer Summit "EU consumer law: still fit for purpose? Achievements and challenges" on 17 October 2016 in Brussels. The 2016 Summit was entirely dedicated to the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing law in the framework of Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). Around 450 representatives of national authorities, European institutions, consumer organisations, businesses as well as academics took part in the 2016 Consumer Summit.^{w)}

The 2016 Consumer Summit included the following workshops:

- ▶ Simplifying consumer information requirements;
- ▶ Increasing fairness of commercial practices and contract terms;
- ▶ Enhancing the effectiveness of the injunction procedure.^{w)}

Citizens' Energy Forum

The Seventh Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 12-13 March 2015. The seventh edition of the Forum attracted a record number of stakeholders and discussed a wide range of issues including energy consumer empowerment, roll-out of smart meters, self-generation, consumer vulnerability and energy poverty.^{t)}

The Eighth Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 23-24 February 2016. Key topics included a socially responsible and inclusive Energy Union, market design in the retail sector, empowering consumers through accessible information, smart and innovative services for consumers/prosumers, and the roles of DSOs distribution system operators in facilitating consumers' market participation.^{t)}

The Ninth Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London on 30-31 May 2017. The 2017 meeting was dedicated to discussing the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' legislative package. Breakout sessions included the following topics:^{t)}

- ▶ Empowering consumers to make better choices on the energy market;
- ▶ The role of local energy communities in the energy transition;
- ▶ New energy technologies and data management;
- ▶ Encouraging active consumers through new products and services.

The Vulnerable Consumer Working Group and the Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors were established within the framework

of the Citizens' Energy Forum in 2012 and 2013, respectively. These working groups have met at least annually during the Citizens' Energy Forum. See below for a description of their outputs.^{t),p),q)aa)}

Networking and events

The following table shows the number of meetings of the **Financial Services User Group** between 2014 and 2017, as well as the number of studies/papers released and opinions issued by the FSUG in response to requests from the Commission and consultations from the three European Supervisory Authorities (the European Securities and Markets Authority, the European Banking Authority, and the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority).^{g)}

	2014 ^{i),z)}	2015 ^{h),z)}	2016 ^{g),z)}	2017 ^{z)}	Total
Nr of meetings	8	8	6	3	25
Opinions issued	9	18	8	Not yet available	35 (to 2016)
Studies/papers	3	4	5	Not yet available	12 (to 2016)

The **Vulnerable Consumer Working Group** met 12 times between March 2012 and January 2016. It released a Guidance Document on Vulnerable Consumers in November 2013^{q)} as well as a Working Paper on Energy Poverty, which was presented to the Citizens' Energy Forum at its meeting on 23-24 February 2016.^{o),t)}

The **Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors** has been meeting approximately twice per year in the context of the Citizens' Energy Forum in order to prepare a Report on new forms of active energy use.^{ad)} Part 1 of the Report was presented and endorsed by the CEF in its meeting on 23-24 February 2016.^{aa)}

The **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims** presented a report with its main findings and recommendations at the 2013 European Consumer Summit and a dedicated Commission study commissioned by the group was published in 2015 on EU consumer markets and environmental claims for non-food products.^{ae)}

The Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims concluded its work in 2016 with agreed Compliance Criteria on Environmental Claims to support the application and enforcement of the UCPD against misleading and unfounded environmental claims. These Compliance Criteria have fed into the UCPD Guidance^{j)} and have also been referenced in the EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy published in 2015.^{ae)}

The **Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools** presented a report with its main findings and recommendations at the 2013 European Consumer Summit and a dedicated Commission study commissioned by the group was published in 2015 on Comparison Tools and Third-Party Verification Schemes.^{af)}

The Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools concluded its work in 2016 with agreed Key Principles for Comparison Tools to guide operators of comparison tools towards better compliance, notably with the UCPD, and user-friendliness. These Principles have fed into the UCPD Guidance^{j)} and have also been referenced in the Communication on Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market also published on 25 May 2016.^{af)}

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

No previous assessments/evaluations are available for Action 8.

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=53, 76, 85, 31, 76)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
<i>Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)</i>	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.8	3.3
<i>Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)</i>	2.8	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
<i>Consumer Summit</i>	3.4	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.0	3.2
<i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i>	-	4.0	-	3.5	3.5*	3.8
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.0	3.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6

Note: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of consumer rights and redress, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV). () The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 b) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme c) Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2014 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme d) Commission Decision of 20 July 2010 setting up a Financial Services User Group 2010/C 199/02 e) Commission Decision C(2017) 359 recasting Decision 2010/C 199/02 setting up a Financial Services User Group
<i>Annual reports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report g) Financial Services User Group Annual Report 2016 h) Financial Services User Group Annual Report 2015 i) Financial Services User Group Annual Report 2014
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	j) European Commission, Staff Working Document, Guidance on the implementation/application of Directive 2005/29/EC (UCPD), SWD/2016/0163 final (2016)
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k) Annual monitoring tables 2014-2016, DG JUST (2017) l) Joint Research Centre, Seven Points to Remember when Conducting Behavioural Studies in Support of EU Policy-making, JRC Scientific and Policy Reports (2015)

- m) Activity report 17th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG) , Wednesday 17th February 2016 (see s) below)
- n) Activity report 19th Meeting Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG), Thursday 29th June 2017 (see s) below)
- o) Conclusions, 8th meeting of the Citizens' Energy Forum, London, 23-24 February 2016 (see t) below)
- p) Vulnerable Consumer Working Group, Terms of Reference (see t) below)
- q) Vulnerable Consumer Working Group, Guidance Document on Vulnerable Consumers (2013)
- r) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/behavioural_research/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- s) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2387> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- t) <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/citizens-energy-forum-london> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- u) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/european-consumer-summit/2015/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- v) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/european-consumer-summit/2015/files/european-consumer-summit_general_02a.pdf (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- w) http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=34204 (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- x) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-353_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- y) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/cross-border_enforcement_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- z) https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/financial-reforms-and-their-progress/regulatory-process-financial-services/expert-groups-comitology-and-other-committees/financial-services-user-group-fsug_en (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- aa) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3329&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- ab) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3327&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- ac) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3325> (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- ad) https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/Draft_WG_report_consumers_market_agents_TC_110315_web_version3.pdf (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- ae) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_rights/unfair-trade/environmental-claims/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-22)
- af) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_rights/unfair-trade/comparison-tools/ (Accessed 2018-01-22)

9. Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and maintenance of relevant IT tools and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective III — Rights and redress: to develop and reinforce consumer rights in particular through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including alternative dispute resolution.
Eligible actions	<p>Defined in Article 4(c) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and maintenance of relevant IT tools, and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development and maintenance of IT tools; (b) support for the development of a Union-wide online dispute resolution system and its maintenance, including for associated services such as translation; (c) support for networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, and for their exchanging and disseminating good practice and experiences; (d) development of specific tools to facilitate access to redress for vulnerable people who are less inclined to seek redress.

II. Description of activities

<i>Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform</i>	<p>To enable easily accessible and efficient out-of-court redress for consumer disputes, including in disputes arising from cross-border e-commerce, a comprehensive legal framework on ADR Directive 2013/11/EU on Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumers^{b)} and ODR Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumers^{c)} was adopted at EU level in 2013 and has been in place since 2016.</p> <p>The European Online Dispute Resolution platform is established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes. The Online Dispute Resolution platform (hereinafter the "ODR platform") is an online platform that channels complaints to ADR bodies. The ODR platform was launched in January 2016 and opened to the public on 15 February 2016. The platform's aim is to facilitate the online resolution of disputes between consumers and traders over online transactions, in particular cross-border transactions. The platform has the following key</p>
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characteristics:

- ▶ Consumers and traders can choose any of the EU official languages for their interaction with the platform (e.g. submitting their complaints, receiving notifications). An automatic translation tool is available for free text communication;
- ▶ The platform identifies which notified ADR bodies are competent to handle the case and refers the dispute to the ADR body on which the parties agree;
- ▶ ADR bodies can use the platform's case management system to conduct the ADR procedure entirely online;
- ▶ The parties can request that the outcome of the ADR procedure is translated by a professional translator;
- ▶ Clear deadlines are built into the platform to ensure a fast process.

The platform's functions have been designed and developed in compliance with Article 5 paragraph 4 of the ODR Regulation, to allow the parties to conduct the dispute resolution procedure online through electronic case management. The ODR platform allows consumers to initiate a procedure by submitting a complaint electronically to a trader, allows the trader to identify the competent ADR entity and, in case of agreement of both parties on the ADR body, transmits the complaint to that body.

The platform does not address disputes between consumers (C2C) or between traders (B2B), nor does it provide a technical framework for direct negotiation between the parties, settlement attempts made by a judge in the course of judicial proceedings, or disputes concerning health services or public providers of further or higher education.

The ODR Regulation provides that Member States should designate ODR contact points to provide one-to-one support to users of the ODR platform when necessary. Online traders are required to provide a link to the ODR platform and state their e-mail address, on which they can be reached via the platform, on their website.

On 1 July 2017 the ADR/ODR legislation became applicable to the EEA/EFTA States (Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein). In order to facilitate the submission of complaints from these States the interfaces of the platform are also available in the Norwegian and Icelandic languages. ADR bodies from those states can also be electronically registered with the ODR platform.^{e)}

Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR

Between 2015 and 2017 the Commission has carried out communication activities to promote the ODR platform amongst consumers and traders. In addition, the Commission organised two high-level events in 2017 with traders active in the top online retail sectors, the clothing and footwear and the airlines sector, to discuss the potential that ADR and ODR hold for increasing consumer confidence in online trading.^{e)}

The ODR regulation provides that in order to ensure broad consumer awareness of the existence of the ODR platform, traders established within the Union engaging in online sales or service contracts should provide, on their websites, an electronic link to the ODR platform.^{c)} In order to check traders' compliance with this obligation, the Commission conducted a scraping of more than 20,000 web shops across the EU in 2017 [see below].^{e),f)}

Networking and events

Although support for networking and events such as expert group meetings is part of the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

and not explicitly assigned to Action 9, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 9.

An Expert Group on ADR was established in 2013 in order to assist the Commission in the preparation of implementation guidelines, following the adoption of the ADR/ODR legislation.^{m)}

An Expert Group on ODR was established in 2013 in order to provide technical advice and expertise to the Commission in relation to the development of the European ODR Platform.ⁿ⁾

The Commission also established a network of ODR contact points to facilitate their cooperation and work and provide, in cooperation with Member States, appropriate training for ODR contact points.^{c)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform*	104.0	1 300.0	651.4	-	2 990.7	3.1%
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	0	1 177.8	1 540.3	354.5	3 072.6	3.2%
Networking and events	115.0	40.5	27.0	720.0	902.5	< 0.1%

**The 2015 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Work Programme has also contributed to the deployment of the ODR platform and to its operation and maintenance in the key years after its launch. As indicated in the 2015 Work Programme for CEF Telecommunications, the core platform would be procured for a duration of 3 years and generic services would be funded through grants, and the indicative total budget for 2015 was EUR 5.2 million (EUR 1 million for generic services and EUR 4.2 million for the core platform). As a results, and as indicated by DG Justice and Consumers, the Consumer Programme only provides a partial view of the cost of the ODR Platform.*

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of the ODR platform ▶ Translation work for the ODR Platform by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union ▶ ODR Platform - Hosting ▶ Services related to the online dispute resolution platform
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Platform: communication campaign targeting traders ▶ Christmas communication campaign on Online Dispute Resolution ▶ ODR Branding ▶ Study on online dispute resolution: web scraping of EU traders website ▶ Ex-ante evaluation of the target audiences, channel and tools, and the optimal use of resources for a campaign in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution

- ▶ Intra-muros communication consultants for ODR

Networking and events

- ▶ ADR - Expert Group Meetings
- ▶ ADR Assembly (summit) 2018
- ▶ ODR Technical Meetings
- ▶ ODR - Meetings of Contact Points

V. Outputs and results of activities

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform

Since the launch of the platform on 15 February 2016, over 55 000 consumer complaints have been registered,^{ab)} of which more than a third concerned cross-border purchases within the EU.^{f)} The number of ADR bodies connected to the platform has grown from 208 in the second quarter of 2016 to 347 at the end of 2017.^{ab)}

In the first year after the launch of the platform, from 15 February 2016 to 15 February 2017, 1.9 million people visited the platform. On average the website received over 160,000 unique visitors per month, and more than 2,000 complaints were submitted per month on average. Current statistics show a steady increase in unique visitors from February 2017 – August 2017 to over 180,000 per month, with over 2,300 complaints being filed per month.

The most complained about sectors were consumer clothing and footwear (11.5%), airline tickets (8.5%), and information and communication technology goods (8%). These also represent the main e-commerce sectors in EU. Germany and UK, where the proportion of e-shoppers is the highest in EU, are the two countries where most complaints have been lodged and also where most traders concerned are located.

The following table shows the complaint life-cycle (outcome) of cases submitted between 15 February 2016 and 15 February 2017.

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>% of cases</u>
Automatically closed within 30 calendar days	85%
Refused by the trader	9%
Both parties withdrew before going to ADR	4%
Complaint submitted to ADR body	2%

A specific Commission survey of consumers whose cases were automatically closed within 30 days revealed that, although a large number of traders did not follow through using the ODR platform, 40% of consumers who submitted a complaint on the ODR platform that was automatically closed after 30 days had been contacted directly by the trader to solve the problem without any further progression of the complaint on the platform.

In 2/3 of the cases where the trader refused the complaint, traders indicated that they made direct contact with the consumer and solved the issue or were planning to do so.

In around half of the cases where the complaints were submitted to ADR bodies, the ADR bodies refused to deal with the case on procedural grounds such as lack of competence or the consumer's failure to attempt to contact the trader first. Furthermore, either consumers or traders in some instances

withdrew from the procedure before it was completed. This explains why the ADR procedure reached a final outcome in less than 1% of the total cases submitted to the platform. Nevertheless, in 2/3 of the cases in which the ADR procedure reached a final outcome, the final outcome was reached within the 90-day deadline.

A user feedback survey conducted in July and August 2017 indicated that 71% of visitors to the ODR platform found it useful. Furthermore, available information reveals that 44% of the total cases submitted to the platform were settled bilaterally outside the platform.^{e)}

Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR

The communication activities around ODR in 2016 were concentrated around 2 separate social media campaigns focused on bringing attention to the ODR Platform managed by the European Commission.^{p)}

- ▶ Campaign number 1 (promoting the platform and a video) came in two waves, between May and November;
- ▶ Campaign number 2 took place before and during the Christmas period and came in the form of a banner campaign, again with paid promotion.

By the end of 2016, awareness-raising campaigns on ADR/ODR had a Facebook reach of 21 million users and a Twitter reach of 9 million users compared to an overall target of 10 million people reached.^{q)}

The two waves of the ODR video campaign achieved a total of 12 842 899 views (compared to a campaign forecast of 3 million views) and 285 623 website clicks (compared to a campaign forecast of 132 000 views).

The Facebook video campaign achieved the following social media results:^{q)}

- ▶ 23 060 post likes;
- ▶ 3 534 shares;
- ▶ 789 comments;
- ▶ 311 new fans.

There were four times more shares than comments. Shares were considered to be the most engaging form of action, as it means that the user is endorsing the message and broadcasting it to friends.^{q)}

The Twitter video campaign achieved the following social media results:^{q)}

- ▶ 1633 tweet likes;
- ▶ 584 retweets;
- ▶ 127 replies;
- ▶ 383 new followers.

In 2017, the Commission contracted a web-scraping study of EU traders' websites^{f)} to examine the current state of compliance of online traders in the EU with the ODR Regulation, which requires online traders to make the link to the ODR platform and their e-mail address available on their website.

The findings of the web-scraping show that only 28% of the investigated traders include a link to the ODR platform on their website.^{f)}

- ▶ Large traders (42%) and marketplaces (48%) tended to be most compliant. In contrast, fewer medium-sized (26%) and small traders (14%) provide the ODR link on their websites;
- ▶ Online traders in Germany (66%) are most likely to present a link to the ODR platform on their websites, followed by Austrian (47%) and Danish (44%) e-traders. In contrast, compliance with this requirement is the lowest in Cyprus (2%), Malta (1%) and Latvia (1%);
- ▶ The three biggest sectors in the study, 'Clothing, shoes and accessories' (34%), 'Electronics and computer hardware' (31%) and 'Beauty, health and wellness goods' (24%) perform close to the average compliance level.

Networking and events The Expert Group on ADR met twice in 2015.^{m)} The Expert Group (technical group) on ODR held four meetings in 2014, in addition to a hands-on exercise with stakeholders to test the platform in November 2014.^{n),t)} The ODR contact points have met twice a year since 2015.^{aa)}

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform</i>	Impact assessment - Proposal for a Directive on Consumer ADR and Proposal for a Regulation on Consumer ODR (2011) ^{l)}	“ADR/ODR will make a real difference for consumers. More consumer problems will be raised and solved, thus leading to a reduction in consumer losses. The recovered losses can be then re-used in the internal market for the purchase of goods and services. Similarly the savings by introducing quality ADR will be important, accounting for about 0.17% of EU GDP (€20 billion). The creation of a consumer-friendly EU web-based platform will enable consumers to solve their disputes by electronic means and consequently increase their confidence to buy goods and services online and cross-border.”
	Optimal integration of the European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012) ^{j)}	<p>“In order to ensure an optimal integration of the ODR Platform with regard to consumer oriented websites on EU level, some requirements should be followed in any case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The implementation of the ODR Platform should rely and benefit from the experience of the existing tools (ECC-Net, for instance) ; ▶ The ODR Platform should be closely linked to the webpages providing consumers with information on their rights ; ▶ Necessary information shall be provided on the ODR Platform itself as well as on other kinds of redresses (judicial procedure or out-of-court settlement procedures); ▶ Measures should be taken so that consumers are obviously aware of the existence of the Platform.”
	EC Report on the functioning of the European ODR platform (2017) ^{e)}	“Overall, the platform's structural functionality and its impressive reach among consumers in its first year of operation is very positive. The platform's main functions work properly, it operates as an interactive multilingual web-based IT tool, it provides a user-friendly means to submit complaints online, it contains a multilingual register of ADR entities, and it offers information on consumer redress. However, it is mainly due to its incentive effects that it contributes to solving cases outside of the platform.”
<i>Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR</i>	Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites (2017) ^{f)}	“The current findings show that only 28% of EU online traders present a link to the ODR platform on their websites, while an e-mail address is provided by the majority of traders. Traders' compliance with the ODR link depends on the size, country and sector of a trader. When the ODR link is made available, it is often moderately to easily accessible for consumers. In 91% of the cases, the ODR link is presented as the exact link to the ODR platform

and it is mainly included in the “Terms and conditions”-section of a website.”

Ex-ante evaluation for a communication campaign on ADR and ODR (2015)^{p)}

“In focus group research, consumers were interested in learning that online help is available if they encounter a problem when buying goods and services online. For most focus group participants, it mattered even more if the help available applied to cross-border purchases in the EU and was backed by the EU so that any potential disputes could be resolved easily online. For some, this information was suggested to make them more likely to buy from a trader in another country. Consumers thought that the platform’s key features were that the platform:

- ▶ Has Commission backing (representing a guarantee for the quality of the service); and
- ▶ Does not require specific legal knowledge or involving lawyers.”

“There is uncertainty with regard to the extent that traders will actually make use of the ODR platform. Trade associations are pessimistic that businesses will use the platform, many large companies use their own automated dispute resolution systems, and most disputes with consumers are resolved. This means that for some traders the platform does not offer a clear benefit.”

No previous assessment/evaluation available for other activities

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=78, 71, 76)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform	2.7	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3
Networking and events	3.0	3.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6

Note: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of consumer rights and redress, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV).

VIII. Key sources

Legislation

- a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
- b) Directive 2013/11/EU of the European parliament and of the Council on Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumers ('ADR Directive')
- c) Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumers ('ODR Regulation')
- d) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1051 of 1 July 2015 on the modalities for the exercise of the functions of the online dispute resolution platform, on the modalities of the electronic complaint form and on the modalities of the cooperation between contact points provided for in Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes

Annual reports

- p) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report
- q) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- r) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report
- s) DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report – Annexes
- t) DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report

Studies/reports/ EC documents

- e) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the European Online Dispute Resolution platform established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes (2017)
- f) Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites - Final report (2017)
- g) Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017
- h) Single Market Scoreboard - European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 - 12/2016)
- i) European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report, Deloitte (2017)
- j) European Parliament (DG Internal Policies), Optimal integration of the European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012)
- k) European Parliament (DG Internal Policies), Assessing the scope of European Dispute Resolution Platform (2012)
- l) Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive on Consumer ADR and Proposal for a Regulation on Consumer ODR (2011)
- p) European Commission, Ex-ante evaluation for a communication campaign on ADR and ODR (2015)
- q) BeConnect, Online Dispute Resolution Video Campaign (30/06/16 to 03/10/16) - Wave 1&2 Final Report (2016)
- u) The new EU regulation on online resolution for consumer disputes (Michael Bogdan)
- v) The Impact of EU Law in the ADR Landscape in Italy, Spain and the UK: Time for Change or Missed Opportunity? (Pablo Cortes)
- w) Redress for free internet services under the scope of the EU and UNCITRAL's ODR regulations (Dusko Martić)
- x) Online Dispute Resolution for Consumers in the European Union (Pablo Cortes)
- y) Consumer Dispute Resolution Goes Online: Reflections on the Evolution of European Law for Out-of-Court Redress (Pablo Cortes and Arno Lodder)
- z) Redress & Alternative Dispute Resolution in Cross-Border E-commerce Transactions (Lilian Edwards and Caroline Wilson)

Other documents/ websites

- m) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2879&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1> (Expert Group Register Entry on ADR Expert Group) (Accessed 2018-01-13)
- n) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2878&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1> (Expert Group Register Entry on ODR Expert Group) (Accessed 2018-01-13)
- o) Jorge Morais Carvalho and Joana Campos Carvalho, Evaluation of the ODR platform in a legal commentary in *The Implications of the Digital Revolution* (2016)
- aa) Communication with the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) (2018)
- ab) Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), CEF Digital monitoring dashboard – Online Dispute Resolution (<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Monitoring+dashboard>) (Accessed 2018-03-16)

10. Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004 (CPC Regulation)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related	Defined in Article 3 (1) (d) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: Objective IV — Enforcement: to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice
Eligible actions	Defined in Article 4 (d) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) development and maintenance of IT tools, such as databases, information and communication systems; (b) actions to improve cooperation between authorities as well as coordination of monitoring and enforcement such as exchanges of enforcement officials, common activities, trainings for enforcement officials and for members of the judiciary; (c) organisation of seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings of stakeholders and experts on enforcement; (d) administrative and enforcement cooperation with third countries which are not participating in the Programme and with international organisations.

II. Description of activities

<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	<p>The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) is a network of authorities responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries set up on basis of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004.^{b)} The CPC Regulation provides a cooperation framework between national authorities of the EU and EEA countries so that their action can overcome national jurisdictional boundaries to incorporate the full dimension of the Single Market.ⁱ⁾ The Regulation covers situations involving the collective interests of consumers and facilitates collaboration between authorities to put a stop to consumer regulation violations when the business and the consumer are located in different countries.^{j)}</p> <p>The CPC network functions as follows:^{b)}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any authority in a country where consumers' rights are being violated can ask its counterpart in the country where the trader is based to take action to stop the breach of law. The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation sets a list of minimum powers which each authority must have to ensure a smooth cooperation. These include power to obtain the information and evidence needed to: tackle infringements within the EU, conduct on-site inspections, require cessation or prohibition of infringements committed within the EU, obtain from traders undertakings and payments into the public purse. ▶ Authorities can also alert each other to malpractices that could spread to other countries. ▶ Authorities, with the Commission's support, can also coordinate their approaches to applying consumer protection law so as to tackle widespread infringements. <p>The CPC network is also regularly carrying out EU-wide screenings of</p>
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websites ("sweeps") to check whether a given sector is complying with consumer rules.^{m)}

Participating Member States systematically and simultaneously check for practices on different websites where consumer protection law is not respected. Examples of such malpractices include:^{g)}

- ▶ Incomplete information on the trader, lack of contact details;
- ▶ Incorrect and misleading information about the price (hidden costs, such as tax, delivery fee);
- ▶ Insufficient information on the products characteristics;
- ▶ Advertising that a product is free of charge, and afterwards tying the consumer to a long term subscription;
- ▶ Unclear information on the right of withdrawal from the agreement, return or reimbursement of the product.

Following such investigation, the **relevant national authorities take proper enforcement actions**: they contact companies about suspected irregularities and ask them to take corrective action or face legal action.^{g)}

In 2014, a further step was made with coordinated positions in areas of common interest **requiring traders** concerned by widespread problematic practices to change them across the Union (for example, in the field of car rental or "in-app" offers in online games).^{m)}

The CPC is also a mechanism for developing **exchange of best practices**.^{j)} A 2016 Impact Assessment by the European Commission highlights that the Commission developed **interpretative guidelines** to further facilitate enforcement and compliance as EU consumer protection and policy expanded. The Commission has also reviewed the Operating Guidelines of the CPC network, which is aimed at providing enforcers a reference to the main principles, best practices and key documents related to the network's operation and the best use of the IT-tool. A new IT tool developed in 2014-2015 – the CPC **knowledge exchange platform** – serves to support collaborative work and to disseminate results to the wider CPC network.^{j)}

The CPC Network has the possibility of seeking cooperation with enforcement authorities in third countries, on the basis of international agreements. Potential candidates for such agreements are authorities in neighbouring countries, such as Switzerland, and those from countries with strong economic relations with the EU. No international agreements have been concluded yet, but the Network cooperates in other ways with its international partners, for instance the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) or Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).ⁿ⁾

Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)

The objective of the exchange of officials is to share best practices and knowledge among the different countries and to create a synergy at the European level in support of consumers' safety and protection. Exchanges include mainly 3 to 5 working day missions of one or a few participants in a host organisation but as of the 2016 programme, applicants are encouraged to implement other options, e.g. one-day workshops with a group of participants.ⁿ⁾

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)

In 2015 the Commission developed an initiative to support an "e-enforcement training academy", catering for both the CPC network and the product safety area where similar needs exist to strengthen enforcement of consumer legislation in online businesses-to-consumers trade.^{j)}

Consumer market

Consumer markets studies funded under Action 10 have focused on issues

<i>studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	relevant for enforcement, see below for more details.
<i>Networking and events</i>	<p>Although support for networking and events such as CPN meetings is financed from the administrative budget of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and not explicitly assigned to Action 10, this activity has been included in this fact sheet as it is considered to be most relevant to Action 10.</p> <p>The Commission and the CPC network are organizing legal workshops to promote the common understanding of EU consumer law and emerging threats for consumers in key priority areas.^{j)}</p> <p>The Consumer Policy Network (CPN) connects the European Commission with General-Directors of national administration of the EU Member States and EEA competent for consumer policy. The Consumer Policy Network's mission is to facilitate exchange of information and good practice between consumer policymakers in the Member States, in particular by assisting the Commission in relation to the implementation of existing Union legislation, programmes and policies, and assisting the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives.^{w)}</p>

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)						
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	282.7	197.8	182.8	1300.0	1963.3	2.1%
<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	70.0	70.0	78.0	100.0	318.0	0.3%
<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)</i>	0	999.0	0	0	999.0	1.0%
<i>Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	498.7	0	0	0	498.7	0.5%
<i>Networking and events</i>	995.0	17.0	32.0	120.0	268.5	0.3%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	137.0	91.0	185.0	565.0	978.0	1.0%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)	
<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consumer Protection Co-operation System (CPCS) - CPC IT Tool maintenance and technical support ▶ Workshops in connection with the modernisation of the functioning of the CPC Regulation and logistic support to CPC joint activities and capacity building ▶ Grants for joint actions to improve cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws

<i>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exchange of CPC officials
<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ E-enforcement Training Academy for consumer legislation
<i>Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provision of a consumer market study on misleading "free" trials and subscription traps for consumers in the European Union
<i>Networking and events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings of CPC authorities ▶ Meetings of the Consumer Policy Network Group
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ IT fiches for Sweeps and CPC notifications of competent authorities ▶ Collaborative websites of the CPC network

V. Outputs and results of activities

Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network

Key outputs of the CPC Network relate to the information flow in the CPC-System, the common IT-tool maintained by the European Commission and designed to provide a secure system for the exchange of information between competent authorities (CAs) in the Member States for the performance of their mutual assistance obligation under the CPC Regulation. This obligation implies three cooperation mechanisms:^{b)}

- ▶ *Information requests* when a competent authority is requested to provide information to establish whether an intra-Union infringement has occurred or whether there is a reasonable suspicion it may occur;
- ▶ *Requests for enforcement measures* when a competent authority is requested to take all necessary enforcement measures to bring about the cessation or prohibition of the intra-Union infringement without delay;
- ▶ *Alerts*, an information exchange without request, that takes place when a competent authority gets warned or suspects that intra-Union infringement is occurring (or may occur) and informs the competent authorities in other Member State(s) and the European Commission.

The number of information requests, enforcement request and alerts from 2014-2016 are presented in the following table. In addition to the number of enforcement requests made within the CPC Network, the percentage of such requests handled within 12 months is also indicated, used as an indicator in the Regulation, see Annex below.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Information requests made within the CPC Network^{d)}</i>	132	122	68	80
<i>Enforcement requests made within the CPC Network^{d)}</i>	130	138	194	198

% of enforcement requests handled within 12 months	53% ^{s)}	46% ^{x)}	26% ^{x)}	24% ^{x)}
Alerts raised within the CPC Network ^{d)}	35	45	57	78

The CPC Network, under the coordination of the Commission, has also undertaken several enforcement actions. Every year the Commission consolidates the available market information to propose a topic for the screening of websites, prepares legal analysis and questionnaire to carry the screening phase, consolidates and publishes the results. Since 2007 more than 3,600 websites have been checked. These actions permitted for instance to correct about 700 websites in the tourism sector alone – this is the area with most cross-border complaints received by European Consumer Centres. An overview of Sweeps conducted since 2014 is provided in the following table.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>EU-wide screening of websites (Sweeps)</i>	Consumer electronics (437 websites checked) ^{e)}	Quality of information available to consumer online before making a purchase (743 websites checked) ^{d)}	Online comparison tools (mainly in the travel sector, 352 websites checked) ^{d)}	Telecommunication and other digital services

Sweeps have increased the level of compliance among traders with EU law, as indicated by the following data: ^{h),g)}

- ▶ 2014: 46% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep; 82% in compliance after sweep
- ▶ 2015: 37% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep, 88% in compliance after sweep
- ▶ 2016: 33% of checked websites found to be in compliance with EU consumer law before sweep ^{y)}

In addition, the CPC Network has concluded two coordinated enforcement actions on the in-app purchases in online games in 2014 and on the car rental in 2015. These two actions in fact concerned many traders (game developers selling through Google, Apple and Amazon which were the three parties in the action and local car rental companies, franchisees and brokers working with the five major car rental companies). The market share covered by CPC enforcement action, rather than a mere number of cases, counts most in the CPC context: for example, it was 65% of all private rentals in the EU in the CPC coordinated action on car rentals (i.e. one CPC case but with significant economic impacts). ⁱ⁾ A third coordinated enforcement action on contract terms of social media service providers was concluded in 2016. It was reported to have succeeded in obtaining an undertaking from some of the main actors in the social media sector – Facebook, Google and Twitter – to change part of their terms of services to make them customer-friendly and

compliant with EU rules.²⁾

CPC workshops are also held for specific subjects, typically six times per year. Members of these workshops are CPC contact points in Member States, though sometimes MS delegate specialists to attend.^{x)}

Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of exchanges (CPC)</i>	37 ^{t)}	54 ^{t)}	72 ^{f)}	33 ^{t)}

Since 2009, Chafea has supported exchanges of enforcement officials in charge of consumer protection and product safety in the Member States and EEA/EFTA countries. The exchanges give the opportunity to participants to share experience and knowledge on the practical implementation of Directive 2001/95 EC (General Product Safety) and Regulation 2006/2004 (Consumer Protection Cooperation). With the aim of increasing the interest of the potential participants, in 2015, some concrete actions were undertaken to promote the exchange of officials programme. Chafea presented the programme and invited the relevant authorities during the Consumer Protection Cooperation and General Product Safety Directive Committees. In addition, a dedicated web page on the Chafea website was developed in order to facilitate the organisation of exchanges between officials. This page contains a Frequently Asked Questions and forum for interaction between the potential applicants and hosts.^{f)}

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)

The following resources/activities delivered during the first year of the E-Enforcement Academy are listed below:

- ▶ 112 blog posts
- ▶ 4 newsletters
- ▶ 6 wiki-pages
- ▶ 3 E-Enforcement tools reports
- ▶ 6 knowledge sharing webinars
- ▶ 8 basic/intermediate coaching webinars
- ▶ 4 advanced trainee webinars
- ▶ Assistance to basic-level trainees forum
- ▶ 3 Master class meetings in Brussels
- ▶ Organisation of 2 CPC e-enforcement group workshops in Brussels
- ▶ 5 e-learning modules
- ▶ 1 promotion video and 4 additional online tutorials
- ▶ Gathering of user feedback

Total participation at on-site and virtual events (webinars) in 2017 amounted to 120 for CPC participants.^{r)}

Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')

- ▶ Consumer Market Study on Misleading "Free" Trials and Subscription Traps for Consumers in the European Union (2014). Scope: To prepare enforcement actions to reduce the exposure of consumers to the misleading marketing of online free trials. The study aimed to help the CPC network better understand the issues, format, and prevalence of these frequent misleading practices involving many traders.^{q)}

Networking and events	The CPN meets twice per year. ^{w)} As of 2017 it had 31 member authorities representing the 28 Member States, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. ^{w)}
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VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

<i>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</i>	EC Impact Assessment (2016) based on external CPC Evaluation (2012) ¹⁾	<p>"In 2012, the European Commission contracted an external evaluation of the CPC Regulation. It concluded that the CPC Regulation had been beneficial for the competent authorities, consumers and traders, thereby confirming the appropriateness and relevance of its objectives. It however also pointed out that these objectives had not been fully achieved and that the CPC Regulation had not been exploited to its full potential. Specifically, the external evaluation found that there remained a number of practical and legal barriers to effective cooperation between CPC authorities, which ultimately undermined the efficiency and effectiveness of the CPC Regulation, most notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ differences between CPC competent authorities in terms of their capabilities, capacities and understanding of the CPC Regulation and the tools available; ▶ tendency among CPC competent authorities to prioritise domestic over cross-border cases; ▶ no formalised systems for recording, storing and exchanging intelligence, and organising cooperation; ▶ insufficient minimum investigative and enforcement powers mandated by the CPC Regulation under Article 4(6); ▶ differences in national judicial systems and procedural rules causing delays and difficulties in cross-border cooperation; and ▶ lack of recognition of the notion of "EU relevant" infringements."
	Commission report on the functioning of the CPC Regulation (2014) ¹⁾ as summarised in EC Impact Assessment (2016) ¹⁾	<p>"The Commission report of 2014 on the functioning of the CPC Regulation stressed the need to increase the rapidity, agility, and consistency of CPC enforcement cooperation and consumer protection, in particular in relation to online purchases and to ensure adequate consumer protection in the digital sphere and across borders. In line with the principles of better regulation, the report also confirmed the commitment of the Commission to study the possible improvements to the CPC Regulation on the basis of a thorough impact assessment."</p>
	EC Impact Assessment (2016) based on external CPC Evaluation	<p>"The problems identified make the cross-border enforcement cooperation ineffective and inefficient, resulting in low deterrence in enforcement actions, legal uncertainty for traders, authorities and consumers and in duplication of enforcement efforts and cost. The identified shortcomings also partly contribute to the malfunctioning of consumer markets and to a persistently high non-compliance rate (other</p>

- (2012)¹⁾ factors include lack of traders' awareness or understanding of key consumer rules, insufficient market transparency, impact of dominant traders, etc.)."
- Commission Proposal for the reform of the CPC Regulation^{b)} "On 25 May 2016 the Commission put forward a proposal for the **reform of the CPC Regulation**. The reform addresses the need to better enforce EU consumer law, especially in the fast evolving digital sphere:
- ▶ Enforcement authorities will get the powers they need to work together in a quicker and more efficient manner. Authorities will be able to request information from domain registrars and banks to detect the identity of the responsible trader, carry out mystery shopping to check geographical discrimination or after-sales conditions, and order the immediate take-down of websites that host scams.
 - ▶ The Commission will be able to launch and coordinate common actions by consumer protection authorities in the Member States to address EU-wide problematic practices. A one-stop-shop approach to consumer law is proposed where enforcement authorities will notify the businesses concerned of the issues, asking them to change their bad practices.
 - ▶ To detect market problems earlier, organisations with an interest in consumer protection such as consumer organisations and European Consumer Centers will be able to signal bad cross-border practices to enforcers and to the European Commission.
 - ▶ Finally, the list of laws to which this modernised framework applies will be updated to ensure that all the relevant consumer protection rules are included, especially in the transport and retail financial services sectors.
- The Commission's proposal is under discussion in the European Parliament and Council."

No previous assessment/evaluation available for other activities

VII. Stakeholder assessment of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=71, 26, 26, 73)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.3	3.6
Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)	-	3.0*	-	3.9	-	3.9

<i>Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)</i>	-	-	4.0*	4.0	4.0	4.0
<i>Networking and events</i>	3.7	4.1	4.2	3.8	4.0*	4.0

Notes: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of enforcement, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV). () The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	<p>a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20</p> <p>c) Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004</p>
<i>Annual reports</i>	<p>f) Chafea 2016 Annual Activity report</p> <p>p) Chafea 2015 Annual Activity report</p> <p>q) DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity report – Annexes</p> <p>s) Chafea 2014 Annual Activity report</p>
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	<p>h) European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Assessing the effectiveness of Regulation (EC) N° 2006/2004, COM(2016) 284 final</p> <p>i) <u>European Commission, Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, SWD(2016) 164 final</u></p> <p>k) External Evaluation of the Consumer Protection Regulation, Final Report by the Consumer Policy Evaluation Consortium, 17 December 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/docs/cpc_regulation_inception_report_revised290212_en.pdf</p> <p>l) European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the functioning of Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, COM(2014) 439 final</p> <p>u) Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU, 2015.</p>

*Other documents/
websites*

- b) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/consumer_protection_cooperation_network/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- d) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 – 12/2016),
- e) Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 – 12/2015)
- g) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweeps/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- j) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016SC0164> (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- m) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/cross-border_enforcement_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- n) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/international_cooperation/index_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- o) http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/consumers/exchange-of-officials-2016_en.html (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- r) Commission documents on e-enforcement academy participation (2017)
- t) Commission documents on ExO numbers of exchange 2014-2017
- v) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5334_en.htm (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- w) <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=861> (Accessed 2017-12-11)
- x) Correspondence with European Commission
- y) http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/document.cfm?doc_id=44016 (Accessed 2018-03-15)
- z) European Commission, Press release of 15 January 2018, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-761_en.htm

11. Financial contributions for joint actions with public or non-profit bodies constituting Union networks which provide information and assistance to consumers to help them exercise their rights and obtain access to appropriate dispute resolution, including out of court online resolution schemes (European Consumer Centres Network)

I. Specific objective and eligible actions

Specific objective to which the actions are related

Defined in Article 3 (1) (d) of Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 as follows: **Objective IV — Enforcement: to support enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice**

Eligible actions

Defined in Article 4 (d) in conjunction with Annex I of the Regulation: **Financial contributions for joint actions with public or non-profit bodies constituting Union networks** which provide information and assistance to consumers to help them exercise their rights and obtain access to appropriate dispute resolution, including out of court online resolution schemes (European Consumer Centres Network), also covering:

- (a) the **development and maintenance of IT tools**, such as databases, information and communication systems, necessary for the proper functioning of the European Consumer Centres Network;
- (b) **actions to raise the profile and visibility of European Consumer Centres.**

II. Description of activities

European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)

The European Consumer Centres (ECCs) were established in 2005 as part of the European Union's consumer policy framework. There is an ECC for each of the 28 EU Member States, as well as one in Norway and Iceland respectively. Together, the ECCs act as a network, the ECC-Net.

ECCs support consumers in exercising their rights in relation to cross-border issues, including by giving free advice and providing practical assistance. They provide information on request and disseminate information widely through their websites, and other communication products. ECCs are also available to individuals via phone or email to deal with specific questions or complaints. They provide personalised advice, have at least one full-time lawyer on staff, and play an important role in identifying emerging issues or problems in policy implementation.

The basic modus operandi of ECCs is enabling consumers to find solutions themselves, including by providing general information materials about their rights and specific information upon request. Where a consumer cannot resolve a dispute alone, the ECCs also provide practical assistance.

The general role and aims for the work of the ECCs are defined in the Consumer Programme. With specific regard to the work of ECCs, the Consumer Programme focuses on the following priorities:

- ▶ To ensure a market where (1) citizens are aware and exercise their rights as consumers so that they contribute to the growth of competitive markets, (2) citizens must enjoy access to redress mechanisms in case of problems without needing to resort to court procedures which are lengthy and costly for them and the governments; and,
- ▶ To ensure a concrete and effective collaboration between national bodies to support the enforcement of consumer rights, support the consumers

with advice.

The detailed objectives and scope of the network are laid down in the Vademecum for the ECC-Net. It includes nine objectives, which are mandatory for every ECC to implement:

1. Providing consumers with information;
2. Assisting consumers with complaints;
3. Assisting consumers with disputes;
4. Organising promotional activities;
5. Contributing to ADR/ODR activities;
6. Networking and feedback;
7. Cooperating with enforcement authorities;
8. Collaborating with traders (associations or professional bodies); and
9. Ensuring a uniformly high quality standardised services.

ECCs cooperate with each other within the ECC-Net. This includes cooperation in individual cases as well as more general communication, for example exchange of information on common themes. They use a common platform ('wiki') to post documents and run discussions based on different threads. Moreover, ECCs have operational relationships with other bodies and initiatives (e.g. ADR entities, SOLVIT, Europe Direct) for more efficient coordination of their work.^{b)}

III. Amounts committed during programme period (in '000 Euro)						
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total Programme</u>
<i>ECC-Net</i>	6 297.0	5 924.5	6 460.2	6 000.0	24781.6	26.0%
<i>Trainings for ECC-Net</i>	0	0	84.0	300.0	384.0	0.4%
<i>Networking and events</i>	0	2.5	37.7	30.0	70.2	0.1%
<i>Other supporting activities</i>	0	238.9	7.1	0	246.0	0.3%

IV. Specific activities funded during programme period (title of projects according to EC budget data)	
<i>ECC-Net</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial contributions for joint actions with bodies constituting the European Consumer Centres Network ▶ ECC Net IT tool maintenance ▶ ECC-Net IT tool feasibility study ▶ Licences, maintenance and hosting for new ECC-Net IT Tool (ECCNet2) ▶ Study: European Consumer Centres: Status review and future challenges ▶ Support services for improving the visibility of the Network of the European Consumer Centres ▶ Communication contract on the promotion of the 10th anniversary of ECC-Net
<i>Trainings for ECC-Net</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Capacity building activities in support of ECCs (organisation of trainings related to ECCNet2 IT Tool) ▶ Capacity building and training activities in support of the European Consumer Centres; increasing the visibility and quality of services of ECCs

- Networking and events* ► ECC-Net meetings
- Other supporting activities* ► Hosting services
 ► ECC-Net annual reports and quarterly statistics
 ► ECC knowledge management platform

V. Outputs and results of activities

ECC-Net In terms of output, the Consumer Programme lays down specific indicators relating to the work of the ECCs, including the number of contacts with consumers handled by the ECCs and number of visits to the websites of the ECCs.^{b)} These indicators, along with other indicators related to the performance of the ECCs along the customer journey (referring to the visibility and accessibility of ECC services, information provision and dealing with complaints and disputes), are presented below.

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Number of contacts from consumers^{c)}</i>	93 741	93 964	111 563	99 895 ^{f)}
<i>Number of complaints received^{c)}</i>	37 609	38 048	45 016	47 485 ^{f)}
<i>Number of unique visitors/users to the websites^{b)}</i>	3 868 976 ^{f)}	4 591 905	4 286 984	8 542 936
<i>Number of information documents downloaded from the websites^{b)}</i>	Not available	272 228	331 540	174 593
<i>Number of yearly national press clippings mentioning the Centre^{b)}</i>	Not available	3 679	6 626	4 513
<i>Number of awareness raising events/products dedicated to traders^{b)}</i>	Not available	94	102	169
<i>Number of brochures/information documents distributed in the year^{b)}</i>	Not available	359 747	417 793	257 607
<i>Number of information requests encoded</i>	35 899 ^{f)}	35 779	43 555	41 801

<i>in the year ^{b)}</i>				
<i>Average time (in days) handling information requests ^{b)}</i>	<i>Not available</i>	3	5	4.22

Following the customer journey, the following main findings can be deduced at an aggregate level as summarised in the recent study: European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges (2017):

- ▶ **Visibility:** Whereas ECCs have managed to distribute an increasing number of information documents, the number of unique website visitors has e.g. decreased from 2015 to 2016 but has nearly doubled in 2017. In general, the practical work done by ECCs concerning their visibility and communication are regarded as a strength within the framework of their given resources (financial, human). In spite of these efforts, the overall visibility is still considered rather low.
- ▶ **Information provision:** The number of information requests increased, while the time to solve information requests decreased: ECCs handled 44 000 information requests in 2016, taking them on average approximately five days. Information materials available on the ECCs' websites and via other channels tend to be of high quality and have positive effects on the level of consumer information as well as visibility of the ECCs. New approaches towards information provision are increasingly tested within the ECC-Net, including using public media and trying to achieve press coverage. As concerns the quality of information provided upon request, ECCs usually provide information within around three days and most of their replies are relevant and targeted to the request. However, all ECCs seem to face challenges in providing complete answers. Across the board, answers contained less than 50% of the information identified as relevant.
- ▶ **Handling of complaints:** ECCs handled more complaints in 2016 (41 507) than in 2015 (35 162). By far, most complaints relate to the area of transport. The overall number of complaints handled with has been increasing and has almost doubled since 2007. Yet, they managed to improve the time it takes to deal with complaints. On average, it took them 79 days to handle a normal complaint (down from 114 in 2015). In terms of the outcome of complaints, in 2015, 51% of the shared cases were resolved amicably. For around one third of the disputes, no solution could be found in 2015 and 2016. Around 16% of the cases that were solved without a solution were transferred to ADR bodies. The success in dealing with complaints depends on various factors, including the type of host organisation, connections with other stakeholders, resources, and competencies of staff.

For all three areas, there are significant differences between the ECCs. (...) In some cases, such differences may be linked to a lack of resources as well as differing quality standards.

The overall workload of the ECCs has increased over the years, based on an increased number of information requests and complaints. At the same time, the majority of consumers are satisfied with the services provided by the ECCs. ^{b)}

VI. Excerpts from previous assessments/evaluations

ECC-Net	European	“The status review showed that ECCs’ services are still
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Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges (Deloitte, 2017) ^{b)}	<p>relevant, based on increasing numbers of online shopping and cross-border purchases as well as an increasing number of requests received by the ECCs. On this basis, their relevance is in fact expected to grow in the future.</p> <p>ECCs have two unique selling points: they provide a comprehensive service on all cross-border issues with early insights into emerging issues being addressed by the Commission, and they are part of a cross-border network which overcomes language and cultural barriers in resolving specific complaints. The fact of having a lawyer on staff often also differentiates them from many other organisations providing consumer advice.</p> <p>One of the most important future challenges indicated by stakeholders is for ECCs to reach more consumers, i.e. be more visible, to consumers and networking partners, either as a self-standing entity or in conjunction with others. This is an overarching point, which also influences performance in other areas. Rising to the other challenges will serve no purpose if ECCs cannot reach more consumers.“</p>
The European Consumer Centres Network – Anniversary Report 2005-2015 ^{e)}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The ECC-Net has supported the development of online consumer fairness with tips for consumers on how to know which traders to trust and how to avoid scams. ▶ ECCs have dealt with more than 8 000 cases involving car rental over the last 10 years. Moreover, the number of complaints has more than doubled between 2010 and 2014, while the total number of complaints received by ECCs only increased by half. This has led ECCs to engage vigorously with the car rental industry, requiring it to become much more transparent about total rental costs and various exceptions to the damage coverage solutions proposed, and to be so right from the booking stage ▶ In the past mobile phone users were sometimes charged hefty ‘roaming’ bills for using a network in another country. The charges started to come down from 2007 thanks to the efforts of the European Commission. In the meantime, ECCs have been active in giving advice to consumers and providers about the lower charges, since telecommunications and the Internet are among the top five areas for complaints. ▶ ECCs proactively issue guidance on passenger rights, regularly issuing information when airlines go out of business or passenger travel companies are on strike; they frequently take stands at travel fairs and have issued a number of special reports to support consumers and/or policy makers

No previous assessment/evaluation available for other activities

VII. Stakeholder assessment of effectiveness of actions in the framework of this study (results of interviews conducted)

Question: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder (N=67, 73)

	Business association	Consumer organisation	ECC	Ministry or national authority	Other	All stakeholders
ECC-Net	3.0*	3.9	4.4	3.8	3.5	4.0
Networking and events	3.7	4.1	4.2	3.8	4.0*	4.0

Notes: for networking and events, the assessments below relate to the activity as a whole in the programme area of enforcement, and are not limited to the specific activities relevant to the present action (listed above in section IV). () The base size for the average calculation is less than three.*

VIII. Key sources

<i>Legislation</i>	a) Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
<i>Annual reports</i>	d) Chafea 2014 Annual activity report Chafea 2015 Annual activity report Chafea 2016 Annual activity report e) ECC Network Anniversary Report 2005-2015
<i>Studies/reports/EC documents</i>	b) European Consumer Centres ECCs): Status review and future challenges (Deloitte, 2017) c) Single Market Scoreboard – European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2016-12/2016)
<i>Other documents/websites</i>	VADEMECUM European Consumer Centres' Network (ECC-Net) (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/other_eu_prog/cons/guide/cons-vademecum-ecc-net_en.pdf) (Accessed 2018-01-19) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/solving_consumer_disputes/non-judicial_redress/ecc-net/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/european_consumer_centre_network/index_en.htm (Accessed 2018-01-19) f) Correspondence with European Commission.

Annex III Actions and activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 Programme includes 11 action types in total, which are carried out through specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme. These actions, activity types, and specific activities are listed in the table below for the years 2014 to 2017.

Table 25: Actions, activity types and specific activities funded under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, years 2014-2017

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
1. Scientific advice and risk analysis relevant to consumer health and safety regarding non-food products and services including support for the tasks of the independent scientific committees established by Decision 2008/721/EC	European Commission's non-food scientific committees	Support for the tasks of independent scientific committees
2. Coordination of market surveillance and enforcement actions on product safety with regard to Directive 2001/95/EC, and actions to improve consumer services safety	Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX) Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD) Other supporting activities	RAPEX Total (IT): RAPEX, RAPEX Archive, RAPEX China, RAPEX Publication IT EU's Rapid Alert System for non-food dangerous products (GRAS-RAPEX) Risk Assessment Guidelines (IT) GPSD business application (IT) Joint cooperation and enforcement actions which aim at improving the effective application of the GPSD Exchange of GPSD officials JRC research on tattoos: Safety of tattoos and permanent make-up Administrative Arrangement between DG Joint Research Center (JRC) and DG Justice and Consumers - Injuries and accident data collection for product safety and market surveillance
3. Maintenance and further development of databases on cosmetics	EU databases on cosmetics (Cosmetic ingredient database, Cosmetic Product Notification Portal)	Maintenance and update of the COSING (Cosmetics Ingredients) application CPNP (Cosmetic Products Notification Portal) - maintenance and application support
4. Building and improving access	Consumer market studies	Study on measuring consumer detriment in the European Union

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies		<p>Consumer study on precontractual information and billing on the energy market - Improved clarity and comparability</p> <p>Study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union</p> <p>Study on the sharing economy</p> <p>Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the European Union</p> <p>Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate for consumers in the European Union</p> <p>Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the European Union</p> <p>In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit.</p> <p>Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market</p> <p>Consumer market monitoring survey</p> <p>Publication (and translation) of the scoreboards</p> <p>Provision of two online consumer surveys as support and evidence base to a Commission study: "Identifying the main cross-border obstacles to the Digital Single Market and where they matter most."</p> <p>IT - Consumer Market Scoreboard Database (CSD)</p> <p>Survey: consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection</p> <p>Survey: business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection</p> <p>Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion) notably through: local training, e-learning courses, exchange of best practices and expertise</p>
	Consumer scoreboards and surveys	
5. Support through financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through	Capacity building for consumer organisations	

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level, increasing transparency and stepping up exchanges of best practices and expertise	Support to EU-level consumer organisations	Financial contributions to the functioning of Union-level consumer organisations representing consumer interests (Operating grants)
6. Enhancing the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have comparable, reliable and easily accessible data, including for cross-border cases, to help them compare not only prices, but also quality and sustainability of goods and services	European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures EU consumer information/ awareness raising campaigns	IT - European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) Grants for complaint handling bodies to implement Commission recommendation on harmonised registration of consumer complaints Information campaign: "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit" Awareness Raising on Energy Efficiency - Communication Campaign targeting energy poor households. Support for communication on consumer issues Consumer advice services in Croatia in support of an EU information campaign Surveys on information campaign on consumer rights in Croatia Production of a video presenting the consumer rights of an EU citizen Dissemination plan for the digital contracts video Development of infographics for consumer market studies Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs Evaluation of the Information Campaign "Raising Consumers' Awareness when they take out Credits" Ex-ante evaluation of communication activities to leisure travellers on the package travel directive Ex-ante evaluation for awareness-raising campaign on switching and energy efficiency Communication/information material specifically for traders Consumer education/information plan

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
	Networking and events Other supporting activities	Awareness-raising campaign in MS related to New Deal for Consumers EU Presidency events Participation in the OECD Statistical Information System Collaboration Community Update, development, maintenance and hosting of IT systems, including: Dissemination of Consumer Statistics; European Consumer Complaints Registration System JUST contribution to the mid-term review of CHAFAE Enhancing consumer education (Consumer Classroom:) including the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education, the development of education measures and materials and promotional activities
7. Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers	EU consumer education resources	
8. Preparation by the Commission of consumer protection legislation and other regulatory initiatives, monitoring the transposition by Member States and the subsequent evaluation of its impact, and the promotion of co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives and monitoring the real impact of those initiatives on consumer markets	Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making) Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)	Study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services: a behavioural economics perspective Behavioural study on food choices and eating habits Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media. Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy Behavioural study on the digitalisation of financial services Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU Foresight study to prepare for the future of EU consumer policy 2020-2030 Follow-up to the initiatives in the field of retail financial services Organisation of the European Consumer Summit
	Consumer Summit	

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
9. Facilitating access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to adequate measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights; monitoring of the functioning and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, including through the development and maintenance of relevant IT tools and the exchange of current best practices and experience in the Member States	<p>Citizens' Energy Forum</p> <p>Networking and events</p> <p>Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform</p> <p>Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR</p> <p>Networking and events</p> <p>Other supporting activities</p>	<p>Organisation of the London Citizens' Energy Forum</p> <p>Financial Services User Group Meetings</p> <p>Development of the ODR platform</p> <p>Translation work for the ODR Platform by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union</p> <p>ODR Platform - Hosting</p> <p>Services related to the online dispute resolution platform</p> <p>Communication actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution</p> <p>ODR Platform: communication campaign targeting traders</p> <p>Christmas communication campaign on Online Dispute Resolution</p> <p>ODR Branding</p> <p>Study on online dispute resolution: web scraping of EU traders website</p> <p>Ex-ante evaluation of the target audiences, channel and tools, and the optimal use of resources for a campaign in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Online Dispute Resolution</p> <p>Intra-muros communication consultants for ODR</p> <p>ADR Assembly (summit) 2018</p> <p>Dual food practices - Technical support for the development and implementation of a harmonised approach for testing quality related characteristics of branded food products</p> <p>Consumer Protection Cooperation System (CPCS) - CPC IT tool maintenance and technical support</p> <p>Workshops in connection with the modernisation of the functioning of the CPC Regulation and logistic support to CPC joint activities and capacity building</p> <p>Grants for joint actions to improve cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws</p> <p>Exchange of CPC officials</p>
10. Coordination of surveillance and enforcement actions with regard to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004	<p>Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network</p> <p>Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)</p>	

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
11. Financial contributions for joint actions with public or non-profit bodies constituting Union networks which provide information and assistance to consumers to help them exercise their rights and obtain access to appropriate dispute resolution, including out of court online resolution schemes (European Consumer Centres Network)	Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)	E-Enforcement Training Academy for consumer legislation
	Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')	Provision of a consumer market study on misleading "free" trials and subscription traps for consumers in the European Union
	Other supporting activities	Webmaster for the collaborative websites of the CPC and ECC networks IT fiches for Sweeps and CPC notifications of competent authorities Procurement contracts to provide service for the organisation of workshops on topics related to the CPC Network
	European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)	Financial contributions for joint actions with bodies constituting the European Consumer Centres Network ECC Net IT tool maintenance ECC-Net IT tool feasibility study Licences, maintenance and hosting for new ECC-Net IT Tool (ECCNet2) Study: European Consumer Centres: Status review and future challenges Support services for improving the visibility of the Network of the European Consumer Centres Communication contract on the promotion of the 10th anniversary of ECC-Net Capacity building activities in support of ECCs (organisation of trainings related to ECCNet2 IT Tool) Capacity building and training activities in support of the European Consumer Centres; increasing the visibility and quality of services of ECCs
	Trainings for ECC-Net	Study on practices towards car rental by consumers in the most concerned MS in the EU Consumer Market Study on the Functioning of the M-Payment for Consumers in the European Union Hosting services
	Consumer market studies (relevant to objective 'enforcement')	
	Other supporting activities	

Action	Types of activities	Specific activities funded
<i>Supporting activities financed from the administrative (cross-cutting) budget line</i>	Networking and events	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Product Safety Week • Consumer Safety Network meetings • RAPEX media events • ECCG and CMIEG meetings • Working groups (e.g. on energy, vulnerable consumers, green claims...) • Stakeholder consultation groups • Meetings of ODR contact points • Meetings of the Expert Group on ODR • Meetings of CPC authorities • ECC-Net meetings
	Other supporting activities	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online community manager services • Publication of annual RAPEX reports • Publications and reprints of the Consumer Scoreboards • Production of brochures • ECC-Net annual reports and quarterly statistics • CPC and ECC knowledge management platform

Source: Civic Consulting, based on budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers.

Annex IV List of references

Table 26: List of literature reviewed

Author	Year	Title of publication
AJUU	2015	Design and Validation (in accordance with ISO rules) of graphical symbols conveying certain safety warning messages to be used for child-care articles
ANEC	2009	ANEC Final Activity Report 2009
ANEC	2010	ANEC Final Activity Report 2010
ANEC	2011	ANEC Final Activity Report 2011
ANEC	2012	ANEC Final Activity Report 2012
ANEC	2013	ANEC Final Activity Report 2013
ANEC	2014	ANEC Final Activity Report 2014
ANEC	2018	Public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment , research & innovation , SMEs and single market - ANEC
Arcadis	2011	Identification and evaluation of data on flame retardants in consumer products
Be Connect	2016	Online Dispute Resolution Video Campaign (30/06/16 to 03/10/16) - Wave 1\&2 Final Report
BEUC	2007	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2007
BEUC	2008	BEUC Annual Report 2008
BEUC	2008	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2008
BEUC	2009	BEUC Annual Report 2009
BEUC	2009	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2009
BEUC	2011	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2011
BEUC	2010	BEUC Annual Report 2010
BEUC	2010	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2010
BEUC	2011	BEUC Annual Report 2011
BEUC	2011	The state of the consumer nation(s)
BEUC	2011	Action Plan for Strengthening the Consumer Movement in Central , Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (CESEE)
BEUC	2011	Policy Recommendations to EU Institutions and National Governments on strengthening the Consumer Movement in Central , Eastern and South Eastern European Countries
BEUC	2012	Strengthening the Consumer Movement in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe (CESEE) - Implementing strategy

Author	Year	Title of publication
BEUC	2012	BEUC Annual Report 2012
BEUC	2012	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2012
BEUC	2012	Analysis of the Consumer Movement in Central , Eastern and South Eastern Europe (CESEE)
BEUC	2013	BEUC Annual Report 2013
BEUC	2013	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2013
BEUC	2014	BEUC Annual Report 2014
BEUC	2014	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2014
BEUC	2015	BEUC Annual Report 2015
BEUC	2015	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2015
BEUC	2016	BEUC Annual Report 2016
BEUC	2016	BEUC Activity Report January to December 2016
BEUC	2017	Consumer Champion evaluation and way forward - Concept note
BEUC	2018	Public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment , research & innovation , SMEs and single market - BEUC
Bogda, Michael	2015	The new EU regulation on online resolution for consumer disputes
Carvallo, Jorge Morais & Carvallo, Joana Campos	2016	Evaluation of the ODR platform in a legal commentary in The Implications of the Digital Revolution
Chafea	2017	Exchange of Officials 2014-2017
Chafea	2015	Chafea 2014 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2015	CHAFEA 2014 Annual Activity Report - Annex
Chafea	2016	CHAFEA 2015 Annual Activity Report - Annex
Chafea	2016	CHAFEA 2015 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2017	CHAFEA 2016 Annual Activity Report - Annex
Chafea	2017	CHAFEA 2016 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2017	Participation in webinars - E-Enforcement Academy
Chafea	2017	Participation on interactive deliverables - E-Enforcement Academy
Chafea	2017	Consumer Champion Website Report

Author	Year	Title of publication
Chafea	2017	Participation in-person - E-Enforcement Academy
Chafea	2008	EAHC 2008 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2010	EAHC 2009 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2010	EAHC 2010 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2011	EAHC 2011 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2012	EAHC 2012 Annual Activity Report
Chafea	2014	EAHC 2013 Annual Activity Report
Chafea/European Commission	2016	Memorandum of Understanding between the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency and DG Health and Food Safety , DG Agriculture and Rural Development , DG Justice and Consumers , DG Internal Market , Industry , Entrepreneurship and SMEs
Civic Consulting/European Commission	2004	Intermediate evaluation of European consumer centres' network (Euroguichets) - Final Report Part II: ECC Evaluation Reports
Civic Consulting/European Commission	2004	Intermediate evaluation of European consumer centres' network (Euroguichets) Part I
Civic Consulting/European Commission	2015	Study on the promotion of the use of RAPEX information by importers, distributors and retailers in the field of consumer product safety, with a particular focus on SMEs
Coffey International Development		
Commission, European	2015	Annex to 2015 Amended CEF Telecom Work Programme
Connecting Europe Facility	2015	2015 Work Programme (WP2015) for CEF Telecommunications
Consumer Classroom Consortium	2015	Provision of promotional services for the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education
Consumer Classroom Consortium	2017	Take-over, hosting, web maintenance and incident management, moderation and web updates of the teachers' interactive on-line platform on consumer education
Consumer Justice Enforcement Forum II	2016	Enforcement of consumer rights: strategies and recommendations
Cortes, Pablo	2015	The Impact of EU Law in the ADR Landscape in Italy, Spain and the UK: Time for Change or Missed Opportunity?
Cortes, Pablo	2011	Online Dispute Resolution for Consumers in the European Union
Cortes, Pablo & Lodder, Arno R.	2014	Consumer Dispute Resolution Goes Online: Reflections on the Evolution of European Law for Out-of-Court Redress

Author	Year	Title of publication
Council of European Energy Regulators	2015	How to Involve and Engage Consumer Organisations in the Regulatory Process: A CEER Public Consultation - Evaluation of responses
Council of the European Union	2007	Council Resolution on the Consumer Policy Strategy of the EU (2007 â€” 2013)
CPEC/European Commission	2011	Evaluation of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net). Final Report
CPEC/European Commission	2011	Evaluation of the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) - Technical Annex to the Final Report
CPEC/European Commission	2012	(External) evaluation of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation. Final report and annexes
Creutzfeldt, Naomi	2016	Trusting the middle-man : Impact and legitimacy of ombudsmen in Europe
CSIL/European Commission	2006	Evaluation of financial contributions 2000-2003 to European Consumer organisations - Final Report Vol. 2
CSIL/European Commission	2006	Evaluation of financial contributions 2000-2003 to European Consumer organisations - Final Report Vol. 1
CSIL/European Commission	2006	Evaluation of financial contributions 2000-2003 to European Consumer organisations - Annex
Deloitte	2016	China E-Retail Market Report 2016
Deloitte	2017	European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report Annexes
Deloitte	2017	European Consumer Centres (ECCs): Status review and future challenges - Draft Final Report
Deloitte/European Commission	2016	Evaluation of the information campaign "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit"
Dominguez-Torreiro, Marcos & Stergios Athanasoglou & Pawel Stano	2015	Consumer Markets Scoreboard: Refinement, Further development and Analysis of Micro-data
ECC Sweden	2017	Presentation on Upcoming communication measures on the Joint Project Subscription traps: ECC-Net Communication Workshop
ECC-Net	2011	VADEMECUM â€” European Consumer Centres' Network (ECC-Net)
Economisti Associati/European Commission	2016	Second Intermediate Evaluation of the Functioning of the SANTE non-food Scientific Committees
Ecorys UK/European Commission	2011	Evaluation of Consumer Education, Information and Capacity Building Actions : Final Report
Edwards, Lilian & Wilson, Caroline	2007	Redress & Alternative Dispute Resolution in Cross-Border E-commerce Transactions

Author	Year	Title of publication
Ene, Corina	2011	RAPEX system - An Efficient Tool for European Consumer Safety
European Commission	2017	Retailers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2016
European Commission	2017	Consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2016
European Commission	1999	Communication from the Commission: Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001
European Commission	2001	Report from the Commission on the Action Plan for Consumer Policy 1999-2001" and on the "General Framework for Community activities in favour of consumers 1999-2003""
European Commission	2003	Decision No 20/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 December 2003 establishing a general framework for financing Community actions in support of consumer policy for the years 2004 to 2007
European Commission	2005	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme of Community action in the field of Health and Consumer protection 2007-2013
European Commission	2006	Flash Eurobarometer 186: Business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
European Commission	2006	Special Eurobarometer 252: Consumer protection in the Internal Market
European Commission	2007	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2007 Annual Report
European Commission	2007	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2007
European Commission	2007	EU Consumer Policy strategy 2007-2013
European Commission	2007	Commission Staff Working Document: Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the EESC - EU Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013 - Review of Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006
European Commission	2007	Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the EESC: EU Consumer Policy strategy 2007-2013
European Commission	2007	Better protection from sun after European Commission action
European Commission	2008	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2008 Annual Report
European Commission	2008	Consumer markets scoreboard 1st edition
European Commission	2008	Flash Eurobarometer 224: Business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
European Commission	2008	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2008
European Commission	2009	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2009 Annual Report
European Commission	2009	Consumer markets scoreboard 2nd edition
European Commission	2009	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2009
European Commission	2009	Consumer markets scoreboard 2nd edition

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Commission	2009	Final report on the Scientific Committees 2004-2009
European Commission	2009	Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committees on Consumer Safety, Health and Environmental Risks and Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks
European Commission	2010	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2010 Annual Report
European Commission	2010	An Energy Policy for Consumers
European Commission	2010	A Digital Agenda for Europe
European Commission	2010	Consumer markets scoreboard 4th edition
European Commission	2010	Flash Eurobarometer 282: Attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection
European Commission	2010	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2010
European Commission	2010	Recommendation of 12.5.2010 on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer complaints and enquiries
European Commission	2011	Flash Eurobarometer 299: Consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection
European Commission	2011	Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive on Consumer ADR and Proposal for a Regulation on Consumer ODR
European Commission	2011	Flash Eurobarometer 300: Retailers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection
European Commission	2011	Consumer markets scoreboard 6th edition
European Commission	2011	Consumer conditions scoreboard 5th edition
European Commission	2011	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2011
European Commission	2011	Commission Staff Working Document: Evaluation of the Consumer Policy Strategy and Programme of Community Action
European Commission	2011	Commission Staff Working Paper: Consumer Empowerment in the EU
European Commission	2011	Commission Staff Working Paper - Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a consumer programme 2014-2020
European Commission	2011	Flash Eurobarometer 295 - Consumer protection and consumer rights in Bulgaria
European Commission	2012	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2011 Annual Report
European Commission	2012	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2012 Annual Report
European Commission	2012	Flash Eurobarometer 332: Consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection
European Commission	2012	Flash Eurobarometer 331: Retailers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Commission	2012	Consumer markets scoreboard 8th edition
European Commission	2012	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2012
European Commission	2012	Commission Staff Working Document: On Knowledge-Enhancing Aspects of Consumer Empowerment 2012-2014
European Commission	2012	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions - A European Consumer Agenda (2014-2020)
European Commission	2012	Commission Staff Working Document: Report on Consumer Policy July 2010 - December 2011 (First report on consumer policy)"
European Commission	2012	Consumer conditions scoreboard 7th edition
European Commission	2013	Flash Eurobarometer 397: Consumer Attitudes Towards Cross-Border Trade and Consumer Protection
European Commission	2013	Annual Work Programme in the area of consumer policy for 2013
European Commission	2013	European Consumer Summit 2013 Conclusions
European Commission	2013	Consumer conditions scoreboard 9th edition
European Commission	2014	Consumer markets scoreboard 10th edition
European Commission	2014	Commission Implementing Decision of 17 December 2014 amending Implementing Decision 2013/770/EU in order to transform the 'Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency' into the 'Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency'
European Commission	2014	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2014 Annual Report
European Commission	2014	10 better deals for 500 million
European Commission	2014	Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2014 and the financing for the implementation of the multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-2020
European Commission	2014	Annex to work programme 2014
European Commission	2014	Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2015 and the financing for the implementation of the multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-2020
European Commission	2014	Annex to work programme 2015
European Commission	2014	Flash Eurobarometer 389 - Consumer Rights in Croatia
European Commission	2014	Flash Eurobarometer 333 - Consumer Rights in Romania: Third Wave
European Commission	2014	Single Market Scoreboard - European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2013 - 12/2013)
European Commission	2015	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2015 Annual Report
European Commission	2015	Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Commission	2015	Flash Eurobarometer 396: Retailers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection
European Commission	2015	Consumer conditions scoreboard 11th edition
European Commission	2015	Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2015 -12/2015)
European Commission	2015	Annex to Work Programme 2016
European Commission	2015	Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2016 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme
European Commission	2015	Ex-ante evaluation for a communication campaign on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)
European Commission	2015	Communication of 2.12.2015 on an EU action plan for the circular economy
European Commission	2015	Communication of 15.7.2015 on Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers
European Commission	2016	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Assessing the Regulation on Consumer Protection Cooperation
European Commission	2016	Single Market Scoreboard: Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 - 12/2016)
European Commission	2016	Adapting consumer protection to the online world: Proposal for a revision of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation - Fact sheet
European Commission	2016	Report assessing the effectiveness of the Regulation on consumer protection cooperation
European Commission	2016	Consumer markets scoreboard 12th edition
European Commission	2016	Commission Staff Working Document Impact Assessment accompanying the document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws
European Commission	2016	Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and on the financing of the Consumer Programme
European Commission	2016	Annex to work programme 2017
European Commission	2016	Report on the activity of the Scientific Committees term 2013-2016
European Commission	2016	Keeping European Consumers Safe - 2016 Annual Report
European Commission	2016	DG GROW internet use report
European Commission	2017	Special Eurobarometer 460: Attitudes towards the impact of digitisation and automation on daily life
European Commission	2017	Commission Work Programme 2018
European Commission	2017	President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address 2017
European Commission	2017	Roadmap Evaluation of Consumers programmes : 2007-2013 and 2014-2020

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Commission	2017	Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition
European Commission	2017	Email from DG GROW on the use of the CosIng and CPNP databases
European Commission	2017	Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 Edition
European Commission	2017	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the European Online Dispute Resolution platform established under Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes
European Commission	2017	Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites - Executive summary
European Commission	2017	Online dispute resolution: Web-scraping of EU traders' websites - Final report
European Commission	2017	E-Enforcement Academy Participation - DG JUST
European Commission	2017	2017 results of the EU Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products
European Commission	2017	Ex-post evaluation of the application of the market surveillance provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765 / 2008
European Commission	2018	CPCS - Requests lifetimes (in months)
European Commission (DG GROW)	2016	Single Market Scoreboard - European Consumer Centre Network (Reporting period: 01/2016 - 12/2016)
European Commission (DG JUST)	2016	Management Plan 2017
European Commission (DG JUST)	2017	Evaluation and Fitness Check (FC) Roadmap - Evaluation of Consumers programmes: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020
European Commission (DG JUST)	2016	DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report - Annexes
European Commission (DG JUST)	2016	DG JUST 2015 Annual Activity Report
European Commission (DG JUST)	2017	DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report - Annexes
European Commission (DG JUST)	2017	DG JUST 2016 Annual Activity Report
European Commission (DG SANCO)	2013	Report on Consumer Policy January 2012 - December 2013 (Second report on consumer policy)"
European Commission (DG SANCO)	2014	DG SANCO 2013 Annual Activity Report

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Commission (DG SANCO)	2015	DG SANCO 2014 Annual Activity Report
European Commission (DG SANTE)	2016	DG SANTE 2015 Annual Activity Report
European Commission (DG SANTE)	2016	DG SANTE 2015 Annual activity report - Annexes
European Commission (DG SANTE)	2017	DG SANTE 2016 Annual activity report - Annexes
European Commission (DG SANTE)	2017	DG SANTE 2016 Annual Activity Report
European Council	1999	Council Resolution of 28 June 1999 on Community consumer policy 1999 to 2001
European Parliament	2016	A New Deal for energy consumers The New Deal and Energy Union
European Parliament	2017	Briefing: EU Legislation in Progress - Consumer protection cooperation
European Parliament & the Council of European Union	2011	Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EE
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	1999	Decision No 283/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 January 1999 establishing a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	2001	General Products Safety Directive
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	2006	Decision No 1926/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013)
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	2006	Decision No. 1926/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013)
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	2014	Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20

Author	Year	Title of publication
European Parliament & the Council of the European Union	2014	Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20
European Parliament (DG Internal Policies)	2009	Market Surveillance in the Member States
European Parliament (DG Internal Policies)	2011	Cross-Border Alternative Dispute Resolution in the European Union
European Parliament (DG Internal Policies)	2012	Assessing the scope of European Dispute Resolution Platform
European Parliament (DG Internal Policies)	2012	Optimal integration of the European Dispute Resolution Platform
European Parliament (DG Internal Policies)	2015	EU Mapping: Overview of internal market and consumer protection related legislation
European Parliamentary Research Service	2015	Consumer protection in the EU: Policy overview
European Parliamentary Research Service	2015	Briefing to the European Parliament on how the EU budget is spent: Consumer programme
European Parliamentary Research Service	2017	Briefing: Protecting and empowering EU consumers
European Union	2015	ECC Network Anniversary Report 2005-2015
Fabisch, Gottlobe	2004	The Regulatory Role of Standards in the European Union and Public Interest Representation in Standardisation
Financial Services User Group	2011	FSUG Annual Report 2011
Financial Services User Group	2012	FSUG Annual Report 2012
Financial Services User Group	2013	FSUG Annual Report 2013
GfK Belgium/European Commission	2017	Consumer Market Study to support the Fitness Check of EU consumer and marketing
GHK/European Commission	2005	Interim evaluation of the European Consumer Diary Project - Final report

Author	Year	Title of publication
Goyens, Monique	2018	Using Behavioural Economics For Rather than Against Consumers: A Practitioner's Perspective
ICF	2014	Summary of stakeholder responses to the public consultation reviewing the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation (2006/2004/EC)
ICF/European Commission	2014	Evaluation of the information campaign Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit" - Final Report"
INNOVHUB	2015	Study on alcohol-powered flueless fireplace combustion and its effects on indoor air quality
Joint Research Center	2013	Applying behavioural sciences to EU policy-making
Joint Research Center	2015	Consumer conditions in the EU: Revised framework and empirical investigation
Martic, Dusko	2014	Redress for free internet services under the scope of the EU and UNCITRAL's ODR regulations
Poncibo, Cristina	2012	Networks to enforce European Law: The case of the consumer protection cooperation network
Prosafe	2011	Baby Walkers Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Implementation Report
Prosafe	2011	Child Appealing Designs Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Implementation Report
Prosafe	2011	Helmets Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Implementation Report
Prosafe	2012	Sunbeds and Solarium Services Joint Market Surveillance Action - Report
Prosafe	2012	Sunbeds and Solarium Services Joint Market Surveillance Action - Annexes
Prosafe	2013	Five Consumer Products Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Implementation Report
Prosafe	2013	Lighters II Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Implementation Report
Prosafe	2014	Joint Action 2011 GPSD - Final Technical Implementation Report
Prosafe	2015	Joint Action 2012 GPSD - Final Technical Implementation Report
Prosafe	2016	Toys Intended for Children under 3 Years Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Technical Report
Prosafe	2016	Children's Kick Scooters Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Technical Report
Prosafe	2016	Joint Action 2013 GPSD - Final Technical Report, Cots
Prosafe	2016	Joint Action 2013 GPSD - Final Technical Report, Smoke Detectors
Prosafe	2017	Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Power tools
Prosafe	2017	Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Childcare Articles 4, Safety Barriers
Prosafe	2017	Joint Action 2014 GPSD - Final technical report, Acoustic toys
Prosafe	2018	Fireworks Joint Market Surveillance Action - Final Technical report

Author	Year	Title of publication
RAND Europe/European Commission	2006	Intermediate evaluation of Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection non-food scientific committees – Final Report
Rott, Peter	2018	ADR in Germany after the Implementation of the ADR Directive
RPA	2014	Study on online consumer reviews in the hotel sector
RPA/European Commission	2011	Consumer Policy: Ex-post and Mid-term Evaluations Final Report
Steer Davies Gleave	2010	Evaluation of Regulation 261/2004
The Evaluation Partnership/ European Commission	2001	Evaluation of 1995-1999 subventions to consumer organisations operating at European level - Annex to the final report
The Evaluation Partnership/ European Commission	2001	Evaluation of 1995-1999 subventions to consumer organisations operating at European level - Final report
The Evaluation Partnership/ European Commission	2002	An ex-ante impact assessment of the new consumer policy strategy - Final report
The Gallup Organization/ European Commission	2002	Flash Eurobarometer 117: Consumers Survey
The Gallup Organization/ European Commission	2003	Special Eurobarometer 193: Consumer Protection in the EU
The Gallup Organization/ European Commission	2009	Flash Eurobarometer 278: Business attitudes towards enforcement and redress in the internal market
TNS Opinion & Social/European Commission	2008	Special Eurobarometer 298 - Consumer protection in the internal market
TNS Opinion & Social/European Commission	2013	Flash Eurobarometer 358 - Consumer Attitudes Towards Cross-Border Trade and Consumer Protection
TNS Opinion & Social/European Commission	2013	Flash Eurobarometer 359 - Retailers' Attitudes Towards Cross-border Trade and Consumer Protection
TNS Opinion & Social/European Commission	2015	Flash Eurobarometer 397 - Consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection

Author	Year	Title of publication
UNE Consortium/European Commission	2017	Support Services to Develop and Provide Training in Internet Investigations for the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) and Consumer Product Safety Networks (CSN) - E-Enforcement Academy
United Nations	2017	UNCITRAL Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution
Van Dijk Management Consultants/ European Commission	2004	Ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001
Van Dijk Management Consultants/ European Commission	2006	Ex-post evaluation of the impact of the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006 on national consumer policies
Van Dijk Management Consultants/ European Commission	2013	Evaluation of EU financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC) 2007-2011
Van Dijk Management Consultants/ European Commission	2013	Evaluation of EU 2007-2011 financial contributions to EU-level consumer organisations (ANEC)
Vzbv & BEUC	2017	The challenge of protecting EU consumers in global online markets
Yellow Window Management Consultants/ European Commission	2004	Evaluation of the financial support for specific projects Article 2c) of Decision 283/1999/EC - Final Report

Source: Regulation (EU) No. 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20.
 Note: Studies and evaluations are also financed under other actions.

Annex V Organisations consulted for the study

Annex VI Analytical framework

Table 27: Updated analytical framework for the evaluation

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators and methodological approaches	Sources of evidence
Effectiveness	1. To what extent have the objectives of the programmes been achieved by the choice and implementation of their actions?	1.1 To what extent have the activities under Objective I been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of RAPEX notifications entailing at least one reaction (by other Member States) [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II] • Ratio number of reactions/number of notifications (serious risks) [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II] • Number of Rapex notification per million population since 2002 (to detect long-term trends in country differences) • Number of joint enforcement and cooperation actions under the GPSD • Number of exchange of GPSD enforcement officials in total and by MS covered • Assessment by stakeholders of effectiveness of the relevant activities to consolidate and enhance product safety for consumers through effective market surveillance in Member States • Performance data on product safety related IT tools, mainly Rapex and portal & databases on cosmetics (data on downtime, users, problems, satisfaction), if available • Consumer trust that products on the market are safe 	Interviews Document review Consultation results Case studies Rapex statistics and reports Eurobarometers Prosafe website Chafea data and reports EC performance data of product safety related IT-tools/databases
	1.2 To what extent have the activities under Objective II been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy, and providing support to consumer organisations?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of complaint bodies and number of countries submitting complaints to the EC complaint database [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II] • Consumer trust in seller/provider respecting consumer rights • Number of visitors and users of Consumer Champion website, number of materials produced • Number of visitors and users of consumer educations websites, number of materials produced and distribution (Consumer Classroom, Dolceta, Europa Diary) • Training courses for consumer professionals, number of participating organisations, coverage of MS and assessment of participants' satisfaction (if available) • Grants provided to EU level consumer organisations • Number of studies by area, use of evidence for policy making/design of legislation • Assessment by target group/stakeholders of effectiveness of the relevant activities to improve consumers' education, information, and awareness of their rights; b) develop the evidence base for consumer policy, c) provide support to consumer organisations (including taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable consumers) 	Interviews Document review Consultation results Case studies Eurobarometers, scoreboards etc Chafea data and reports EC data on complaints database Data on capacity building activities conducted BEUC/ANEC annual reports

1.3 To what extent have the activities under Objective III been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which studies and smart regulation activities such as IAs, evaluations, and consultations have contributed to preparation/simplification by the Commission of consumer protection legislation (as evidenced by EC and stakeholder assessment)• Number of cases dealt with by the EU-wide online dispute resolution system [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II]• Performance data on IT-tool for online dispute resolution system (data on downtime, users, problems, satisfaction), if available• Percentage of cross-border cases referred to ADR by ECCs [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II]• Number of communication activities on ADR and ODR, coverage of MS, participants' assessment of activities (if available)• Assessment by target group/stakeholders of effectiveness of the relevant activities to develop and reinforce consumer rights through a) smart regulatory action, and b) improved access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including ADR	Interviews Document review Consultation results Eurobarometers etc Case studies ODR data and IT tool performance indicators
1.4 To what extent have the activities under Objective IV been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of information flow and cooperation within the CPC Network, as indicated by number of requests for information exchange, for enforcement measures and number of alerts [From Regulation (EU) No 254/2014, Annex II]• Performance data on CPC Network database (data on downtime, users, problems, satisfaction), if available• Number of joint enforcement and cooperation actions and coverage of MS• Number of exchange of CPC enforcement officials• Extent of enforcement cooperation with third countries, if available• Capacity building for enforcement officials, number of participants, MS covered and materials produced (E-enforcement academy)• Number of contacts with consumers handled by the ECC-net (from Commission regulation)• Assessment of effectiveness by target group/stakeholders of the relevant activities for a) strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and b) supporting consumers with advice	Interviews with national enforcement bodies and ECCs Document review Consultation results Eurobarometers etc Case studies CPC Evaluation (2012) ECC Evaluations ECC annual reports/ Chafea data and reports Consumer scoreboards
2. To what extent do the activities and outputs of the actions match the objectives of the programmes?	<div>2.1 What are the activities that have been conducted, and what outputs have been produced?</div> <div>2.2 Do the activities and outputs match with the objectives of the programmes?</div>	<div>Mapping of activities conducted under the actions and outputs produced to the objectives of the programmes</div> <div>Existence of activities that have been financed but do not match any of the objectives</div> <div>If yes: What has been the rationale and have procedures for re-allocation of budget been adhered to?</div> <div>Fact sheets on actions</div>

the Consumer Programmes?			Interviews
3. To what extent can these effects be credited to the Commission interventions?	<p>3.1 What are the effects (results/impacts) of the activities funded?</p> <p>3.2 Degree to which these effects can be credited to EC interventions financed under the programmes.</p>	<p>Product safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of the relevant activities to consolidate and enhance product safety for consumers through effective market surveillance in Member States (as assessed by stakeholders) • Extent to which these effects can be credited directly or indirectly to the activities funded under Objective I, as assessed by primary targets of activities and stakeholders • Are there other factors that have affected the observed levels of achievements, including other EU policies/measures, MS activities or external factors (e.g. product innovation, trade flows, measures in third countries etc)? • What are the trends in key indicators (such as product safety related incidents, consumer trust in product safety etc) and have activities under the programmes led to notable changes in trend trajectories? <p>Consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of the relevant activities to a) improve consumer education, information and awareness of their rights, b) develop the evidence base for consumer policy and c) to provide support to consumer organisations (as assessed by stakeholders) • Extent to which these effects can be credited directly or indirectly to the activities funded under Objective II, as assessed by primary targets of activities and stakeholders • Are there other factors that have affected the observed levels of achievements, including other EU policies/measures, MS activities or external factors (e.g. internet penetration in households, innovation in commercial practices etc.)? • What are the trends in key indicators (such as consumer knowledge of key rights or the number of complaints handled by national consumer organisations) and have activities under the programmes led to notable changes in trend trajectories? <p>Consumer rights and redress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of the relevant activities to develop and reinforce consumer rights through a) smart regulatory action, and b) improved access to simple, efficient, expedient and low-cost redress including ADR (as assessed by stakeholders) • Extent to which these effects can be credited directly or indirectly to the activities funded under Objective III, as assessed by primary targets of activities and stakeholders • Are there other factors that have affected the observed levels of achievements, including other EU policies/measures, MS activities or external factors? • What are the trends in key indicators (such as usage rates of ADR/ODR) and have activities under the programmes led to notable changes in trend trajectories? <p>Enforcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of the relevant activities for a) strengthening cooperation between national 	<p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation results</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Statistics and EB data</p>
4. To what extent have different factors influenced the level of the achievements observed?	<p>4.1 What are reasons for achievement or non-achievement of objectives and what are relevant influencing factors?</p>		

enforcement bodies and b) supporting consumers with advice (as assessed by stakeholders)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which these effects can be credited directly or indirectly to the activities funded under Objective IV, as assessed by primary targets of activities and stakeholders• Are there other factors that have affected the observed levels of achievements, including other EU policies/measures, MS activities or external factors (e.g. levels of cross-border transactions)?• What are the trends in key indicators (such as information exchanged between enforcement officials or hits on ECC advice websites) and have activities under the programmes led to notable changes in trend trajectories?			
Efficiency	5. Which were the costs and the benefits of the actions?	5.1 What are the costs associated with the activities? 5.2 What are the benefits associated with the activities?	Interviews Document review Consultation results Case studies
	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost of activities (related to implementation of activities):<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Programme costs (grants, procurement contracts)- Administrative costs EC- Costs of beneficiaries, such as national authorities, consumer organisations, private bodies, due to co-financing requirements (where applicable) <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benefits of activities for EC (e.g. better evidence base for policy making/smart regulation, better functioning internal market)• Benefits of activities in Member States (e.g. increased capacity/quality of services, better enforcement, better coordination, efficiency gains through networking and joint activities etc.)• Benefits of activities for consumers (e.g. better information and advice, better access to ADR)• Benefits of activities for businesses (e.g. better information for traders on ODR/ADR)• Breakdown of costs by action and programme objective• Analysis of costs and effects for different actions/programme objectives		
6. To what extent have the costs used in the actions and their distribution among the priorities of the programmes been justified, given the changes which have been achieved?	6.1 How have overall costs been allocated by action and programme objectives/priorities? 6.2 Extent to which this allocation of costs has been justified in light of the effects achieved?		Interviews Case studies Fact sheets on actions Analysis of effects of actions under EQ1 Quantification of effects

7. To what extent are the costs proportionate to the benefits achieved?	7.1 Extent to which the costs of the Consumer Programmes and the distribution among the Programme areas have been proportionate to the benefits achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder assessment as to whether the distribution of funds among Programme areas has been justified given the benefits achieved Assessment of costs and benefits 	Interviews Analysis of costs and benefits
8. What factors influenced the efficiency with which the observed achievements were attained?	<p>8.1 Which factors led to increased/reduced benefits in the context of specific activities?</p> <p>8.2 Which factors led to increased/reduced costs in the context of specific activities?</p> <p>8.3 Are there sources of inefficiency or redundancies? Could the activities have been delivered at lower costs while still meeting the set objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of factors that affected efficiency of specific actions Identification of factors that affected efficiency of programme delivery in general Identification of inefficiencies/redundancies and their causes 	Document review Case studies Interviews Assessment of costs and benefits
9. How affordable were the costs borne by different stakeholder groups, given the benefits they received?	9.1 Extent to which costs borne are considered to be affordable given the benefits, by stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of costs and benefits Stakeholder assessment of affordability of own costs given the benefits received 	Case studies Interviews Consultation Assessment of costs and benefits
10. If there are significant differences in costs or benefits between Member States, what are these differences caused by?	10.1 Are differences in costs or benefits between Member States significant? If yes, what are the causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of costs and benefits Stakeholder assessment of causes for differences 	Case studies Interviews Consultation Assessment of costs and benefits

<p>Relevance</p> <p>11. To what extent are the objectives and priorities of the programmes still relevant to the needs of the stakeholder community and to other consumer-relevant EU policies?</p>	<p>11.1 To what extent are the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 still relevant to the current needs of the national authorities and other stakeholders?</p> <p>11.2 Are the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes relevant to other consumer-relevant EU policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, digital single market, transport, financial services etc)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views and assessments of EC representatives, MS authorities and other stakeholders as to whether the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (as reflected in the activities listed above in the previous sections) are still relevant • Relevant other indicators concerning current problems and needs, where available • Identification of relevance of objectives and priorities for other consumer-relevant policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, digital single market, transport, financial services etc) 	<p>Consultation Interviews</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Document review, including consumer scoreboards and EBs</p>
<p>12 a) To what extent have the objectives of the programmes proven to be appropriate to consumer needs? b) To what extent have the actions under the programmes proven to be appropriate to the specific needs of different c) Are the needs identified at the time of the adoption of the 2014-2020 Programme still relevant or have new needs emerged which necessitate an adjustment of the Programme?</p>	<p>12.1 Have the objectives of the programmes been appropriate to needs of consumers?</p> <p>12.2 Have the activities been appropriate to the specific needs of different consumer groups, e.g. vulnerable consumers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of stakeholders (EC / MS authorities / consumer organisations) regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whether the objectives of the programmes (and the related activities) have been appropriate to needs of consumers? - Have there been other needs of consumers that are relevant in a consumer policy perspective and that have not been addressed by the programmes? - Whether actions have taken appropriate consideration of different groups of consumers (e.g. vulnerable consumers)? • Indicators from consumer scoreboards and EBs etc. that indicate how relevant needs/problems have evolved over the evaluation period • Conclusion of previous EQ 	<p>Answer to EQ11</p> <p>Consultation Interviews</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Document review, including consumer scoreboards and EBs</p>

13. How well adapted is the intervention to subsequent economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances?	13.1 To what extent have there been economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances since the adoption of the programme that affect the relevance of the objectives/actions (e.g. IoT, new marketing/pricing techniques, sharing economy etc)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder assessment regarding relevant economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances since the adoption of the programme that could affect its implementation • Identification of relevant advances that could affect the relevance of the objectives/actions and could require adjustment 	Consultation Interviews Document review Expert assessment
Coherence	14. To what extent have the objectives, priorities and actions of the Consumer Programmes been coherent with those of the Consumer policy and/or with other consumer-relevant EU policies, in particular those which have similar objectives, and other EU programmes, such as the 2014-2020 Multiannual 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme? ²³⁹	<p>14.1 To what extent have the objectives, priorities and actions of the Consumer Programmes been coherent with those of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU consumer policy in general (as specified e.g. in Consumer Agenda) - other consumer-relevant EU policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, transport, digital single market, financial services) and programme (such as the 2014-2020 Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme?) <p>• Assessment of complementarity and consistency of objectives, priorities and activities of the Consumer Programmes with objectives and priorities of EU consumer policy (as specified e.g. in the Consumer Agenda)</p> <p>• Assessment of complementarity and consistency of objectives, priorities and activities of the Consumer Programmes with objectives and priorities of other consumer-relevant EU policies/programmes (e.g. the 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme, LIFE programme)</p>	Document review Consultation Interviews Case studies

²³⁹ Possible synergies/complementarities with other EU Programmes shall be assessed in this context as well, especially policy priority areas such as digital, financial, environment (in particular sustainable consumption) and energy as well as the programmes' contribution of the measures to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth should be assessed.

EU added value	15. To what extent have the priorities of the Consumer Programmes produced synergy, focus and coherence between the funded actions in delivering on the objectives?	15.1 To what extent have the priorities of the programmes produced synergy, focus and coherence between the actions in achieving the objectives? 15.2 Are there indications for a lack of synergy, focus and coherence between actions with respect to achieving the objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of activities undertaken to identify existing synergies between actions and their internal coherence • Conclusions from evaluations of specific activities regarding coherence with other activities under the programmes 	Document review Consultation Interviews
	16. To what extent were/are the interventions/ actions coherent within the Consumer Programmes?	16.1 Have there been any gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities within the Consumer Programmes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the activities to determine the existence of any gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps within the programmes • Stakeholder assessment concerning gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between activities within the programmes 	Document review Consultation Interviews
EU added value	17. What is the additional value resulting from the EU interventions compared to what could have been/be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels?	17.1 Could activities similar to the activities funded under the programmes have been implemented by the Member States without the EU intervention? 17.2 Could the results and impacts of the activities funded under the programmes have been achieved by the Member States acting at the national level/regional level without EU intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions from evaluations regarding specific actions in terms of EU added value • Identification of need for EU-wide coordination regarding actions/ specific activities (e.g. use of common IT tools/databases, common standards and approaches required) • Assessment of stakeholders regarding added value from the EU intervention 	Document review Consultation Interviews
	18. To what extent do the issues addressed by the interventions continue to require actions at EU level?	18.1 Do the needs/problems addressed by the interventions continue to require actions at EU level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of EQs regarding relevance in light of current needs (see above) • Evidence for continued need for intervention at EU level (e.g. continued needs/problems regarding cross-border shopping, redress and enforcement) • Evidence for convergence to a high level of consumer protection/empowerment or existing imbalances between MS in this respect • Stakeholder views on the likely consequences of reducing or stopping the EU intervention through the Consumer Programmes 	Document review Consultation Interviews

	19. What would be the most likely consequences of stopping or withdrawing the existing EU interventions?	19.1 What actions would likely continue to be implemented at national level if the Consumer Programme would be discontinued?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder assessment regarding which actions would likely continue to take place at the national level without the Consumer Programme • Consideration of a scenario in which the EU intervention would be withdrawn 	Interviews
Complemen- tarity	20. To what extent do the actions of the Consumer Programme/policy support, complement and usefully supplement and monitor policies pursued by the Member States?	<p>20.1 To what extent have the Consumer Programmes and the related activities been complementary to relevant policies pursued by the Member States?</p> <p>20.2 To what extent have the Consumer Programmes and the related activities monitored relevant policies pursued by the Member States?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the actions are complementary to policies implemented at the national level, as identified in the programme documentation and evaluations of specific activities? • Stakeholder assessment as to whether the programme actions complement/monitor national policies. Provision of illustrative examples • Stakeholder views on the impact of the Consumer Programmes' actions on the development of national policies in the consumer field 	Document review Consultation Interviews
Sustai- nability	21. How likely are the effects to last after the interventions' end?	<p>21.1 How likely is it that effects of the Consumer Programmes on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - product safety, - consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations, - consumer rights and redress, - enforcement of consumer rights, <p>last after the end of each Programme?</p> <p>21.2 In what ways could the actions under the Consumer Programme be adapted to safeguard that effects last after the interventions' end?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder assessment of whether the Consumer Programmes had/will have long term effects • Long-term evolution of indicators regarding key results/impacts of activities 	Document review Consultation Interviews Time series data on key results and impacts (e.g. from EBs, scoreboards, documentation of actions etc)

Source: Civic Consulting.

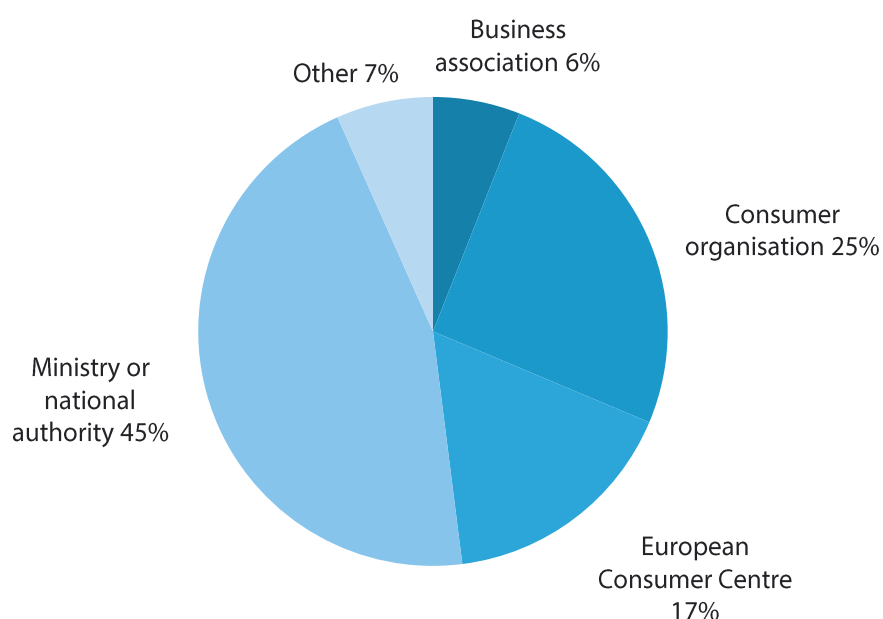
Annex VII Results of the stakeholder interviews

In this annex we present the results of the stakeholder interviews regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, on the basis of the interviews in all Member States, Norway, Iceland and at EU level conducted in the framework of this study. For all interview questions, breakdowns of results by stakeholder type are also provided.

1. Overview of interviewees

This analysis is based on 150 completed interview questionnaires.²⁴⁰ The figure below displays the breakdown by type of stakeholder: 45% were ministries or national authorities (N=68), 25% were consumer organisations (N=38), 17% were European Consumer Centres (N=25), 6% were business organisations (N=9) and 7% were other types of stakeholders (N=10) such as other government entities or ADR bodies.

Figure 33: Types of stakeholders interviewed



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 1. N=150 (N in this figure and hereafter refers to the number of completed interview questionnaires).

The table below shows the number of completed interview questionnaires by country.

²⁴⁰ Note that these 150 completed questionnaires correspond to 165 interviews, as in some cases separate interviews were conducted with two representatives of the same organisation that cover different areas (e.g. product safety and consumer policy), but were documented in one questionnaire, depending on the preference of the organisation.

Table 28: Number of completed interview questionnaires, by Member State

Country	Number of completed interview questionnaires	%
Austria	3	2%
Belgium	2	1%
Bulgaria	6	4%
Croatia	8	5%
Cyprus	3	2%
Czech Republic	8	5%
Denmark	5	3%
Estonia	5	3%
Finland	4	3%
France	7	5%
Germany	10	7%
Greece	3	2%
Hungary	9	6%
Iceland	2	1%
Ireland	4	3%
Italy	7	5%
Latvia	4	3%
Lithuania	4	3%
Luxembourg	3	2%
Malta	4	3%
Netherlands	3	2%
Norway	2	1%
Poland	8	5%
Portugal	5	3%
Romania	4	3%
Slovakia	4	3%
Slovenia	5	3%
Spain	3	2%
Sweden	6	4%
United Kingdom	5	3%
EU-level	4	3%
Total	150	100%

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 1.

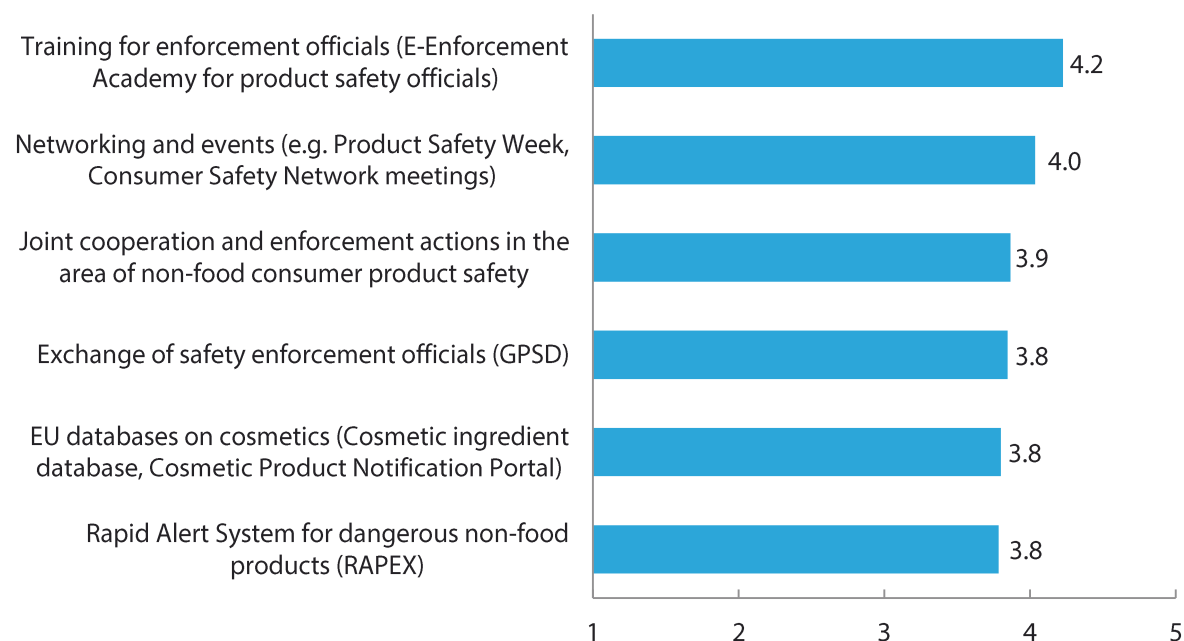
2. Effectiveness

In this section we present interview results related to interviewees' assessments of effectiveness of the 2014-2020 Programme activities by topical area. These assessments cover the period 2014-2017.

2.1 Product safety

The figure below shows interviewees' assessments of effectiveness of the activities related to product safety conducted under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Figure 34: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. N=22, 55, 45, 26, 15, 70 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown in the figure above, "training for enforcement officials" received the highest average rating in terms of effectiveness (4.2), followed by networking and events (4.0). The other product safety activities received high ratings between 3.9 and 3.8. The average assessments of these activities under the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme were fairly similar: "networking and events" and "exchange of safety enforcement officials" received the same ratings (4.0 and 3.8 respectively), whereas "joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety" and "RAPEX" were ranked lower (both 3.6). "Training for enforcement officials" and "EU databases on cosmetics" were not relevant activities under the previous programme.

Figure 35: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. N=63, 45, 53, 71, 64, 47, 36, 53, 28 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown in the figure above, “better information on unsafe non-food products for enforcement authorities” received the highest average assessment in terms of level of achievement (4.0); ministries and national authorities as well as ECCs provided particularly high assessments for this benefit.²⁴¹ The benefits that received the next highest average assessments with respect to level of achievement were “better trained enforcement officials” (3.7), “better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States” (3.6) and “better information on unsafe non-food products for consumers” (3.5). The benefits that were assessed as the least achieved, and on average below the midpoint of the scale, were “better cooperation with enforcement authorities in third countries” (2.7) and “reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe services” (2.5); the latter received several low assessments from consumer organisations and ECCs in particular.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Ministries and national authorities provided an average achievement assessment of 4.1 for this benefit, whereas ECCs provided an average assessment of 4.3.

²⁴² Consumer organisations provided an average assessment of 1.9 and ECCs of 2.0 in this respect.

Figure 36: If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

According to the figure above, “Limited staff/financial resources for market surveillance and enforcement” was indicated by the most interviewees (34) as a factor influencing a low level of achievement of product safety-related benefits of the Consumer Programmes in their own countries. Factors that were also indicated by a large number of interviewees as influencing a low level of achievement of benefits included “new distribution channels making effective market surveillance more difficult” (32), “direct B2C e-commerce with third countries leading to purchase of unsafe products” (30), “rapid product innovation making effective market surveillance more difficult” (29) and “increased trade with third countries leading to unsafe products on the market” (28). Other reasons/factors influencing a low level of achievement provided by interviewees included “insufficient coordination of cooperation between ECCs and authorities” and “lack of coordination between Member States’ enforcement authorities and authorities from third countries” (3).

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

In general, the interviewees considered that the Programme activities related to product safety were highly effective, but cited the continued presence of unsafe products on the market as well as emerging risks (e.g. from new, technically complex products or from e-commerce with third countries) as evidence that market surveillance needed to be continuously improved. The interviewees however noted that the adequate implementation of the activities and adequate use of the tools relied on resources of the national authorities and often cited lack of resources and/or time to participate in or use the output of the activities as a limiting factor.

The large majority of interviewees with an opinion on **RAPEX** considered it to be an effective and important tool, although some argued that the scope could be expanded. A few interviewees provided examples of specific issues such as language barriers and **suggested that communication to consumers (including the website's user interface)** could be improved.

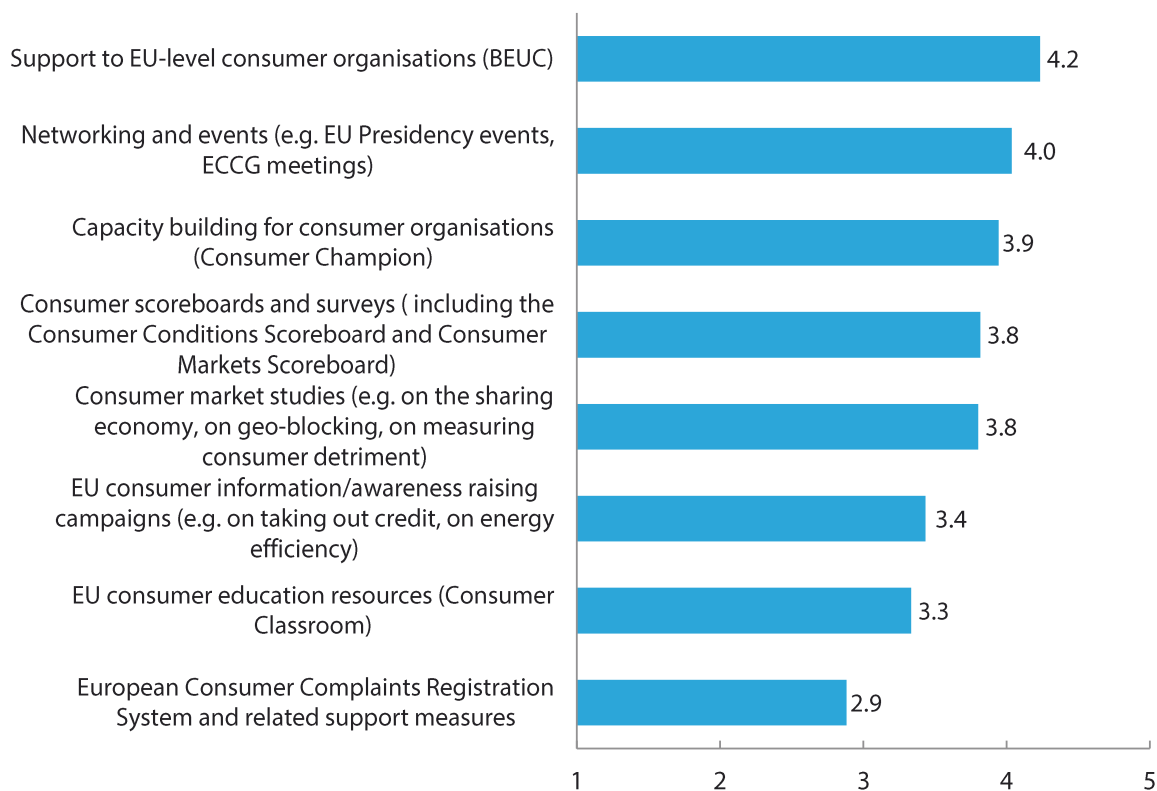
Interviewees also considered **networking and events** related to product safety to be a useful opportunity to share best practices and improve coordination between Member States in the area of market surveillance. While most of the national ministries or authorities that mentioned **exchanges of officials** assessed this activity positively, this assessment was less uniform than for networking and events in general, with some interviewees citing a lack of resources to participate.

Finally, most interviewees considered **joint actions** to be effective. While one national authority commented that it had not seen many visible benefits, a number of interviewees indicated that joint actions enabled authorities in some Member States to conduct testing activities that could otherwise not be financed at the national level.

2.2 Consumer education, information, and support to consumer organisations

The figure below shows interviewees' assessments of effectiveness of the activities related to consumer education, information, and support to consumer organisations conducted under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Figure 37: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. N=51, 83, 36, 77, 76, 53, 39, 34 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown in the figure above, “support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)” received the highest average effectiveness assessment from interviewees (4.2), followed by “networking and events” (4.0). Both of the latter activities received several high assessments from consumer organisations and ECCs.²⁴³ The activity that received the lowest assessment (2.9) was the “European Consumer Complaints Registration System and other related support measures”. Interestingly, “capacity building for consumer organisations (Trace)” received a noticeably higher average effectiveness assessment under the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme relative to Consumer Champion under the current programme (4.4 compared to 3.9). Other activities were rated very similarly under both programmes across stakeholder groups.

²⁴³ “Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)” received ratings of 4.5 and 4.2 from consumer organisations and ECCs, respectively. Consumer organisations and ECCs both provided average assessments of 4.0 with respect to networking and events.

Figure 38: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

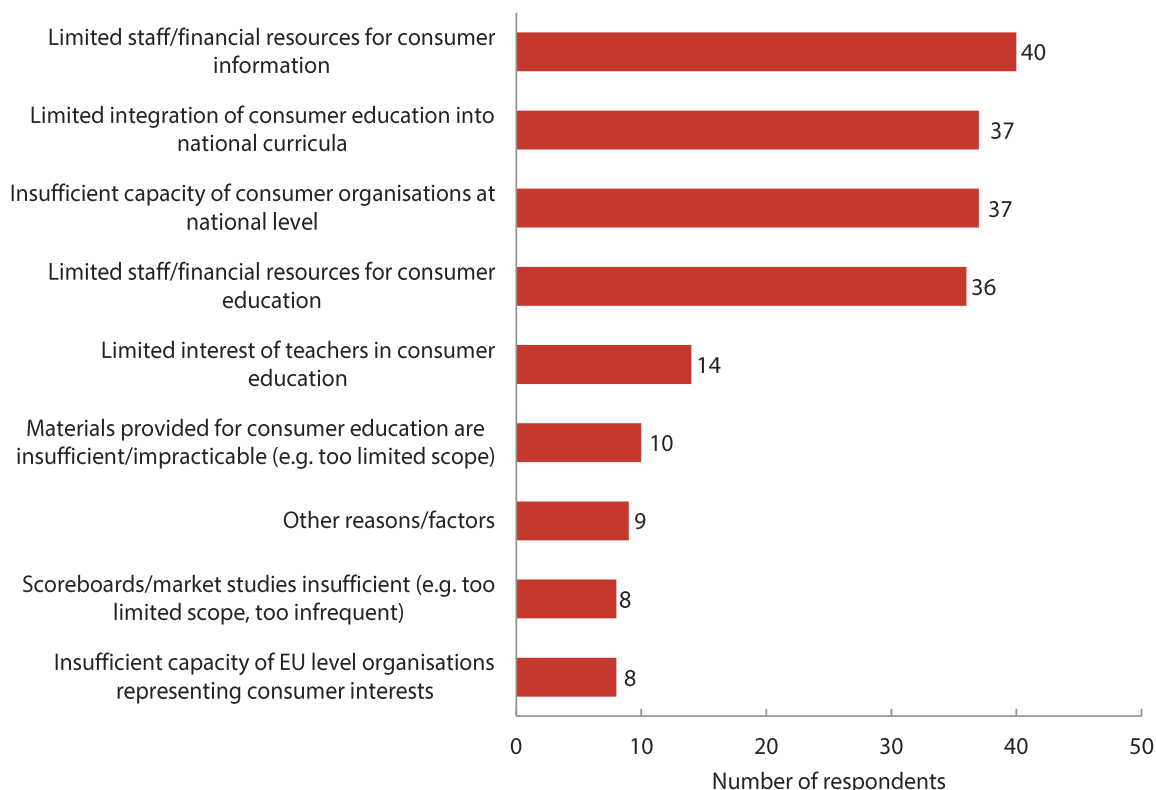


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=81, 93, 94, 78, 53, 77, 65. (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As displayed in the figure above, “improved representation of consumer interests at EU level” and “better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States” were the benefits that were rated, on average, with the highest level of achievement (3.6 and 3.5 respectively). “Improved capacity of national consumer organisations” was ranked the lowest in terms of level of achievement (particularly among consumer organisations)²⁴⁴ with an average assessment of 2.8.

²⁴⁴ “Improved capacity of national consumer organisations” received an average assessment of 2.5 from consumer organisations.

Figure 39: If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown above, “limited staff/financial resources for consumer information”, “limited integration of consumer education into national curricula”, “insufficient capacity of consumer organisations at national level” and “limited staff/financial resources for consumer education” were indicated by the most interviewees (40, 37, 37 and 36, respectively) as factors influencing a low level of achievements of benefits of Consumer Programme activities related to consumer information, education, and support to consumer organisations.

Another reason/factor mentioned by several interviewees included lack of national authorities’ support to consumer associations, both in terms of funding and regularly consulting them.

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

The interviewees assessed most activities carried out in the area of consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations to be generally effective, particularly with respect to the evidence base, support for an EU-level consumer organisation, and networking and events. However, for some activities (ECCRS, Consumer Classroom, information and awareness campaigns) the opinions of the interviewees were more divided. Several interviewees emphasised the lack of resources of national consumer organisations as a limiting factor. A few organisations also mentioned more general themes such as the need for greater involvement of national consumer organisations in EU consumer policy activities and a limited support from national authorities to consumer representation in policy making.

The majority of interviewees considered the development of an **evidence base** for consumer policy to be effective and useful also at the national level. However, several

interviewees complained that policymakers at the EU and national level did not sufficiently take the evidence base into account when making consumer policy decisions. Most interviewees who commented on the **ECCRS** also suggested that it needed considerable improvement.

With respect to **consumer education** and **information or awareness campaigns**, the interviewees who expressed an opinion were split on their assessment of effectiveness. Interviewees criticised the Consumer Classroom for not having enough local content (including content in the local language) and suggested that there was a need for better monitoring of its results. Regarding information or awareness campaigns, while a slight majority of interviewees considered these to be effective, many argued that the effectiveness would be improved if national consumer organisations were given a larger role in these campaigns.

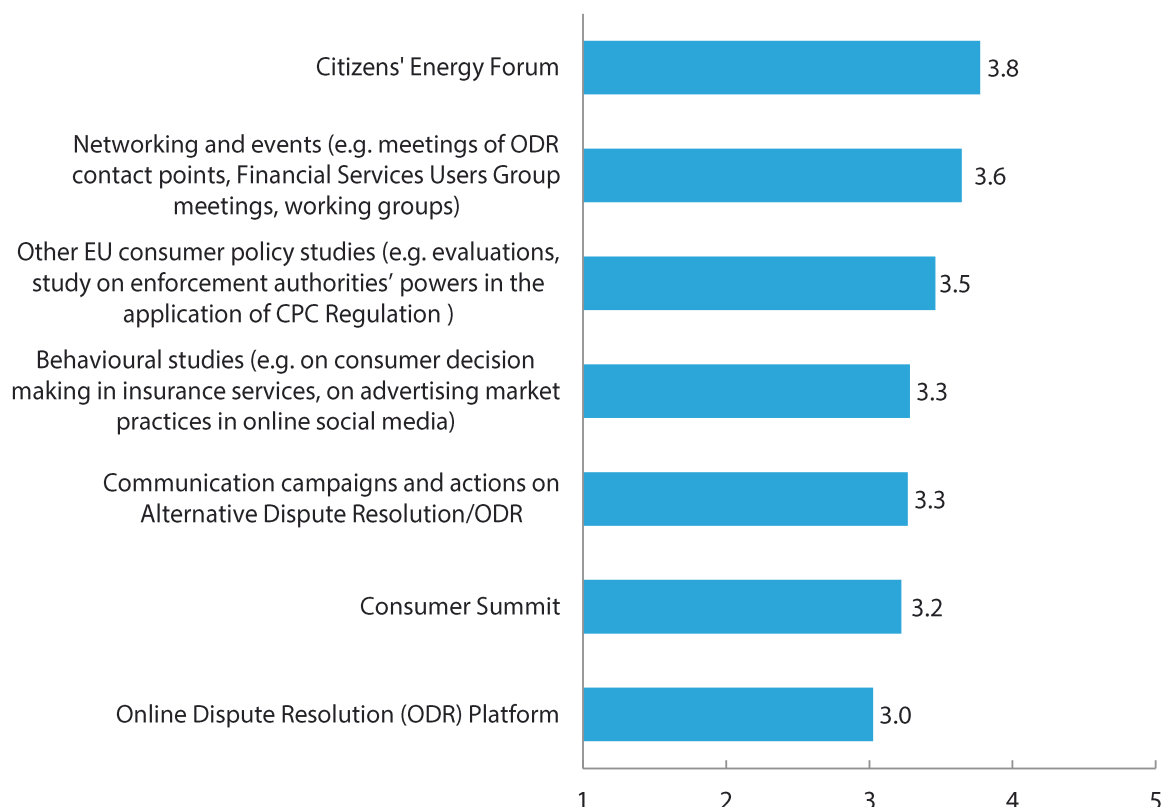
Consumer organisations and ECCs were generally positive in their assessment of the **capacity-building** activities funded under the Consumer Programme, but provided suggestions for improvement. While a number of consumer organisations stated that they were happy with Consumer Champion, some stated that it led to less personal interaction with consumer professionals in other countries, which they felt was important for building connections and sharing best practices. Some consumer organisations also complained that the Consumer Champion content was too focused on the New Member States. Lastly, some interviewees noted that, while such capacity-building activities led to better trained staff on an ad-hoc basis, challenges remained for the national organisations to reap sustainable benefits from these activities, i.e. to see training materialise in real practice and keep trained staff within the organisation. Interviewees assessed the **networking and events** quite positively, although a few organisations considered that the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) had been underutilised by the Commission.

National consumer organisations considered the **support to European-level consumer organisations** to be highly effective. Several consumer organisations mentioned that BEUC played an important role in the European consumer protection framework and acted as an education and networking hub for national consumer organisations. While ANEC is no longer financed under the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme, a couple of consumer organisations commented that ANEC's funding outside the Consumer Programme raised issues with coordination.

2.3 Consumer rights and redress

The figure below shows interviewees' assessments of effectiveness of the activities related to consumer rights and redress conducted under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Figure 40: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)



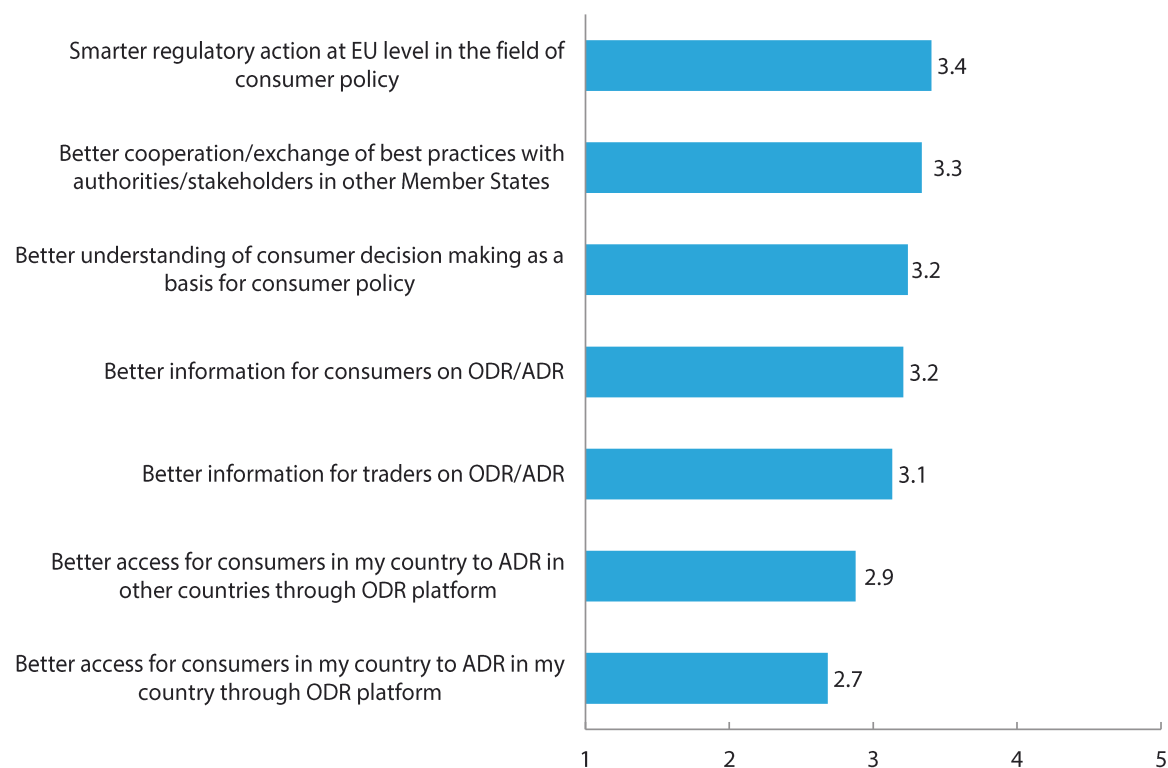
Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=31, 76, 76, 53, 71, 85, 78 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As indicated by the figure above, the Citizens' Energy Forum received the highest average effectiveness rating (3.8) of all activities related to consumer rights and redress; this assessment was driven by several positive assessments from consumer organisations.²⁴⁵ The next highest rated activity in terms of effectiveness was "networking and events" (3.6). The ODR Platform received the lowest average effectiveness assessment (3.0) due in large part to lower assessments given by consumer organisations but also business associations.²⁴⁶ Under the previous Programme, the Citizens' Energy Forum also received the highest effectiveness rating (3.8) and all activities were assessed very similarly under both programmes.

²⁴⁵ Consumer organisations provided an average assessment of 4.0 for this activity.

²⁴⁶ The average assessment for the ODR platform provided by consumer organisations is 2.4 and the average assessment provided by three responding business associations is 2.7.

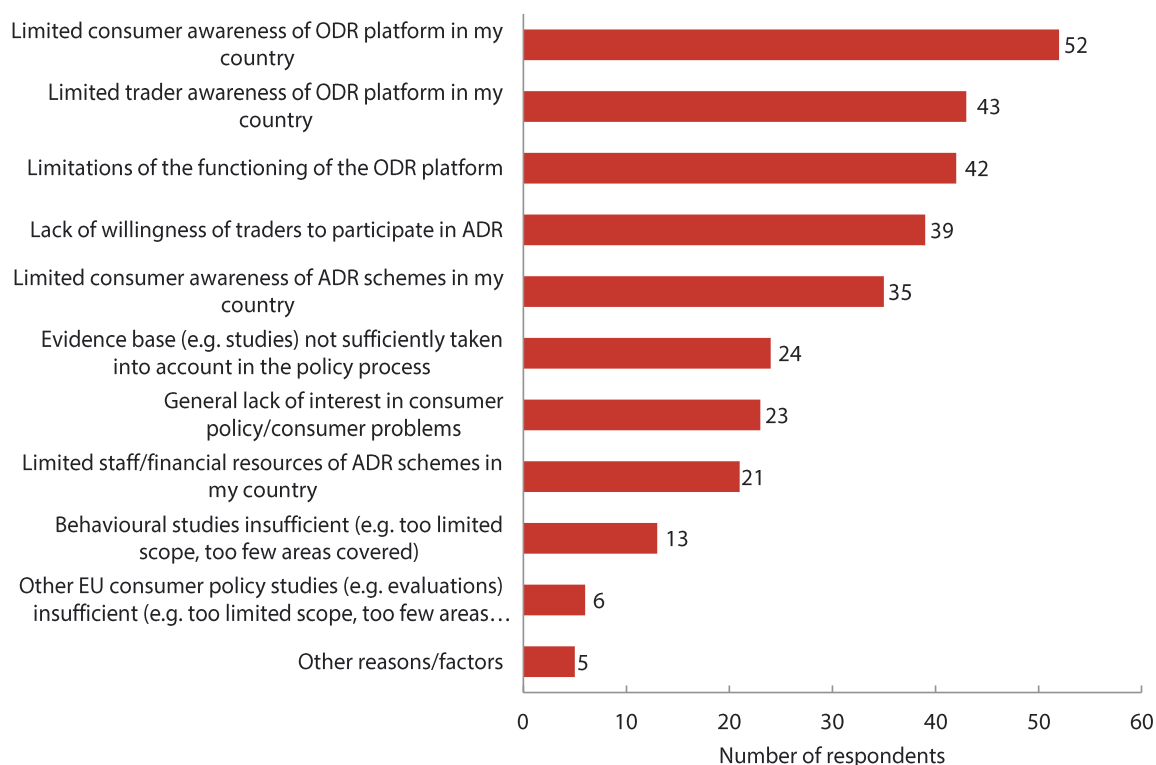
Figure 41: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=84, 83, 87, 95, 91, 82, 89 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

The figure above shows that “smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy” was assessed, on average, as the benefit of rights and redress-related activities with the highest level of achievement (3.4). “Better access for consumers in my country to ADR in other countries through the ODR platform” and “better access for consumers in my country to ADR in my country through the ODR platform” received the lowest assessments with respect to achievement (2.9 and 2.7, respectively). Both of the latter items received several assessments of 1 and 2 from consumer organisations. More than one interviewee commented on the voluntary nature of the ODR/ADR system and the lack of enforceability of rulings, which can discourage the use of this system, and lack of awareness among consumers was also noted (see below).

Figure 42: If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown in the figure above, “limited consumer awareness of ODR platform in my country” was assessed by the most interviewees (52) as a factor behind a low level of achievement of benefits of activities related to rights and redress. Other factors that were indicated by many interviewees as responsible for a low level of achievement were “limited trader awareness of ODR platform in my country” (43) and “limitations of the functioning of the ODR platform” (42).

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

While interviewees assessed some activities (such as behavioural and other EU consumer policy studies as well as networking and events) in the area of rights and redress to be generally effective, opinions were significantly divided regarding the ODR platform and the Consumer Summit in particular. Most interviewees considered that these activities were not achieving their full potential, and provided specific criticisms and examples of issues that could be improved.

Most of the interviewees with an opinion on the **ODR platform** considered that the platform was underutilised. While several interviewees considered that the idea had good potential and would become more effective over time as consumers become more aware of it, others pointed out a number of issues with the platform that contributed to its lack of effectiveness, e.g. consumer dissatisfaction with the automatic closing of complaints within 30 days if the consumer and trader do not agree on an ADR body. Although a few interviewees commented that **communication activities on ODR/ADR** had been effective in their country, most considered that the platform had a low level of awareness among consumers.

Interviewees generally considered **behavioural studies** and **other EU consumer policy studies** to be effective and helpful for policymaking. However, some

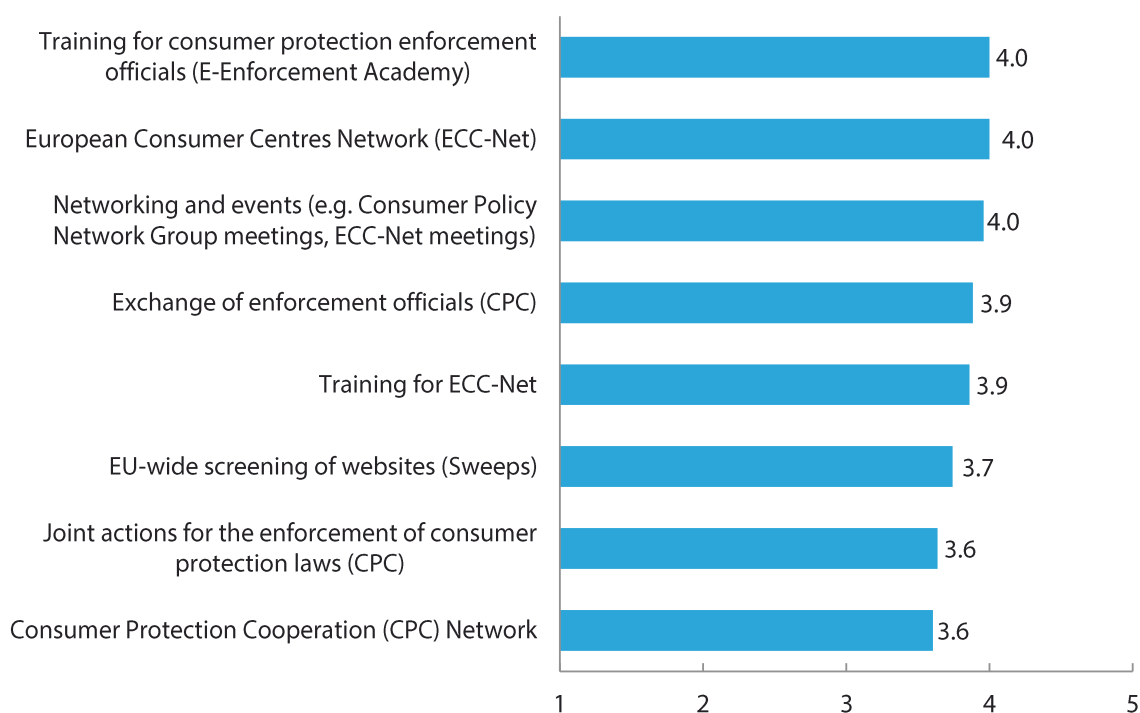
interviewees complained that policymakers do not make enough use of these studies, or that the studies could be better promoted.

The interviewees were divided on the effectiveness of the **Consumer Summit**. While some interviewees assessed it to be a good learning and networking opportunity, others considered that the topics had become too broad and a number of authorities and consumer organisations commented that there was too much participation from business interests, taking the focus away from consumer issues. In contrast, assessments of the **Citizens Energy Forum** as well as other **networking and events** related to rights and redress were almost uniformly positive, with a few interviewees noting that the Citizens Energy Forums had gained importance over the years and should be a model for similar activities in other fields.

2.4 Enforcement of consumer rights

The figure below shows interviewees' assessments of effectiveness of the activities related to enforcement of consumer rights conducted under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Figure 43: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)

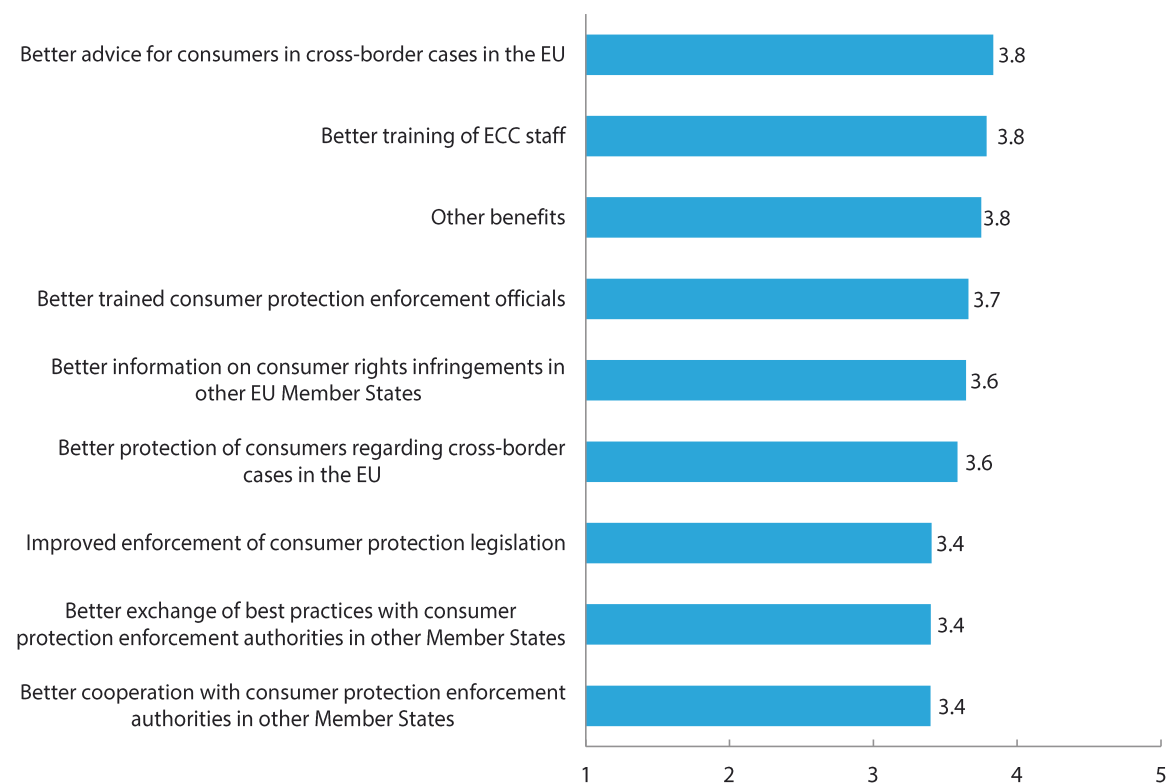


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. N=26, 67, 73, 26, 43, 58, 55, 71 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

In the figure above, "Training for consumer protection enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)", "European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)" and "Networking and events" received the highest average assessment of effectiveness with assessments of 4.0. The average assessments for most activities under the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme were similar across stakeholder groups, however "exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)" and "joint actions for the enforcement of

consumer protection laws” received higher ratings under the current programme (respectively 3.6 compared to 3.9 and 3.3 compared to 3.6).

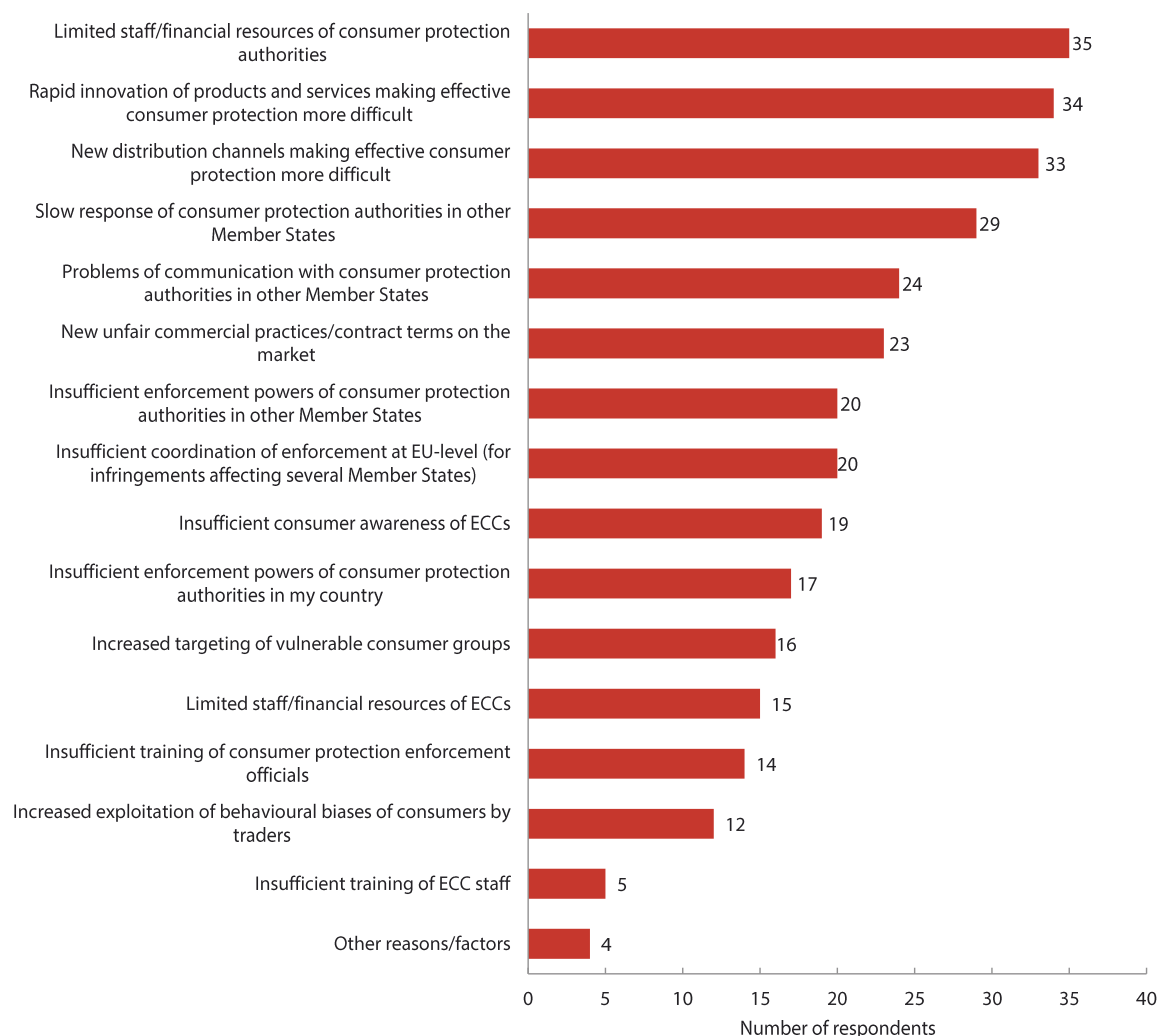
Figure 44: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=78, 47, 4, 59, 73, 82, 74, 70, 78 (in the order of activities from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As indicated in the figure above, “better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU” and “better training of ECC staff” were rated as the benefits of enforcement-related activities with the highest degree of achievement (3.8). Other benefits were also highly rated and included better understanding of other MS’ powers and national systems and improved cooperation between the MS’ national authorities responsible for consumer protection. The benefits with the next-highest rating with respect to degree of achievement (3.6) were “better trained consumer protection enforcement officials”, “better information on consumer rights infringements in other EU Member States” and “better protection of consumers regarding cross-border cases in the EU”.

Figure 45: If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

As shown in the figure above, “limited staff/financial resources of consumer protection authorities”, “rapid innovation of products and services making effective consumer protection more difficult” and “new distribution channels making effective consumer protection more difficult” were indicated by the most interviewees (35, 34 and 33, respectively) as factors influencing a low level of achievement of benefits related to enforcement activities in their countries.

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

The interviewees generally considered that the enforcement activities funded under the Consumer Programme had been effective in improving the level of cooperation between Member States, although some suggested that this cooperation could be further improved and that the potential synergies between the CPC network and ECC-net could be better exploited. Sweeps and joint actions were considered to be highly effective. As a general theme, some consumer organisations and national authorities also mentioned a lack of resources available at the national level as a limiting factor in enforcement.

Most of the interviewees considered that the **CPC network** was effective and that it had encouraged a good level of cooperation between Member States. However, several interviewees commented that the level of cooperation between Member States in the CPC network needed improvement, with some organisations complaining that the administrative burdens involved in persuading a national authority to deal with cross-border infringements were too high and some interviewees indicating that the CPC System could be improved. It was also suggested by a few interviewees that further cooperation could be put in place with other networks, for example with sector-specific stakeholders (e.g. energy regulators, financial supervisors) or competition authorities.

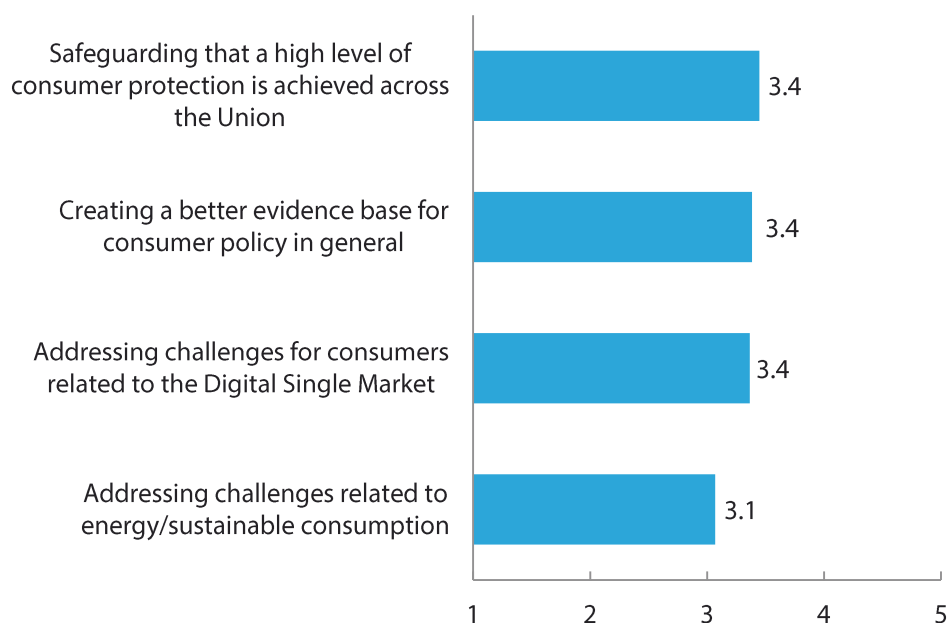
Interviewees generally regarded the **ECC-net** to be effective. Multiple interviewees (ECCs and consumer organisations) commented that ECCs were particularly effective in countries where the ECC was hosted by the local consumer organisation or responsible authority, which allowed them to better cooperate and exploit natural synergies. Some interviewees also suggested that the CPC network and ECC-net should hold more joint events, and that consumer awareness of the ECC-net could be improved.

Most of the interviewees considered **sweeps** and **joint actions** to be highly effective, although some interviewees noted that the implementation and results of sweeps were uneven in quality. One national authority also commented that these activities do not always take into account national enforcement traditions or priorities.

Most interviewees assessed **training** activities (e.g. the e-Enforcement Academy) to be effective, with some interviewees stating that training activities should be more frequent and conducted in-person, and that the e-Enforcement Academy should include more advanced training courses. **Exchanges of officials** were also generally assessed to be positive, although one national authority commented that the benefits of the program were not worth the costs. Interviewees also considered other enforcement-related **networking and events** to be highly effective.

2.5 Addressing cross-cutting challenges

Figure 46: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 14. N=121, 109, 115, 57 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

As shown in the figure above, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme scored the same in terms of effectiveness with respect to the following challenges: “safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union”, “creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general” and “addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market” (3.4). Ministries and national authorities tended to indicate higher assessments²⁴⁷ with respect to the first two challenges. In line with the assessment made for the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme, the programme received the lowest rating for its effectiveness in “addressing challenges for consumers related to energy/sustainable consumption” (3.1 under the current programme and 2.9 under the previous programme).

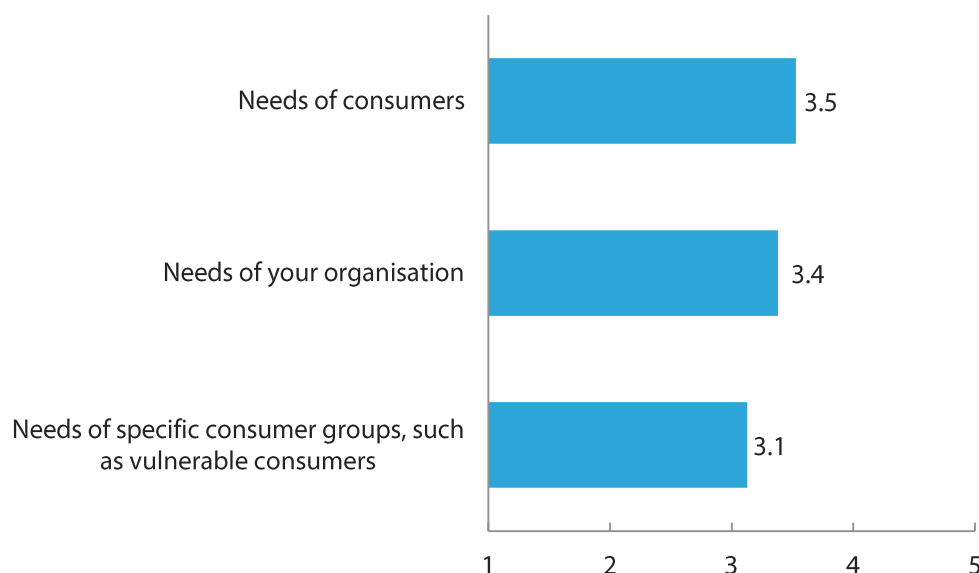
Effectiveness of the Consumer Programme was assessed as most improved regarding challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market, with an average assessment of 3.4 for the 2014-2020 Programme compared to 2.9 for the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme. Under the previous programme, the effectiveness of the programme in addressing these challenges was assessed as highest for “safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union”, “creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general” with a rating of 3.3 for both.

²⁴⁷ Average assessments of 3.6 was provided by ministries and national authorities for both “safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union” and “creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general” under the 2014-2020 Programme.

3. Relevance

3.1 Appropriateness to needs

Figure 47: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of consumers and to the needs of your organisation – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=121, 121, 110 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the figure above, the objectives of the current Consumer Programme were rated, on average, as being the most appropriate to the needs of consumers (3.5). The objectives were rated as the least appropriate to the needs of specific consumer groups, such as vulnerable consumers, with an average assessment of 3.1 (although slightly improved from an average assessment of 3.0 for the objectives of the previous programme). The latter received particularly low ratings from consumer organisations (2.7).

3.2 Relevance of Programme objectives and new needs

Figure 48: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are still relevant? Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Still very relevant)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 16. N=126, 118, 125, 123 (in the order of areas from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

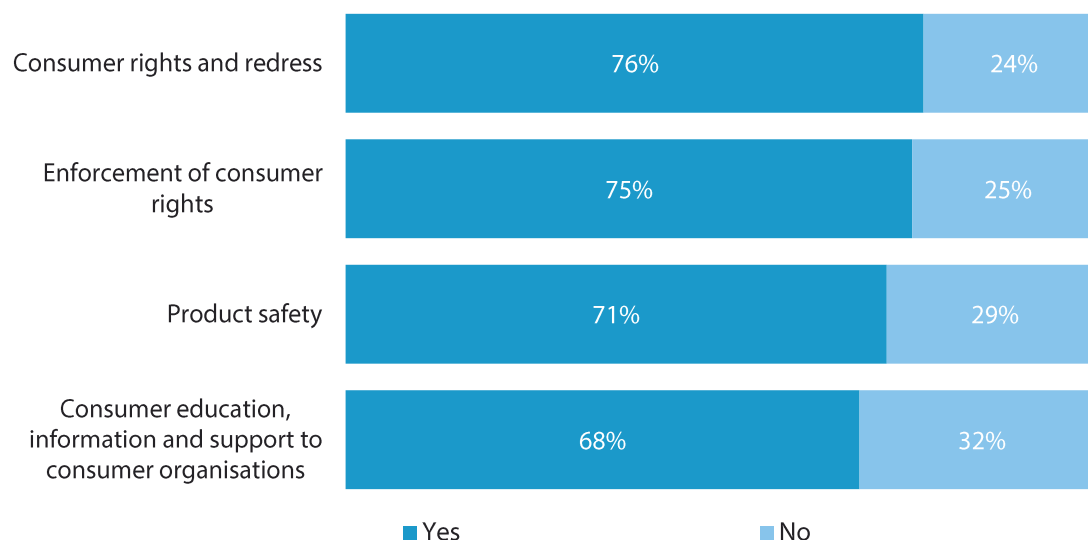
All four objectives of the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme were rated very similarly with respect to their ongoing relevance – between 4.5 for “enforcement of consumer rights” and 4.3 for “consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations”. ECC interviewees provided the highest relevance assessments for all four objectives.²⁴⁸

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

The interviewees generally considered the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme to still be relevant. In particular, a number of interviewees stressed that the enforcement of consumer rights still needed to be improved. Some also highlighted the importance of improving or maintaining a high level of market surveillance in response to increasingly complex products and services. One interviewee noted that the objectives were very general and broad and needed to be adapted to specific emerging practices and products, and another interviewee suggested that the programme objectives should reflect new perspectives relevant to sustainable energy and digital disruption. However, two interviewees (a business association and a national authority) commented that there was already a high level of consumer protection at the EU and further activities at the EU level would be less relevant.

²⁴⁸ ECCs provided an average assessments of 4.6 with respect to product safety, 4.5 with respect to consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations, and an average assessment of 4.8 regarding consumer rights and redress and enforcement of consumer rights.

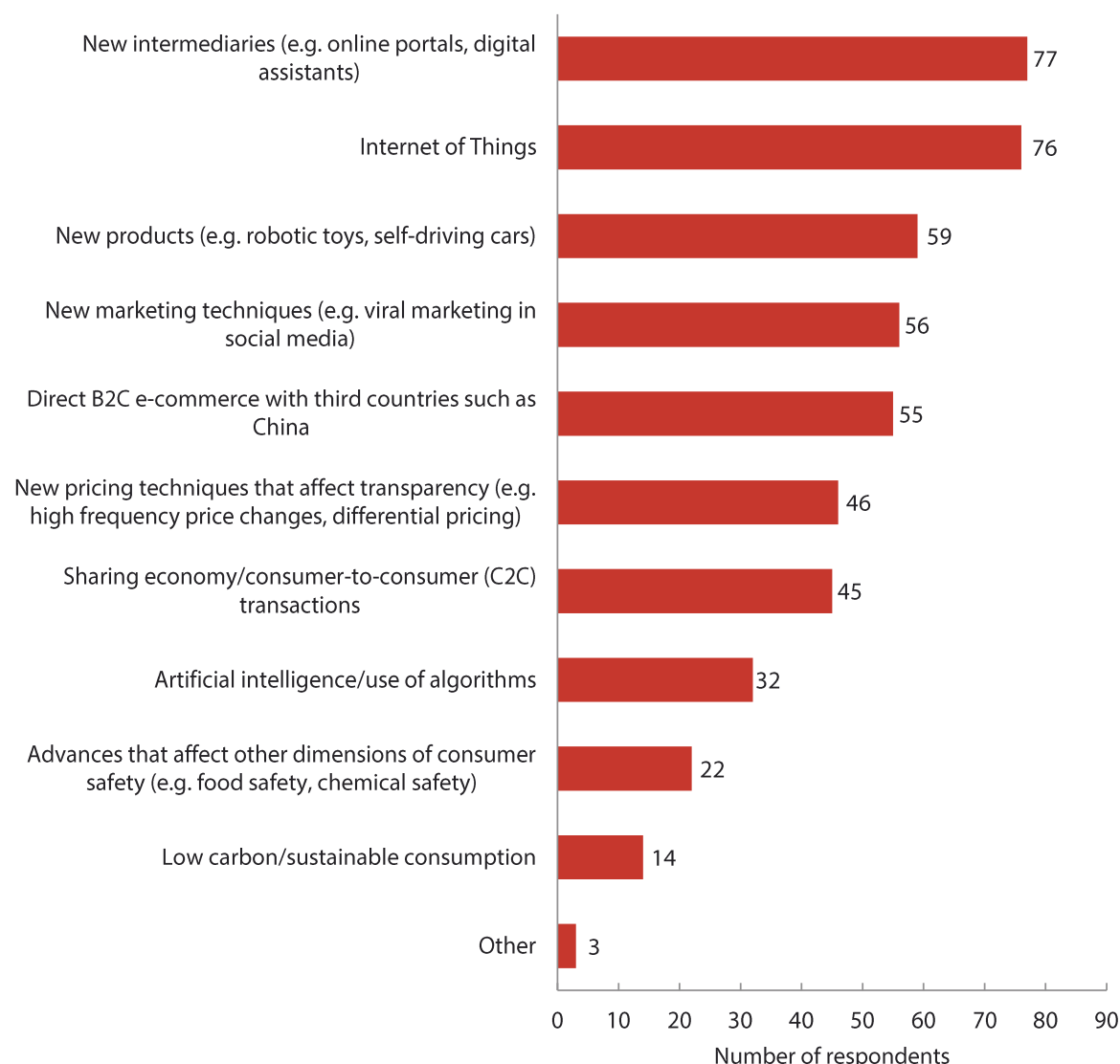
Figure 49: Have any new needs emerged that necessitate an adjustment of the Consumer Programme?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 17. N=97, 99, 84, 87 (in the order of areas from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

As observed in the figure above, over two-thirds of interviewees indicated that new needs have emerged that necessitate an adjustment of the Consumer Programme with respect to each of the four programme areas. The programme areas for which the most interviewees indicated a need for adjustment were “consumer rights and redress” (76% of interviewees) and “enforcement of consumer rights” (75% of interviewees).

Figure 50: Please indicate up to three economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances that you consider to be the most relevant in creating new needs that should be considered in a possible new Consumer Programme



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 17. Note: Multiple answers possible. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

The top advances considered by interviewees to be most relevant in creating new needs were “new intermediaries” (77) and the “Internet of Things” (76) and . The next most relevant advances were “new products”, “new marketing techniques” and “direct B2C e-commerce with third countries such as China”, with 59, 56 and 55 responses, respectively. Three interviewees also indicated other advances. These included data protection issues and regulation of advertising and marketing on the part of online influencers.

Further elaboration on interviewee assessments

Interviewees provided many examples of new and emerging needs related to technological innovation and the digital single market, product safety in e-commerce with third countries, redress, and support for consumer organisations. At a more general level, the interviewees also emphasised the need to continuously improve enforcement and cross-border cooperation within the EU.

The most commonly cited new needs among the interviewees related to the challenges of keeping up with new innovations in products, services, and markets. Interviewees mentioned the need for new approaches to deal with connected products and the Internet of Things as well as product safety concerns related to 3D printing. Many interviewees also mentioned challenges related to online platforms and data protection as well as adapting to new sales channels, pricing and marketing techniques, and suggested that better consumer education and/or capacity building activities for consumer organisations would be needed in these areas. Two interviewees even suggested that there could be an EU contact point or watchdog for surveillance and detection of new developments especially in digital goods and services.

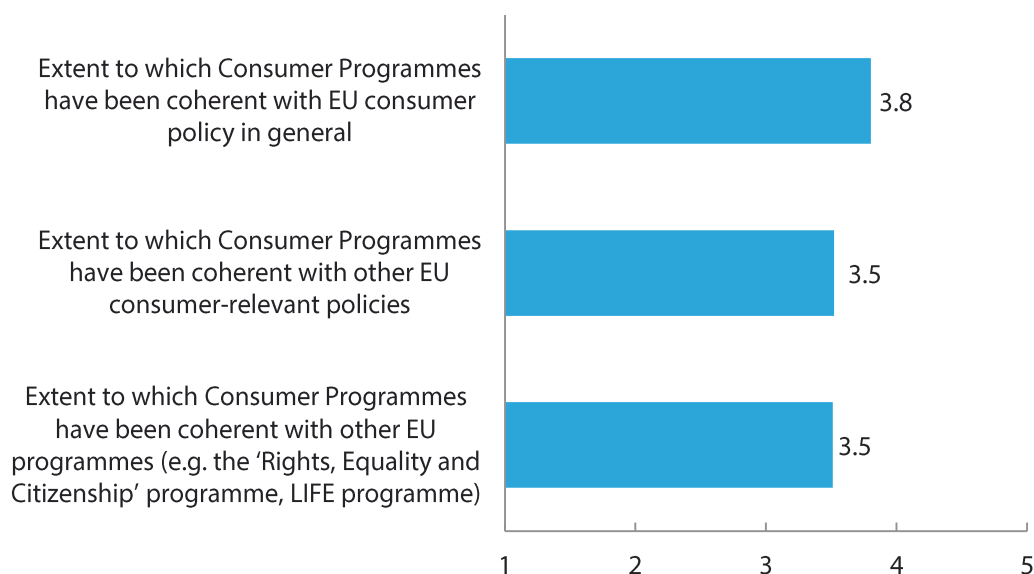
Several interviewees also mentioned product safety concerns related to direct B2C e-commerce with third countries such as China and emphasised the need to improve market surveillance in this area. Nanomaterials were also mentioned as raising product safety issues.

Many interviewees brought up the need to improve redress mechanisms for consumers, especially in a cross-border context. A number of interviewees also brought up the need for collective redress mechanisms, with multiple interviewees citing the recent Volkswagen scandal as an example.

Finally, some of the interviewees suggested that additional support should be provided to national consumer organisations for the purposes of helping them deal with cross-border cases, conduct product testing, or assist vulnerable consumers. Several interviewees mentioned that education activities should be further targeted to children and youngsters.

4. Coherence

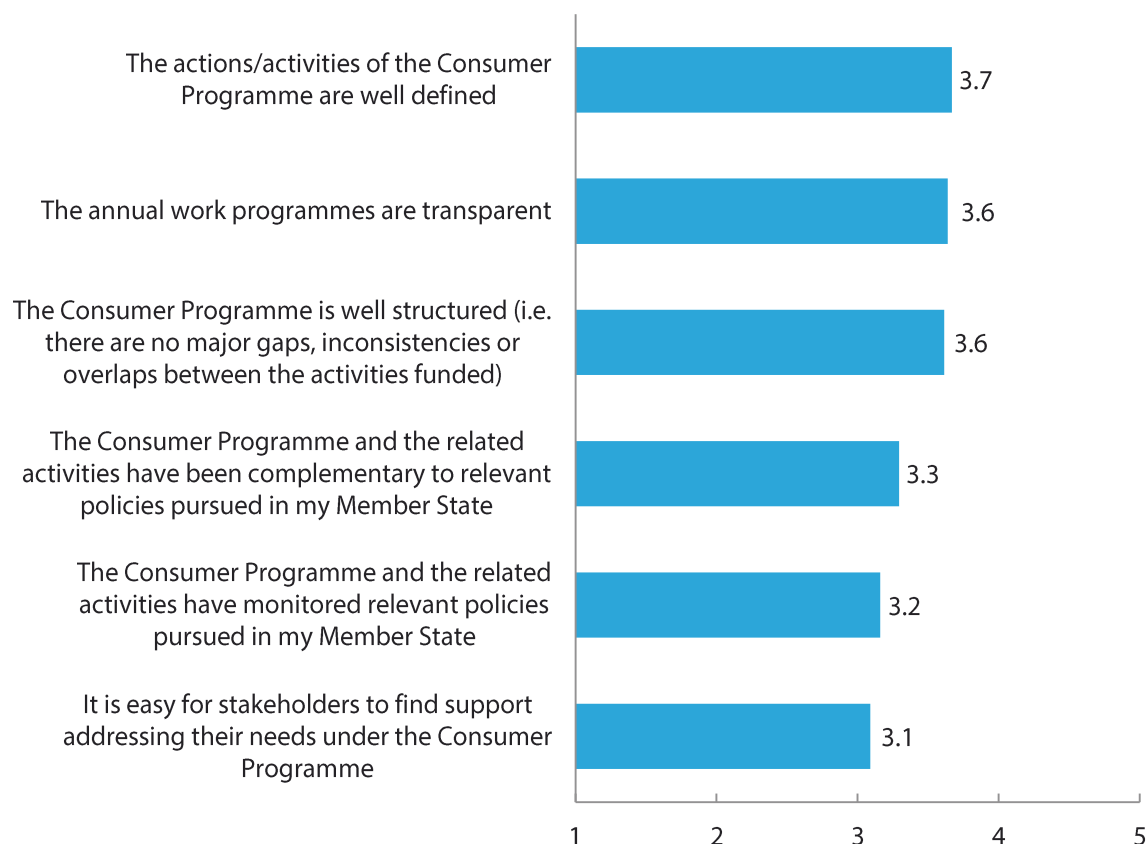
Figure 51: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes have been coherent with EU consumer policy in general, and with other EU consumer-relevant policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, transport, digital single market, financial services)? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all coherent) to 5 (Very coherent)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 18. N=97, 88, 43 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the figure above, the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme was considered by interviewees to be coherent with EU consumer policy in general, with average assessments of 3.8, as well as with other EU programmes and other EU consumer-relevant policies. The assessments remain largely unchanged from the previous programme to the current programme. For both programmes, ECCs provided the highest average assessments while business associations tended to have the lowest average assessments for all aspects of coherence.

Figure 52: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)



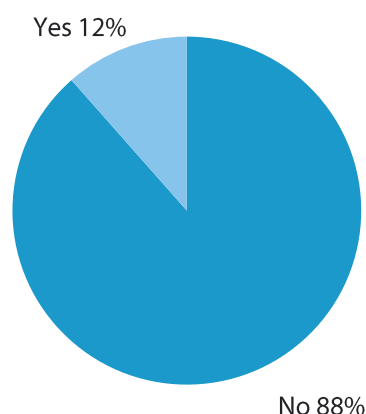
Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=109, 94, 101, 92, 75, 99 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

Interviewees agreed the most with the following statements: “the actions/activities of the Consumer Programme are well defined” (3.7) and “the annual work programmes are transparent” (3.6), largely due to higher assessments provided by ECCs and ministries/national authorities.²⁴⁹ The statement that received the lowest agreement rating (3.1) was “it is easy for stakeholders to find support addressing their needs under the Consumer Programme”.

²⁴⁹ The statement “the actions/activities of the Consumer Programme are well defined” was rated on average by ECCs and ministries/national authorities with 3.9 and 3.8 respectively. The statement “the annual work programmes are transparent” were rated by ECCs and ministries/national authorities with 4.0 and 3.9 respectively.

5. EU added-value

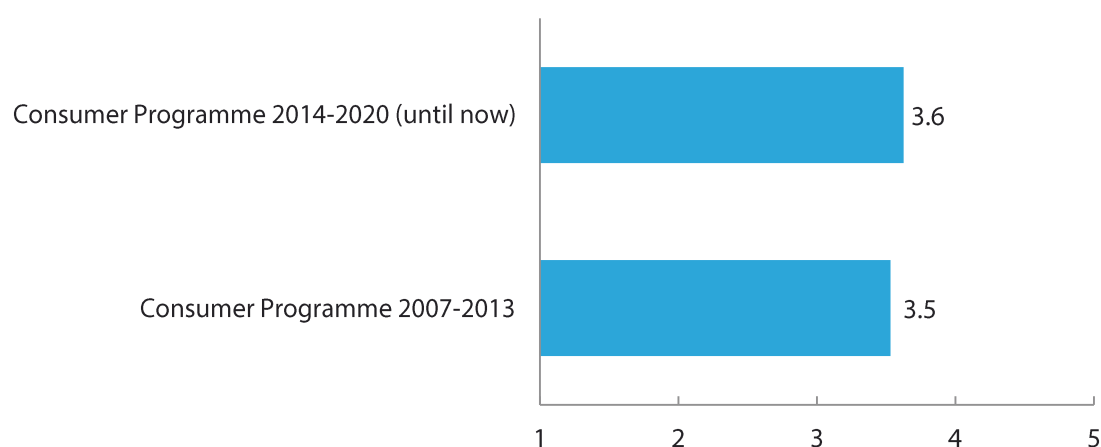
Figure 53: Based on your experience, do you consider that the same results would have been achieved in your country without the EU intervention through the Consumer Programmes (i.e. via initiatives funded only at national/regional level)? – CP 2014-2020



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 20. N=113. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the figure above, the vast majority of interviewees (88%) considered that the same results would *not* have been achieved in their countries without the EU interventions through the 2014-2020 Consumer Programme. A very similar assessment was made regarding the previous Consumer Programme with 90% of interviewees indicating that the same results would not have been achieved in their countries without the EU interventions through the 2007-2013 Consumer Programme.

Figure 54: In your view, to what extent have the Consumer Programmes’ actions impacted the development of national policies in the consumer field? Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (To a great extent)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 21. N=112, 96 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

With respect to the extent to which the Consumer Programmes’ actions impacted the development of national policies in the consumer field, the current programme received a slightly higher average assessment (3.6) relative to the previous programme (3.5).

6. Sustainability

Figure 55: How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 last after the end of the Programme? Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (Very likely that effects last after end of Programme)

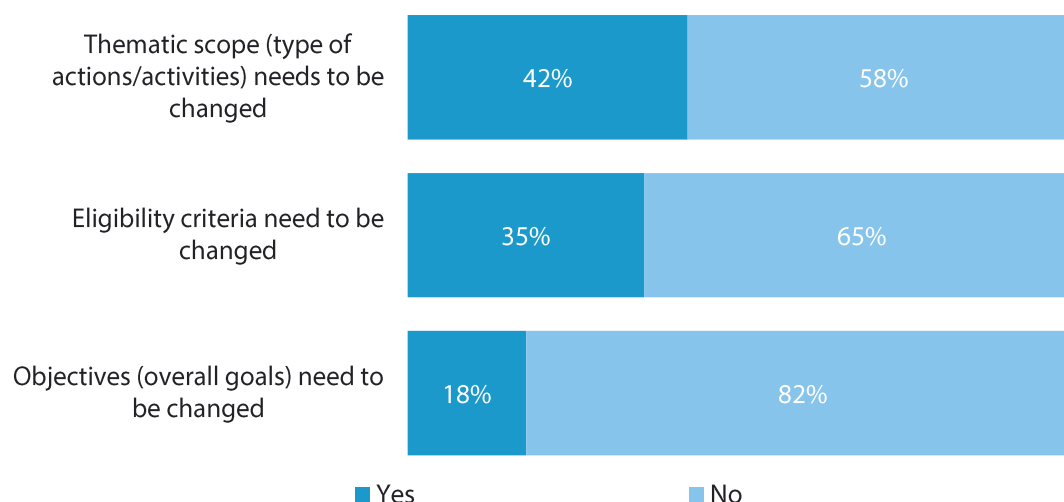


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 22. N=95, 109, 103, 94 (in the order of areas from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the above figure, the effects of the programme in the area of product safety received the highest average assessments (3.9), while effects in the area of “consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations received the lowest average assessments (3.6). The average assessments with respect to the likelihood of the effects of the Consumer Programme lasting in each programme area were very similar across both programmes, with slightly higher assessments in all topical areas (in the same order, average assessments under the previous programme were 3.7, 3.6, 3.6, and 3.5).

7. Scope for simplification and needs for change

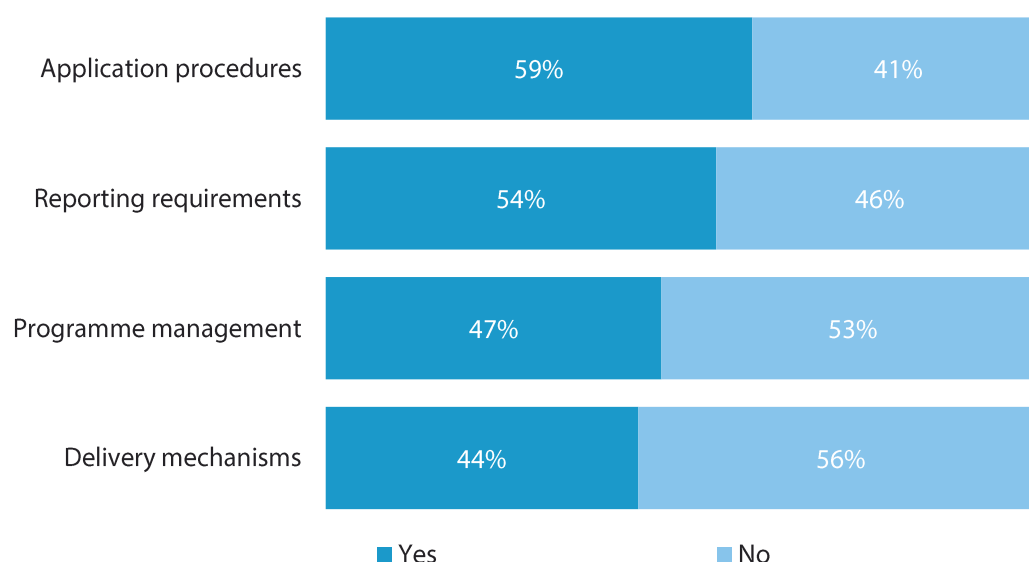
Figure 56: Do you see a need to change the objectives, scope or eligibility criteria of a possible new Consumer Programme?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews question 23. N=84, 71, 85 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

Slightly over two fifths (42%) of interviewees considered that the thematic scope of a new Consumer Programme would need to be changed, whereas slightly over one-third (35%) of interviewees felt that the eligibility criteria would need to be changed. Only 18% of interviewees considered that the overall goals of a new programme would need to be changed.

Figure 57: Do you see any scope for simplification in a possible new Consumer Programme?

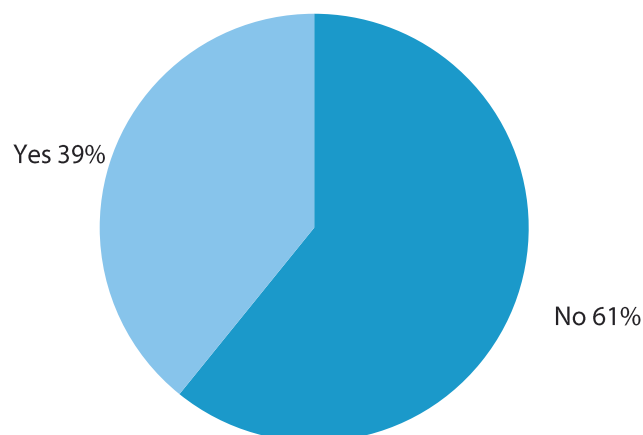


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 24. N=74, 68, 62, 62 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

Over half (59%) of interviewees saw scope for simplification with respect to application procedures in a new consumer programme as well as concerning reporting

requirements (54%). Finally, slightly under half viewed there to be scope for simplification with respect to programme management and delivery mechanisms (47% and 44%, respectively).

Figure 58: Do you see a need for any other changes in a possible new Consumer Programme?

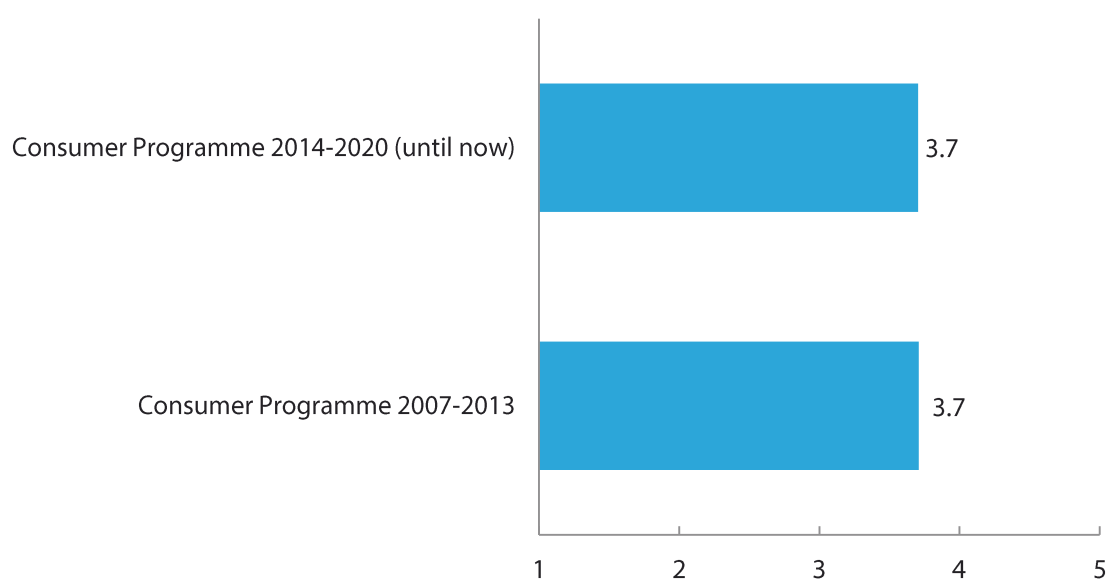


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 25. N=74. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

As shown in the figure above, three fifths (61%) of interviewees saw a need for other changes in a possible new consumer programme. These other changes pertained to reinforcement of coordination and complementarity when it comes to enforcement, also taking into accounts other areas beyond the strictly defined scope of the consumer acquis such as telecommunications and health care, having the Consumer Programme explicitly designed to have consumers as the main focus, including vulnerable consumers, and having the Consumer Programme be a key tool in the shift to sustainable markets given the important role that consumer policy has to play with regards to the EU ambitions on environmental issues and climate change.

8. Efficiency

Figure 59: Do you consider that the distribution of funds among the four Programme areas (product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement) has been justified given the benefits achieved? Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all justified) to 5 (Fully justified)

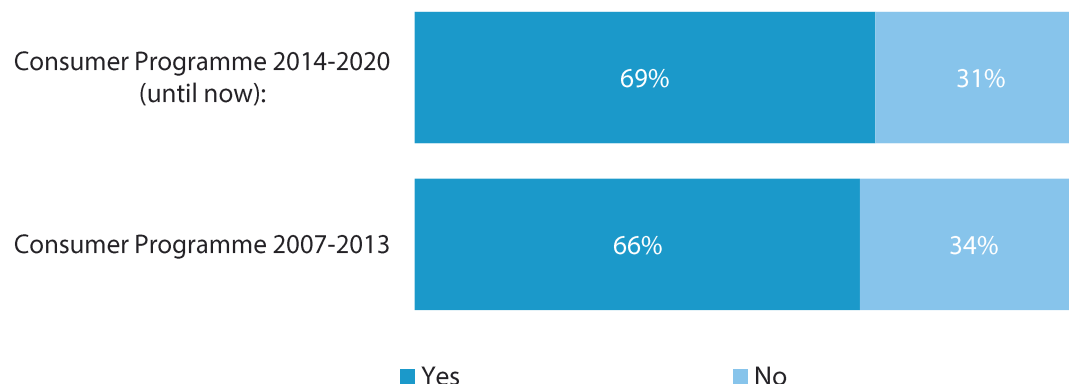


Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 26. N=81, 69 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

The distribution of funds among the four programme areas received similar average assessments in terms of justification: interviewees gave an average assessment of 3.7 for the current and the previous programmes. For both programmes, higher average assessments were given by ECCs and ministries/national authorities, whereas business associations and consumer organisations provided lower average assessments in this respect.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ For example, under the current programme, ECCs provided an average assessment of 3.9, ministries and national authorities 4.0, business associations 3.3 and consumer organisations 3.4.

Figure 60: Has your organisation incurred costs for participating in specific activities that are funded under the Consumer Programmes or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme?



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=105, 89 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment. Note: Costs refer to monetary costs or staff time used in relation to activities funded under the Consumer Programmes.

As shown in the figure above, roughly two-thirds of interviewees indicated their organisation has incurred costs for participating in specific activities or applying for funding under both the current and previous consumer programmes (69% and 66% of interviewees, respectively).

Figure 61: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)



Source: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=36, 28, 54, 25, 21, 26, 19, 26, 19, 16, 20, 14 (in the order of items from top to bottom). Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc.

For both programmes, “ECC-Net”, “joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety” and “training for ECC-Net” received the highest average affordability assessments (4.2, 4.1 and 4.0 for the 2014-2020 programme). The activity that was ranked the lowest in terms of affordability for both programmes was “European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures”, with average assessments of 2.8 and 2.9 under the current and previous programmes, respectively.

9. Breakdowns by stakeholder type²⁵¹

Effectiveness

Product safety

Table 29: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: RAPEX. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	3	1	4.0
Consumer organisation	--	7	6	7	--	3.0
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	--	1	4.0
Ministry or national authority	--	1	11	11	16	4.1
Other	--	--	--	2	2	4.5
All stakeholders	--	8	19	23	20	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. N=70. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

²⁵¹ The assessments cover the period 2014-2017.

Table 30: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	--	1	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	1	5	3	--	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Ministry or national authority	--	--	7	10	12	4.2
Other	--	--	2	1	1	3.8
All stakeholders	--	2	15	15	13	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=45. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 31: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ministry or national authority	--	2	5	10	6	3.9
Other	--	--	1	--	1	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	2	7	10	7	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=26. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 32: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: Training for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy for product safety officials). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	--	--	--	--
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ministry or national authority	--	1	2	10	8	4.2
Other	--	--	--	--	1	5.0*
All stakeholders	--	1	2	10	9	4.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=22. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 33: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: EU databases on cosmetics (Cosmetic ingredient database, Cosmetic Product Notification Portal). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	1	--	5	1	3.9
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ministry or national authority	--	--	3	3	1	3.7
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	1	3	9	2	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=15. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 34: To what extent have these activities been effective in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? – CP 2014-2020: Networking and events (e.g. Product Safety Week, Consumer Safety Network meetings). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	2	5	4	1	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Ministry or national authority	--	--	7	10	18	4.3
Other	--	--	--	2	1	4.3
All stakeholders	--	2	14	19	20	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 3. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=55. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 35: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on unsafe non-food products for enforcement authorities – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	--	6	8	--	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	2	1	4.3
Ministry or national authority	--	--	6	23	10	4.1
Other	--	--	--	3	1	4.3
All stakeholders	--	1	13	37	12	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. N=63. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 36: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on unsafe non-food products for businesses – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	--	--	2.5*
Consumer organisation	--	1	5	3	--	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Ministry or national authority	1	3	12	10	4	3.4
Other	--	--	1	2	1	4.0
All stakeholders	1	5	20	16	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=47. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 37: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on unsafe non-food products for consumers – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	6	8	3	3	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	1	1	2	--	3.3
Ministry or national authority	1	3	14	12	4	3.4
Other	--	--	1	1	1	4.0
All stakeholders	1	10	26	18	8	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=63. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 38: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better trained enforcement officials – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Consumer organisation	--	--	2	3	--	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	--	1	4.0*
Ministry or national authority	1	--	11	17	4	3.7
Other	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
All stakeholders	1	--	16	23	5	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=45. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 39: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Improved market surveillance and enforcement of product safety legislation – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	2	6	4	6	--	2.8
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	2	12	19	4	3.7
Other	--	--	--	2	1	4.3
All stakeholders	2	9	18	30	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. N=64. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 40: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	--	--	2.7
Consumer organisation	--	--	3	5	1	3.8
European Consumer Centre	1	1	1	--	--	2.0
Ministry or national authority	1	2	7	16	10	3.9
Other	1	--	--	1	--	2.5*
All stakeholders	3	4	13	22	11	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=53. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 41: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in third countries – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	1	3	3	--	--	2.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Ministry or national authority	2	7	11	1	1	2.6
Other	--	1	--	1	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	3	11	17	3	1	2.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=35. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 42: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	2	5	3	2	1	2.6
European Consumer Centre	--	1	--	1	--	3.0*
Ministry or national authority	1	2	8	5	2	3.3
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	3	8	13	9	3	3.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=36. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 43: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe services – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	6	2	3	1	--	1.9
European Consumer Centre	1	--	1	--	--	2.0*
Ministry or national authority	--	2	8	--	1	3.0
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	7	4	14	2	1	2.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 4. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=28. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Consumer education, information, and support to consumer organisations

Table 44: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	2	6	3	4	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	3	3	2	1	3.1
Ministry or national authority	--	2	8	5	--	3.2
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
All stakeholders	--	7	17	10	5	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. N=39. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 45: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out credit, on energy efficiency). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	3	8	4	2	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	7	6	2	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	2	7	6	2	3.5
Other	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	--	5	26	16	6	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=53. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 46: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	--	3	9	6	4.2
European Consumer Centre	--	--	2	5	1	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	--	4	4	1	3.7
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
All stakeholders	--	--	10	18	8	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=36. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 47: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Consumer organisation	--	1	3	3	19	4.5
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	5	5	4.2
Ministry or national authority	--	--	4	3	1	3.6
Other	--	--	--	2	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	1	11	14	25	4.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=51. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 48: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: Consumer scoreboards and surveys (including the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and Consumer Markets Scoreboard). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	1	8	5	8	3.9
European Consumer Centre	--	--	4	9	2	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	2	7	20	3	3.8
Other	--	--	2	2	1	3.8
All stakeholders	--	3	22	38	14	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. N=77. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 49: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: Consumer market studies (e.g. on the sharing economy, on geo-blocking, on measuring consumer detriment). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	3	--	3.8
Consumer organisation	--	2	10	7	3	3.5
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	11	4	4.1
Ministry or national authority	--	--	4	18	3	4.0
Other	--	1	2	3	1	3.6
All stakeholders	--	3	20	42	11	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. N=76. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 50: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	1	2	1	--	3.0
European Consumer Centre	3	1	2	2	1	2.7
Ministry or national authority	2	1	9	2	1	2.9
Other	--	1	2	1	--	3.0
All stakeholders	5	4	17	6	2	2.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=34. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 51: To what extent have these activities been effective in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? – CP 2014-2020: Networking and events (e.g. EU Presidency events, ECCG meetings). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	1	7	6	10	4.0
European Consumer Centre	1	--	6	6	10	4.0
Ministry or national authority	--	1	5	17	8	4.0
Other	--	--	--	1	1	4.5*
All stakeholders	1	2	19	32	29	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 6. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=83. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 52: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better resources for teachers as a basis for consumer education at schools – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	--	1	--	--	2.0*
Consumer organisation	--	3	5	8	2	3.5
European Consumer Centre	2	--	6	2	--	2.8
Ministry or national authority	2	1	10	6	1	3.2
Other	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
All stakeholders	5	5	23	17	3	3.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=53. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 53: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information for consumers (e.g. when taking out credit, or on energy efficiency) – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	5	13	8	1	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	1	13	5	2	3.4
Ministry or national authority	--	3	8	9	2	3.5
Other	--	1	3	1	--	3.0
All stakeholders	--	11	38	24	5	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=78. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 54: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on consumer markets and problems in my country – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	--	2	2	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	3	4	9	11	1	3.1
European Consumer Centre	--	--	10	11	2	3.7
Ministry or national authority	1	3	10	15	2	3.5
Other	--	1	2	4	--	3.4
All stakeholders	5	8	33	43	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=94. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 55: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	--	2	2	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	2	3	7	11	5	3.5
European Consumer Centre	--	2	6	12	2	3.6
Ministry or national authority	1	2	9	17	2	3.5
Other	--	1	3	2	1	3.4
All stakeholders	4	8	27	44	10	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=93. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 56: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better data on consumer complaints in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	2	5	12	4	--	2.8
European Consumer Centre	1	4	5	10	2	3.4
Ministry or national authority	2	4	13	5	--	2.9
Other	--	2	2	1	--	2.8
All stakeholders	5	16	33	21	2	3.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=77. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 57: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Improved capacity of national consumer organisations – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Consumer organisation	7	11	7	4	2	2.5
European Consumer Centre	1	1	4	8	--	3.4
Ministry or national authority	--	2	10	2	--	3.0
Other	2	--	2	--	--	2.0
All stakeholders	10	14	24	15	2	2.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=65. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 58: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Improved representation of consumer interests at EU level – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Consumer organisation	2	3	6	17	4	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	1	8	8	3	3.7
Ministry or national authority	1	--	3	16	2	3.8
Other	1	1	--	2	--	2.8
All stakeholders	4	5	18	45	9	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 7. N=81. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Consumer rights and redress

Table 59: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Behavioural studies (e.g. on consumer decision making in insurance services, on advertising market practices in online social media). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	--	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	6	6	2	1	2.9
European Consumer Centre	--	--	6	2	2	3.6
Ministry or national authority	1	4	4	10	2	3.4
Other	--	--	2	1	1	3.8
All stakeholders	1	10	21	15	6	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=53. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 60: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations, study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of CPC Regulation). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	5	--	--	2.8
Consumer organisation	--	--	7	10	1	3.7
European Consumer Centre	--	2	5	4	2	3.5
Ministry or national authority	1	3	12	17	2	3.5
Other	--	--	2	2	--	3.5
All stakeholders	1	6	31	33	5	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=76. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 61: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Consumer Summit. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	1	1	3.4
Consumer organisation	1	7	8	6	2	3.0
European Consumer Centre	--	4	9	5	4	3.4
Ministry or national authority	1	7	8	12	2	3.2
Other	1	--	1	2	--	3.0
All stakeholders	3	19	28	26	9	3.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=85. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 62: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Citizens' Energy Forum. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	1	2	11	4	4.0
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ministry or national authority	1	--	3	7	--	3.5
Other	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
All stakeholders	1	1	6	19	4	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=31. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 63: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	--	--	2.7
Consumer organisation	4	6	4	3	--	2.4
European Consumer Centre	1	5	7	8	1	3.1
Ministry or national authority	3	2	12	7	5	3.3
Other	--	2	1	4	--	3.3
All stakeholders	8	16	26	22	6	3.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=78. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 64: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	3	--	--	2.8
Consumer organisation	2	6	2	4	2	2.9
European Consumer Centre	1	3	8	7	2	3.3
Ministry or national authority	2	1	7	7	6	3.6
Other	--	2	1	4	--	3.3
All stakeholders	5	13	21	22	10	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=71. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 65: To what extent have these activities been effective in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? – CP 2014-2020: Networking and events (e.g. meetings of ODR contact points, Financial Services Users Group meetings, working groups). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	3	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	3	6	2	1	3.1
European Consumer Centre	--	--	6	12	4	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	2	8	17	5	3.8
Other	--	--	2	3	--	3.6
All stakeholders	--	6	25	35	10	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 9. N=76. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 66: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better understanding of consumer decision making as a basis for consumer policy – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	3	--	1	3.0
Consumer organisation	2	8	9	7	--	2.8
European Consumer Centre	1	1	7	7	2	3.4
Ministry or national authority	1	--	13	15	2	3.5
Other	--	1	3	2	--	3.2
All stakeholders	4	12	35	31	5	3.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=87. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 67: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	2	2	--	1	2.7
Consumer organisation	1	5	11	5	--	2.9
European Consumer Centre	--	--	5	8	2	3.8
Ministry or national authority	1	2	6	24	2	3.7
Other	--	1	2	3	--	3.3
All stakeholders	3	10	26	40	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=84. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 68: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information for consumers on ODR/ADR – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	2	1	3.7
Consumer organisation	2	5	11	2	4	3.0
European Consumer Centre	1	3	9	10	1	3.3
Ministry or national authority	2	3	15	13	--	3.2
Other	1	1	1	5	--	3.3
All stakeholders	6	12	39	32	6	3.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=95. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 69: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information for traders on ODR/ADR – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	2	1	3.7
Consumer organisation	1	7	6	4	2	3.0
European Consumer Centre	2	1	11	10	--	3.2
Ministry or national authority	2	3	19	10	--	3.1
Other	1	2	--	3	1	3.1
All stakeholders	6	13	39	29	4	3.1

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=91. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 70: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better access for consumers in my country to ADR in my country through ODR platform – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	2	2	--	1	2.7
Consumer organisation	8	6	1	1	4	2.4
European Consumer Centre	4	7	4	7	1	2.7
Ministry or national authority	8	3	11	10	1	2.8
Other	2	1	--	3	1	3.0
All stakeholders	23	19	18	21	8	2.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=89. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 71: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better access for consumers in my country to ADR in other countries through ODR platform – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	3	2	--	1	2.8
Consumer organisation	3	7	5	--	--	2.1
European Consumer Centre	2	4	8	8	1	3.1
Ministry or national authority	3	4	12	11	1	3.1
Other	1	2	1	3	--	2.9
All stakeholders	9	20	28	22	3	2.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=82. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 72: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better cooperation/exchange of best practices with authorities/stakeholders in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	3	1	1	3.3
Consumer organisation	1	3	9	4	--	2.9
European Consumer Centre	1	1	9	8	3	3.5
Ministry or national authority	1	2	11	14	4	3.6
Other	1	2	1	2	--	2.7
All stakeholders	4	9	33	29	8	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 10. N=83. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Enforcement of consumer rights

Table 73: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	1	3	5	1	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	2	8	6	--	3.3
Ministry or national authority	--	1	10	23	5	3.8
Other	--	1	--	2	--	3.3
All stakeholders	--	6	22	37	6	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. N=71. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 74: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	--	--	2.7
Consumer organisation	--	1	3	1	1	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	1	7	4	2	3.5
Ministry or national authority	--	1	8	17	5	3.8
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	4	20	23	8	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=55. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 75: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: EU-wide screening of websites (Sweeps). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	2	--	4.0
Consumer organisation	--	--	1	4	--	3.8
European Consumer Centre	--	--	2	7	--	3.8
Ministry or national authority	--	--	14	18	5	3.8
Other	--	1	1	3	--	3.4
All stakeholders	--	1	18	34	5	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. N=58. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 76: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ministry or national authority	1	--	6	11	7	3.9
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
All stakeholders	1	--	7	11	7	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=26. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 77: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Training for consumer protection enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	--	--	--	--
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
Ministry or national authority	--	1	3	15	5	4.0
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0
All stakeholders	--	1	3	17	5	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=26. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 78: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	--	1	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	2	3	5	5	3.9
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	12	12	4.4
Ministry or national authority	--	2	4	12	3	3.8
Other	--	1	--	3	--	3.5
All stakeholders	--	6	8	33	20	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=67. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 79: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Training for ECC-Net. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	1	1	1	2	3.8
European Consumer Centre	--	1	7	10	6	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	1	3	6	3	3.8
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	3	11	18	11	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=43. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 80: To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? – CP 2014-2020: Networking and events (e.g. Consumer Policy Network Group meetings, ECC-Net meetings). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective), by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	--	2	2	3	4.1
European Consumer Centre	--	1	3	11	10	4.2
Ministry or national authority	1	3	10	11	11	3.8
Other	--	--	--	2	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	1	4	16	28	24	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 12. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=73. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 81: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better trained consumer protection enforcement officials – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	--	4	1	--	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	1	4	9	2	3.8
Ministry or national authority	1	--	9	17	6	3.8
Other	1	--	1	1	--	2.7
All stakeholders	2	1	20	28	8	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=59. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 82: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better information on consumer rights infringements in other EU Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	1	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	--	2	--	4	--	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	6	8	3	3.8
Ministry or national authority	--	4	10	25	4	3.7
Other	--	--	2	1	--	3.3
All stakeholders	--	6	21	39	7	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=73. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 83: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Improved enforcement of consumer protection legislation – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	1	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	--	4	5	2	--	2.8
European Consumer Centre	1	--	6	9	1	3.5
Ministry or national authority	--	2	18	15	4	3.5
Other	--	1	--	2	--	3.3
All stakeholders	1	7	32	29	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=74. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 84: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better cooperation with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	--	--	2.7
Consumer organisation	--	2	7	1	--	2.9
European Consumer Centre	1	4	6	7	--	3.1
Ministry or national authority	--	4	11	22	7	3.7
Other	--	1	1	1	--	3.0
All stakeholders	1	12	27	31	7	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=78. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 85: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better exchange of best practices with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	--	--	2.5*
Consumer organisation	--	1	6	1	--	3.0
European Consumer Centre	1	4	5	4	--	2.9
Ministry or national authority	1	3	8	26	5	3.7
Other	1	--	--	2	--	3.0
All stakeholders	3	9	20	33	5	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. Note: *The base size for the average calculation is less than three. N=70. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 86: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	1	--	2	1	--	2.8
Consumer organisation	--	2	6	5	3	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	13	8	4.2
Ministry or national authority	--	3	8	12	7	3.8
Other	--	--	--	3	1	4.3
All stakeholders	1	5	19	34	19	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=78. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 87: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better protection of consumers regarding cross-border cases in the EU – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	--	1	--	2.7
Consumer organisation	--	2	6	7	2	3.5
European Consumer Centre	--	4	4	11	5	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	2	14	16	3	3.6
Other	--	--	--	3	--	4.0
All stakeholders	--	10	24	38	10	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=82. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Table 88: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country: Better training of ECC staff – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all achieved) to 5 (Fully achieved)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all achieved)	2	3	4	5 (Fully achieved)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Consumer organisation	--	--	2	2	3	4.1
European Consumer Centre	--	2	7	9	5	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	--	5	4	3	3.8
Other	1	--	--	1	1	3.3
All stakeholders	1	2	15	17	12	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 13. N=47. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities.

Addressing cross-cutting challenges

Table 89: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges – CP 2014-2020: Addressing challenges related to energy/sustainable consumption. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	--	1	3.7
Consumer organisation	1	4	12	7	3	3.3
European Consumer Centre	1	--	5	1	1	3.1
Ministry or national authority	1	3	8	1	--	2.7
Other	1	2	1	2	--	2.7
All stakeholders	4	9	28	11	5	3.1

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 14. N=57. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

Table 90: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges – CP 2014-2020: Addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	3	3	1	3.5
Consumer organisation	2	3	11	15	1	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	2	10	10	1	3.4
Ministry or national authority	1	7	14	21	2	3.4
Other	1	1	1	3	1	3.3
All stakeholders	4	14	39	52	6	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 14. N=115. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

Table 91: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges – CP 2014-2020: Creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	3	2	1	3.3
Consumer organisation	1	3	11	12	3	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	4	9	6	1	3.2
Ministry or national authority	1	2	17	20	4	3.5
Other	--	4	--	3	--	2.9
All stakeholders	2	15	40	43	9	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 14. N=109. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

Table 92: Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges – CP 2014-2020: Safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Very effective)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all effective)	2	3	4	5 (Very effective)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	4	3	1	3.6
Consumer organisation	1	3	16	10	1	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	3	9	10	1	3.4
Ministry or national authority	--	4	17	24	6	3.6
Other	--	2	3	3	--	3.1
All stakeholders	1	12	49	50	9	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 14. N=121. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the Programme activities.

Relevance

Table 93: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of consumers – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all appropriate to needs)	2	3	4	5 (Very appropriate to needs)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	2	1	1	3.2
Consumer organisation	1	5	14	12	2	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	8	13	3	3.8
Ministry or national authority	--	3	17	23	6	3.7
Other	--	1	3	4	--	3.4
All stakeholders	1	11	44	53	12	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=121. Not included were interviewees who answered “don’t know” or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 94: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of specific consumer groups, such as vulnerable consumers – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all appropriate to needs)	2	3	4	5 (Very appropriate to needs)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	1	1	1	3.2
Consumer organisation	3	8	14	5	--	2.7
European Consumer Centre	--	2	12	6	3	3.4
Ministry or national authority	1	8	21	8	7	3.3
Other	--	3	1	3	--	3.0
All stakeholders	4	23	49	23	11	3.1

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=110. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 95: Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities have been appropriate to the needs of your organisation – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (Very appropriate to needs)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all appropriate to needs)	2	3	4	5 (Very appropriate to needs)	Average assessment
Business association	1	1	5	1	--	2.8
Consumer organisation	2	11	10	6	4	3.0
European Consumer Centre	--	--	6	9	8	4.1
Ministry or national authority	1	6	16	20	7	3.5
Other	2	2	--	2	1	2.7
All stakeholders	6	20	37	38	20	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 15. N=121. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 96: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are still relevant: Product safety. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Still very relevant)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all relevant)	2	3	4	5 (Still very relevant)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	3	2	3.8
Consumer organisation	--	1	6	5	22	4.4
European Consumer Centre	--	--	--	8	13	4.6
Ministry or national authority	--	1	3	10	33	4.6
Other	1	--	3	2	2	3.5
All stakeholders	1	3	14	28	72	4.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 16. N=118. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 97: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are still relevant: Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Still very relevant)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all relevant)	2	3	4	5 (Still very relevant)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	5	2	2	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	1	4	10	22	4.4
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	5	16	4.5
Ministry or national authority	--	1	3	14	28	4.5
Other	--	2	3	1	1	3.1
All stakeholders	--	4	18	32	69	4.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 16. N=123. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 98: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are still relevant: Consumer rights and redress. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Still very relevant)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all relevant)	2	3	4	5 (Still very relevant)	Average assessment
Business association	--	2	2	4	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	--	--	6	3	26	4.6
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	3	20	4.8
Ministry or national authority	--	--	5	20	25	4.4
Other	1	--	2	3	2	3.6
All stakeholders	1	2	16	33	73	4.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 16. N=125. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 99: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 are still relevant: Enforcement of consumer rights. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all relevant) to 5 (Still very relevant)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all relevant)	2	3	4	5 (Still very relevant)	Average assessment
Business association	1	1	2	3	2	3.4
Consumer organisation	--	1	3	3	28	4.7
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	2	21	4.8
Ministry or national authority	--	--	4	14	32	4.6
Other	1	--	2	3	2	3.6
All stakeholders	2	2	12	25	85	4.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 16. N=126. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Coherence

Table 100: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes have been coherent with EU consumer policy in general? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all coherent) to 5 (Very coherent)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all coherent)	2	3	4	5 (Very coherent)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	2	3	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	--	1	9	8	7	3.8
European Consumer Centre	--	--	5	9	6	4.1
Ministry or national authority	--	--	13	19	6	3.8
Other	--	2	1	5	--	3.4
All stakeholders	--	4	30	44	19	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 18. N=97. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 101: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes have been coherent with other EU consumer-relevant policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, transport, digital single market, financial services)? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all coherent) to 5 (Very coherent)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all coherent)	2	3	4	5 (Very coherent)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	3	2	--	3.2
Consumer organisation	--	1	14	8	1	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	1	7	6	4	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	3	11	15	4	3.6
Other	--	2	1	3	1	3.4
All stakeholders	--	8	36	34	10	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 18. N=88. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 102: Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes have been coherent with other EU programmes (e.g. the 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme, LIFE programme)? – CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all coherent) to 5 (Very coherent)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all coherent)	2	3	4	5 (Very coherent)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	4	--	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	--	3	4	2	1	3.1
European Consumer Centre	--	--	2	2	3	4.1
Ministry or national authority	--	--	7	12	--	3.6
Other	--	1	--	2	--	3.3
All stakeholders	--	4	17	18	4	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 18. N=43. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 103: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: The Consumer Programme is well structured (i.e. there are no major gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities funded). Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	5	1	--	3.2
Consumer organisation	2	1	14	9	2	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	8	8	4	3.8
Ministry or national authority	--	2	14	17	9	3.8
Other	--	--	2	2	1	3.8
All stakeholders	2	3	43	37	16	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=101. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 104: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: The actions/activities of the Consumer Programme are well defined. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	5	2	--	3.1
Consumer organisation	--	2	11	12	3	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	1	5	11	4	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	1	16	20	8	3.8
Other	--	2	1	3	1	3.4
All stakeholders	--	7	38	48	16	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=109. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 105: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: It is easy for stakeholders to find support addressing their needs under the Consumer Programme. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	7	--	--	2.9
Consumer organisation	2	12	7	4	2	2.7
European Consumer Centre	--	2	5	11	1	3.6
Ministry or national authority	--	7	18	13	1	3.2
Other	1	2	--	3	--	2.8
All stakeholders	3	24	37	31	4	3.1

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=99. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 106: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: The annual work programmes are transparent. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	6	1	--	3.1
Consumer organisation	1	2	14	6	5	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	--	4	13	3	4.0
Ministry or national authority	1	1	5	20	5	3.8
Other	--	3	1	2	1	3.1
All stakeholders	2	6	30	42	14	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=94. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 107: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: The Consumer Programme and the related activities have been complementary to relevant policies pursued in my Member State. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	5	--	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	4	7	9	5	1	2.7
European Consumer Centre	--	2	4	12	1	3.6
Ministry or national authority	1	2	11	18	3	3.6
Other	--	1	3	2	1	3.4
All stakeholders	5	12	32	37	6	3.3

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=92. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 108: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20: The Consumer Programme and the related activities have monitored relevant policies pursued in my Member State. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all agree) to 5 (Fully agree)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all agree)	2	3	4	5 (Fully agree)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	5	--	--	3.0
Consumer organisation	3	7	6	4	2	2.8
European Consumer Centre	1	--	5	7	1	3.5
Ministry or national authority	2	3	7	17	1	3.4
Other	1	1	1	1	--	2.5
All stakeholders	7	11	24	29	4	3.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 19. N=75. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

EU added-value

Table 109: In your view, to what extent have the Consumer Programmes' actions impacted on the development of national policies in the consumer field? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (To a great extent)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all)	2	3	4	5 (To a great extent)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	3	1	3.7
Consumer organisation	--	7	10	7	3	3.2
European Consumer Centre	--	1	3	13	5	4.0
Ministry or national authority	--	3	17	21	8	3.7
Other	--	1	3	3	1	3.5
All stakeholders	--	13	34	47	18	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 21. N=112. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Sustainability

Table 110: How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 last after the end of the Programme? Product safety. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (Very likely that effects last after end of Programme)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all likely)	2	3	4	5 (Very likely)	Average assessment
Business association	--	1	1	1	2	3.8
Consumer organisation	2	1	8	7	7	3.6
European Consumer Centre	--	--	5	10	1	3.8
Ministry or national authority	--	3	10	13	15	4.0
Other	--	--	--	6	2	4.3
All stakeholders	2	5	24	37	27	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 22. N=95. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 111: How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 last after the end of the Programme? Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (Very likely that effects last after end of Programme)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all likely)	2	3	4	5 (Very likely)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	4	1	1	3.5
Consumer organisation	1	1	13	8	4	3.5
European Consumer Centre	--	1	12	8	1	3.4
Ministry or national authority	--	2	9	17	5	3.8
Other	--	1	2	3	--	3.3
All stakeholders	1	5	40	37	11	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 22. N=94. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 112: How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 last after the end of the Programme? Consumer rights and redress. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (Very likely that effects last after end of Programme)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all likely)	2	3	4	5 (Very likely)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	2	2	2	4.0
Consumer organisation	1	2	12	7	4	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	2	9	11	1	3.5
Ministry or national authority	1	1	12	22	10	3.8
Other	--	1	3	3	1	3.5
All stakeholders	2	6	38	45	18	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 22. N=109. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 113: How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 last after the end of the Programme? Enforcement of consumer rights. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (Very likely that effects last after end of Programme)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all likely)	2	3	4	5 (Very likely)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	3	2	4.2
Consumer organisation	2	2	7	8	5	3.5
European Consumer Centre	1	--	8	14	--	3.5
Ministry or national authority	--	1	15	19	7	3.8
Other	--	2	--	6	--	3.5
All stakeholders	3	5	31	50	14	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 22. N=103. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Efficiency

Table 114: Do you consider that the distribution of funds among the four Programme areas (product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement) has been justified given the benefits achieved? CP 2014-2020. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all justified) to 5 (Fully justified)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all justified)	2	3	4	5 (Fully justified)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	3	1	--	3.3
Consumer organisation	1	2	8	5	3	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	1	4	8	4	3.9
Ministry or national authority	--	1	10	15	11	4.0
Other	1	1	1	1	--	2.5
All stakeholders	2	5	26	30	18	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 26. N=81. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment.

Table 115: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety. Average assessments on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	1	--	1	4.0*
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Ministry or national authority	--	--	4	10	9	4.2
Other	--	--	2	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	--	--	8	10	10	4.1

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=28. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 116: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	--	--	--	--
European Consumer Centre	1	--	--	--	--	1.0*
Ministry or national authority	1	--	3	7	8	4.1
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	2	--	4	7	8	3.9

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=21. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 117: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Training for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	--	--	--	--	--
European Consumer Centre	1	1	--	--	--	1.5*
Ministry or national authority	1	1	3	7	10	4.1
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	2	2	5	7	10	3.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=26. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 118: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: EU consumer education resources. Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	1	2	1	1	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
Ministry or national authority	--	1	3	4	2	3.7
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	--	2	8	6	3	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=19. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 119: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out credit, on energy efficiency). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	2	4	2	--	3.0
European Consumer Centre	--	--	2	3	--	3.6
Ministry or national authority	--	--	3	3	1	3.7
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
All stakeholders	--	2	9	8	1	3.4

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 20. N=15. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc.

Table 120: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Capacity building for consumer organisations. Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	3	6	--	3.7
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	--	--	3.0
Ministry or national authority	--	1	1	1	1	3.5
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
All stakeholders	--	1	7	7	1	3.5

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=16. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc.

Table 121: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures. Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	1	--	1	2	--	3.0
European Consumer Centre	1	--	1	1	--	2.7
Ministry or national authority	2	1	1	1	1	2.7
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	4	1	4	4	1	2.8

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=14. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 122: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	2	--	--	--	2.0*
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	2	--	3.7
Ministry or national authority	--	1	5	10	3	3.8
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	--	3	8	12	3	3.6

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=26. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 123: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	1	--	--	--	2.0*
European Consumer Centre	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Ministry or national authority	--	2	1	7	5	4.0
Other	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
All stakeholders	--	3	4	7	5	3.7

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=19. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 124: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net). Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	1	1	1	1	3.5
European Consumer Centre	--	--	2	4	9	4.5
Ministry or national authority	--	--	3	4	7	4.3
Other	--	--	1	1	--	3.5*
All stakeholders	--	1	8	10	17	4.2

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=36. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 125: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Training for ECC-Net. Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	--	--	--	--
Consumer organisation	--	--	--	2	--	3.3
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	6	5	4.1
Ministry or national authority	--	--	3	2	2	3.9
Other	--	--	--	1	--	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	--	6	11	7	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=25. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Table 126: If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received – CP 2014-2020: Networking and events. Average assessments on a scale of on a scale of 1 (Not at all affordable) to 5 (Very affordable)

Stakeholder type	1 (Not at all affordable)	2	3	4	5 (Very affordable)	Average assessment
Business association	--	--	1	--	--	3.0*
Consumer organisation	--	4	1	4	2	3.4
European Consumer Centre	--	--	3	5	5	4.2
Ministry or national authority	--	--	5	12	10	4.2
Other	--	--	1	--	1	4.0*
All stakeholders	--	4	11	21	18	4.0

Sources: Civic Consulting, stakeholder interviews, question 27. N=54. Not included were interviewees who answered "don't know" or who did not provide an assessment because they did not participate in or use the output of the listed activities. Note: interviewees were asked to only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which they incurred costs for participating or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme, and to not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc. *The base size for the average calculation is less than three.

Annex VIII Identification of specific actions not implemented by the end of 2016

With regard to the implementation of actions set out in the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 and as required in the TOR, we have scrutinised the list of specific actions set out in Annex I of the Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 and have identified the following candidates for actions that have not been implemented by 31 December 2016.

Table 127: Actions set out in the Consumer Programme that have not been implemented between 2014 and 2016

Action	Specific action
Action 2	(e) monitoring and assessment of the safety of non-food products and services, including the knowledge base for further standards or the establishment of other safety benchmarks, and clarification of the traceability requirements
Action 4	(c) development and analysis of national statistical and other relevant evidence. Collection, in particular, of national data and indicators on prices, complaints, enforcement, redress will be developed in collaboration with national stakeholders
Action 5	(d) support to international bodies promoting principles and policies which are consistent with the objectives of the Programme
Action 6	(d) actions enhancing consumers' access to information on sustainable consumption of goods and services (g) support to Union-wide bodies for the development of codes of conduct, best practices and guidelines for price, quality, and sustainability comparison, including through comparison websites
Action 8	(c) development and maintenance of easily and publicly accessible databases covering the implementation of Union legislation on consumer protection
Action 9	(d) development of specific tools to facilitate access to redress for vulnerable people who are less inclined to seek redress
Action 10	(d) administrative and enforcement cooperation with third countries which are not participating in the Programme and with international organisations

Sources: Civic Consulting based on 2014-2017 budget data provided by DG Justice and Consumers .

Annex IX Stakeholder interview guide

**EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE CONSUMER PROGRAMME 2007-13 AND MID-TERM
EVALUATION OF THE CONSUMER PROGRAMME 2014-20**

*

GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

This interview is conducted in the framework of two interlinked evaluations commissioned by DG Justice and Consumers of the European Commission. The aim of the ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013¹ is to assess the main outcomes and results achieved and to identify the main problems and solutions with regard to its implementation, including against recommendations from the mid-term evaluation of the same Programme. The aim of the mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020² is to review the achievement of the objectives of all the measures, the state of play regarding the implementation of the eligible actions, the efficiency of the use of resources and the Programme's European added value, taking into consideration developments in the area of consumer protection and other consumer-relevant EU policies. The evaluation will also address the scope for simplification, the Programme's internal and external coherence including possible synergies/complementarities with other EU programmes, and the continued relevance of the objectives.

The evaluation covers the period since the beginning of the first of the two Consumer Programmes, i.e. 2007 to 2017.

The information you will provide will feed into a **decision on a possible renewal of a subsequent Consumer Programme in terms of scope, nature and cost.**

This interview guide is targeted at all relevant stakeholders and covers Programme activities in the areas of product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement. Please follow the indications provided and reply to the questions that are applicable to you. Only answer the questions with respect to the Programme activities you participated in or have used the outputs of.³ Please provide your expert opinion and focus on the effects/results of the Programmes in your country, unless specified otherwise. European stakeholders should refer to the situation from an EU perspective. Note that references to the EU and its Member States include Norway and Iceland, which are also beneficiaries of the Programmes.

Please save this questionnaire in .doc format. Please do not save as .docx or .pdf.

1. Identification data:

Name of organisation:	Please specify
Type of organisation:	DD. Type of organisation (Ministry or national authority, Consumer organisation, European Consumer Centre, Business association, Other) If other, please specify
Country:	Please specify
Is your organisation an EU-level organisation?	DD. Yes/No
Completed by:	Name, position, contact details
Can your answers be quoted by naming your organisation?	DD: Yes, the answers represent the view of my organisation and can be quoted No, the answers represent my personal expert opinion Note: If your answer is 'No', you will only be quoted anonymously by mentioning your type of organisation

Comments

¹ Decision No 1926/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013).

² Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20.

³ "Using the output of" denotes, for example using a consumer scoreboard or a market study prepared under the Consumer Programme for understanding of consumer problems in a specific market, or using information collected by the RAPEX system, or any other result of the listed actions.

I. PRODUCT SAFETY

2. Have you ever participated in or used the output of any of the following **activities** related to **product safety under the Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and/or 2014-20**? Please indicate so by ticking the relevant boxes in the table below.

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy for product safety officials)	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EU databases on cosmetics (Cosmetic ingredient database, Cosmetic Product Notification Portal)	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking and events (e.g. Product Safety Week, Consumer Safety Network meetings...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

If no activity indicated, please continue with section II.

3. To what extent have these activities been **effective** in consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union? Please assess separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).⁴

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK	As before
Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety	As before	As before
Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)
Training for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy for product safety officials)	n.a.	
EU databases on cosmetics (Cosmetic ingredient database, Cosmetic Product Notification Portal)	n.a.	
Networking and events (e.g. Product Safety Week, Consumer Safety Network meetings...)		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

4. Considering the activities you have participated in or used the output of: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following **benefits** in your country. Indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all achieved) to 5 (fully achieved).

⁴ Effectiveness refers to the degree to which the intended objectives of an intervention have been reached, i.e. the question here refers to the objectives of consolidating and enhancing product safety through market surveillance in the European Union.

Benefit	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Better information on unsafe non-food products for enforcement authorities	DD: 1 – Not at all achieved ... 5 – Fully achieved, DK	As before
Better information on unsafe non-food products for businesses	As before	As before
Better information on unsafe non-food products for consumers
Better trained enforcement officials		
Improved market surveillance and enforcement of product safety legislation		
Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States		
Better cooperation with enforcement authorities in third countries		
Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe products		
Reduction in the number of accidents related to unsafe services		
Other benefits <i>Please specify</i>		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?

- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources for market surveillance and enforcement
- ☐ Unclear distribution of competences for market surveillance and enforcement at the national level
- ☐ Lack of coordination at the national level
- ☐ Lack of coordination at EU level
- ☐ Insufficient training of safety enforcement officials
- ☐ Increased trade with third countries leading to unsafe products on the market
- ☐ Direct B2C e-commerce with third countries leading to purchase of unsafe products
- ☐ New distribution channels making effective market surveillance more difficult
- ☐ Rapid product innovation making effective market surveillance more difficult
- ☐ Other reasons/factors *Please specify*

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

II. CONSUMER EDUCATION, INFORMATION, AND SUPPORT TO CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS

5. Have you ever participated in or used the output of any of the following activities related to consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations under the Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and/or 2014-20? Please indicate so by ticking the relevant boxes in the table below.

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
EU consumer education resources (Dolceta, Consumer Diary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	n.a.
EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out credit, on energy efficiency...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity building for consumer organisations (TRACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	n.a.
Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Champion)		
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (ANEC, BEUC) ⁵	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer scoreboards and surveys (including the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and Consumer Markets Scoreboard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer market studies (e.g. on the sharing economy, on geo-blocking, on measuring consumer detriment...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking and events (e.g. EU Presidency events, ECCG meetings...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

If no activity indicated, please continue with section III.

6. To what extent have these activities been **effective** in improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations? Please assess separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).⁶

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
EU consumer education resources (Dolceta, Consumer Diary)	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK	n.a.
EU consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)	n.a.	As before
EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out credit, on energy efficiency...)	As before	As before
Capacity building for consumer organisations (TRACE)	...	n.a.
Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)	n.a.	
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (ANEC, BEUC) ⁷		
Consumer scoreboards and surveys (including the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and Consumer Markets Scoreboard)		
Consumer market studies (e.g. on the sharing economy, on geo-blocking, on measuring consumer detriment...)		
European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures	n.a.	
Networking and events (e.g. EU Presidency events, ECCG meetings...)		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

7. Considering the activities you have participated in or used the output of: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following **benefits** in your country. Indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all achieved) to 5 (fully achieved).

⁵ Support to ANEC is since 2013 no longer financed from the Consumer Programme, but through other EU funds.

⁶ Effectiveness refers to the degree to which the intended objectives of an intervention have been reached, i.e. the question here refers to the objectives of improving consumer education/information, developing the evidence base for consumer policy and providing support to consumer organisations.

⁷ Support to ANEC is since 2013 no longer financed from the Consumer Programme, but through other EU funds.

Benefit	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Better resources for teachers as a basis for consumer education at schools	DD: 1 – Not at all achieved ... 5 – Fully achieved, DK	As before
Better information for consumers (e.g. when taking out credit, or on energy efficiency)		
Better information on consumer markets and problems in my country	As before	As before
Better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States		
Better data on consumer complaints in other Member States		
Improved capacity of national consumer organisations		
Improved representation of consumer interests at EU level
Other benefits <i>Please specify</i>		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?

- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources for consumer education
- ☐ Limited integration of consumer education into national curricula
- ☐ Limited interest of teachers in consumer education
- ☐ Materials provided for consumer education are insufficient/impracticable (e.g. too limited scope)
- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources for consumer information
- ☐ Scoreboards/market studies insufficient (e.g. too limited scope, too infrequent)
- ☐ Insufficient capacity of consumer organisations at national level
- ☐ Insufficient capacity of EU level organisations representing consumer interests
- ☐ Other reasons/factors *Please specify*

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

III. CONSUMER RIGHTS AND REDRESS

8. **Have you ever participated in or used the output of any of the following activities related to consumer rights and redress under the Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and/or 2014-20?**
Please indicate so by ticking the relevant boxes in the table below.

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Behavioural studies (e.g. on consumer decision making in insurance services, on advertising market practices in online social media...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations, study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of CPC Regulation...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer Summit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Citizens' Energy Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking and events (e.g. meetings of ODR contact points, Financial Services Users Group meetings, working groups...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

If no activity indicated, please continue with section IV.

9. To what extent have these activities been **effective** in developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress? Please assess separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).⁸

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Behavioural studies (e.g. on consumer decision making in insurance services, on advertising market practices in online social media...)	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK	As before
Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations, study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of CPC Regulation ...)		
Consumer Summit		
Citizens' Energy Forum		
Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform	n.a.	
Communication campaigns and actions on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ODR	n.a.	
Networking and events (e.g. meetings of ODR contact points, Financial Services Users Group meetings, working groups...)		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

10. Considering the activities you have participated in or used the output of: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following **benefits** in your country. Indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all achieved) to 5 (fully achieved).

Benefit	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Better understanding of consumer decision making as a basis for consumer policy	DD: 1 – Not at all achieved ... 5 – Fully achieved, DK	As before
Smarter regulatory action at EU level in the field of consumer policy		
Better information for consumers on ODR/ADR	n.a.	
Better information for traders on ODR/ADR	n.a.	
Better access for consumers in my country to ADR in <u>my</u> country through ODR platform	n.a.	
Better access for consumers in my country to ADR in <u>other</u> countries through ODR platform	n.a.	
Better cooperation/exchange of best practices with authorities/stakeholders in other Member States	n.a.	
Other benefits <i>Please specify</i>		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

⁸ Effectiveness refers to the degree to which the intended objectives of an intervention have been reached, i.e. the question here refers to the objectives of developing and reinforcing consumer rights through smart regulatory action and improving access to simple and low-cost redress.

If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?

- ☐ Behavioural studies insufficient (e.g. too limited scope, too few areas covered)
- ☐ Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations) insufficient (e.g. too limited scope, too few areas covered)
- ☐ Evidence base (e.g. studies) not sufficiently taken into account in the policy process
- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources of ADR schemes in my country
- ☐ Limited consumer awareness of ADR schemes in my country
- ☐ Limited consumer awareness of ODR platform in my country
- ☐ Limited trader awareness of ODR platform in my country
- ☐ Lack of willingness of traders to participate in ADR
- ☐ Limitations of the functioning of the ODR platform
- ☐ General lack of interest in consumer policy/consumer problems
- ☐ Other reasons/factors *Please specify*

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

IV. ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER RIGHTS⁹

11. Have you ever participated in or used the output of any of the following activities related to enforcement of consumer rights under the Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and/or 2014-20? Please indicate so by ticking the relevant boxes in the table below.

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EU-wide screening of websites (Sweeps)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training for consumer protection enforcement officials and judiciary (E-Enforcement Academy)	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training for ECC-Net	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking and events (e.g. Consumer Policy Network Group meetings, ECC Net meetings...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

If no activity indicated, please continue with section V.

12. To what extent have these activities been effective in supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice? Please assess separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).¹⁰

⁹ Note that this section refers to the protection of the economic interests of consumers. Product safety and related aspects are covered in section I of this questionnaire.

¹⁰ Effectiveness refers to the degree to which the intended objectives of an intervention have been reached, i.e. the question here refers to the objective of supporting enforcement of consumer rights by strengthening cooperation between national enforcement bodies and by supporting consumers with advice.

Activity	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK	As before
Joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC)		
EU-wide screening of websites (Sweeps)		
Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)		
Training for consumer protection enforcement officials and judiciary (E-Enforcement Academy)	n.a.	
European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)		
Training for ECC-Net		
Networking and events (e.g. Consumer Policy Network Group meetings, ECC Net meetings...)		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

13. Considering the activities you have participated in or used the output of: Please assess to what extent these activities have achieved the following benefits in your country. Indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all achieved) to 5 (fully achieved).

Benefit	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Better trained consumer protection enforcement officials	DD: 1 – Not at all achieved ... 5 – Fully achieved, DK	As before
Better information on consumer rights infringements in other EU Member States		
Improved enforcement of consumer protection legislation		
Better cooperation with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States		
Better exchange of best practices with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States		
Better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU		
Better protection of consumers regarding cross-border cases in the EU		
Better training of ECC staff		
Other benefits <i>Please specify</i>		

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

If you have indicated a low level of achievement: What are the reasons for this and relevant influencing factors in your country?

- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources of consumer protection authorities
- ☐ Insufficient training of consumer protection enforcement officials
- ☐ Insufficient enforcement powers of consumer protection authorities in my country
- ☐ Insufficient enforcement powers of consumer protection authorities in other Member States
- ☐ Problems of communication with consumer protection authorities in other Member States
- ☐ Slow response of consumer protection authorities in other Member States
- ☐ Insufficient coordination of enforcement at EU-level (for infringements affecting several Member States)
- ☐ Limited staff/financial resources of ECCs
- ☐ Insufficient training of ECC staff

- ☐ Insufficient consumer awareness of ECCs
- ☐ New unfair commercial practices/contract terms on the market
- ☐ Increased exploitation of behavioural biases of consumers by traders
- ☐ Increased targeting of vulnerable consumer groups
- ☐ New distribution channels making effective consumer protection more difficult
- ☐ Rapid innovation of products and services making effective consumer protection more difficult
- ☐ Other reasons/factors *Please specify*

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

V. CROSS-CUTTING QUESTIONS

14. Please assess to what extent the Consumer Programmes have been effective in addressing the following challenges? Please assess separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).

Challenge	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Addressing challenges related to energy/sustainable consumption	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK	DD: 1 – Not at all effective ... 5 – Very effective, DK
Addressing challenges for consumers related to the Digital Single Market		
Creating a better evidence base for consumer policy in general		
Safeguarding that a high level of consumer protection is achieved across the Union

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

15. Please assess to what extent the objectives of the Consumer Programmes and the related activities (listed above in the previous sections) have been appropriate to the needs of consumers (including of specific consumer groups) and to the needs of your organisation? Please indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all appropriate to needs) to 5 (very appropriate to needs).

Needs	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Needs of <u>consumers</u>	DD: 1 – Not at all appropriate to needs ... 5 – Very appropriate to needs, DK	As before
Needs of specific consumer groups, such as <u>vulnerable consumers</u>		
Needs of <u>your organisation</u>		

Please elaborate

16. Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (as reflected in the activities listed above in the previous sections) are still relevant? Please indicate on a scale of 1 (not at all relevant) to 5 (still very relevant).

Objectives and priorities in Programme area ...	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Product safety	DD: 1 – Not at all relevant

	anymore ... 5 – Still very relevant, DK
Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations	
Consumer rights and redress	
Enforcement of consumer rights	

If you have indicated a low level of relevance, please elaborate in detail

17. Have any new needs emerged that necessitate an adjustment of the Consumer Programme? Please indicate separately for each Programme area.

In Programme area ...	
Product safety	DD: Yes/No/DK
Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations	
Consumer rights and redress	
Enforcement of consumer rights	

If you have answered 'Yes': Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples of new needs and possible actions to address them, where possible

Please indicate up to three economic, technological, scientific, social, political or environmental advances that you consider to be the most relevant in creating new needs that should be considered in a possible new Consumer Programme:

- ☐ Internet of Things
- ☐ New products (e.g. robotic toys, self-driving cars)
- ☐ New intermediaries (e.g. online portals, digital assistants)
- ☐ New marketing techniques (e.g. viral marketing in social media)
- ☐ New pricing techniques that affect transparency (e.g. high frequency price changes, differential pricing)
- ☐ Direct B2C e-commerce with third countries such as China
- ☐ Sharing economy/consumer-to-consumer (C2C) transactions
- ☐ Artificial intelligence/use of algorithms
- ☐ Low carbon/sustainable consumption
- ☐ Advances that affect other dimensions of consumer safety (e.g. food safety, chemical safety)
- ☐ Other *Please specify*

Please elaborate and provide illustrative examples, where possible

18. Please assess to what extent the objectives and priorities of the Consumer Programmes (as reflected in the activities listed above in the previous sections) have been coherent with EU consumer policy in general, and with other EU consumer-relevant policies (e.g. energy, telecommunication, transport, digital single market, financial services)? Please indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all coherent) to 5 (very coherent).¹¹

	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Extent to which Consumer Programmes have been coherent with EU consumer policy in general	DD: 1 – Not at all coherent ... 5 – Very coherent, DK	As before
Extent to which Consumer Programmes have been coherent with other EU consumer-		

¹¹ The term 'coherence' here refers to how well EU interventions in different areas are working together (e.g. to achieve common objectives or as complementary actions) or point to areas where there are tensions (e.g. objectives which are potentially contradictory, or approaches which are causing inefficiencies).

relevant policies		
Extent to which Consumer Programmes have been coherent with other EU programmes (e.g. the 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' programme, LIFE programme)		

Please elaborate

19. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Consumer Programme 2014-20, on a scale of 1 (not at all agree) to 5 (fully agree):

Statement	
The Consumer Programme is well structured (i.e. there are no major gaps, inconsistencies or overlaps between the activities funded)	DD: 1 – Not at all agree ... 5 – Fully agree, DK
The actions/activities of the Consumer Programme are well defined	
It is easy for stakeholders to find support addressing their needs under the Consumer Programme	
The annual work programmes are transparent ¹²	
The Consumer Programme and the related activities have been complementary to relevant policies pursued in my Member State	
The Consumer Programme and the related activities have monitored relevant policies pursued in my Member State	

Please explain your assessments

20. Based on your experience, do you consider that the same results would have been achieved in your country without the EU intervention through the Consumer Programmes (i.e. via initiatives funded only at national/regional level)?

Consumer Programme 2007-2013:

DD: Yes/No/DK

Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (until now):

DD: Yes/No/DK

Please explain your assessment, also considering what the most likely consequences would be of reducing or even completely stopping the EU intervention through the Consumer Programmes

21. In your view, to what extent have the Consumer Programmes' actions impacted on the development of national policies in the consumer field?

Consumer Programme 2007-2013:

DD: 1 – Not at all ... 5 – To a great extent, DK

Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (until now):

DD: 1 – Not at all ... 5 – To a great extent, DK

Please elaborate

22. How likely do you consider it to be that effects of the Consumer Programmes last after the end of each Programme? Please indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme) to 5 (very likely that effects last after end of Programme).

¹² See links under 'Annual Work Programme' at http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/eu_consumer_policy/financial-programme/index_en.htm

Programme area	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020
Product safety	DD: 1 – Not at all likely that effects lasted after end of Programme... 5 – Very likely that effects lasted after end of Programme, DK	DD: 1 – Not at all likely that effects last after end of Programme... 5 – Very likely that effects last after end of Programme, DK
Consumer education, information and support to consumer organisations		
Consumer rights and redress		
Enforcement of consumer rights		
<i>Please elaborate</i>		

23. Do you see a need to change the objectives, scope or eligibility criteria of a possible new Consumer Programme?

Objectives (overall goals) need to be changed: DD: Yes/No/DK
Thematic scope (type of actions/activities) needs to be changed: DD: Yes/No/DK
Eligibility criteria need to be changed: DD: Yes/No/DK

If you have answered 'Yes': Please elaborate in detail

24. Do you see any scope for simplification in a possible new Consumer Programme?

Application procedures DD: Yes/No/DK
Delivery mechanisms DD: Yes/No/DK
Programme management DD: Yes/No/DK
Reporting requirements DD: Yes/No/DK

If you have answered 'Yes': Please elaborate

25. Do you see a need for any other changes in a possible new Consumer Programme?

DD: Yes/No/DK

If you have answered 'Yes': Please elaborate

VI. COSTS OF THE CONSUMER PROGRAMMES

26. Do you consider that the distribution of funds among the four Programme areas (product safety, consumer education/information, consumer rights and redress, and enforcement) has been justified given the benefits achieved? Please indicate separately for Consumer Programmes 2007-13 and 2014-20 on a scale of 1 (not at all justified) to 5 (fully justified). Note that a brief overview of the distribution among the Programme areas is provided in Annex II.

Consumer Programme 2007-2013: DD: 1 – Not at all justified... 5 – Fully justified, DK
Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (until now): DD: 1 – Not at all justified... 5 – Fully justified, DK

Please elaborate

27. Has your organisation incurred costs¹³ for participating in specific activities that are funded under the Consumer Programmes or for applying for funding under the Consumer Programme?

Consumer Programme 2007-2013:

DD: Yes/No/DK

Consumer Programme 2014-2020 (until now):

DD: Yes/No/DK

Comments

If you have answered 'Yes', please assess the extent to which the costs borne by your organisation have been affordable given the benefits you received, on a scale of 1 (not at all affordable) to 5 (very affordable). In the following table, please only assess the activities under the Consumer Programmes for which you incurred such costs.

Please do not consider costs due to specific legal obligations on Member States, e.g. related to participating in the Rapex system, the ODR Platform, etc.

Activities	CP 2007-2013	CP 2014-2020 (until now)
Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety	DD: 1 – Not at all affordable... 5 – Very affordable, DK	As before
Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)		
Training for enforcement officials and judiciary (E-Enforcement Academy)		
EU consumer education resources		
EU consumer information/awareness raising campaigns (e.g. on taking out credit, on energy efficiency...)		
Capacity building for consumer organisations		
European Consumer Complaints Registration System and related support measures		
Joint actions for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (CPC)		
Exchange of enforcement officials (CPC)		
European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)		
Training for ECC-Net		
Networking and events		
Other activity <i>Please specify</i>		

Comments

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

¹³ Costs refer to monetary costs or staff time used in relation to activities funded under the Consumer Programmes.

ANNEX I: LINKS TO RELEVANT WEBSITES

Product safety:

Rapex:

https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/repository/content/pages/rapex/index_en.htm

EU databases on cosmetics:

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/cosmetics/cosing_en

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/cosmetics/cnpn_en

Consumer education, information, and support to consumer organisations:

Consumer scoreboards:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/index_en.htm

Consumer market studies:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/market_studies/index_en.htm

Consumer Classroom:

www.consumerclassroom.eu

Consumer Champion:

<http://www.consumerchampion.eu/>

EU-level consumer organisations:

<http://www.beuc.eu/>

<https://www.anec.eu/>

European Consumer Complaints Registration System:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/data_consumer_complaints/index_en.htm

Consumer rights and redress:

Behavioural studies:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/behavioural_research/index_en.htm

Citizens' Energy Forum:

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/citizens-energy-forum-london>

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Platform:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/solving_consumer_disputes/non-judicial_redress/adr-odr/index_en.htm

<https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr/main/index.cfm?event=main.home.chooseLanguage>

Enforcement of consumer rights:

Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network and related activities:

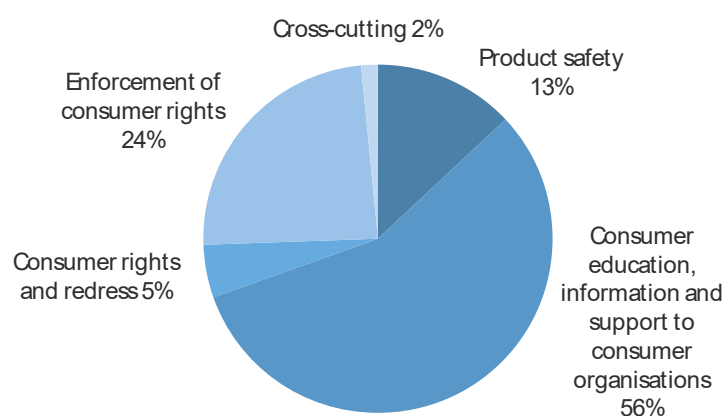
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/consumer_protection_cooperation_network/index_en.htm

European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net):

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/solving_consumer_disputes/non-judicial_redress/ecc-net/index_en.htm

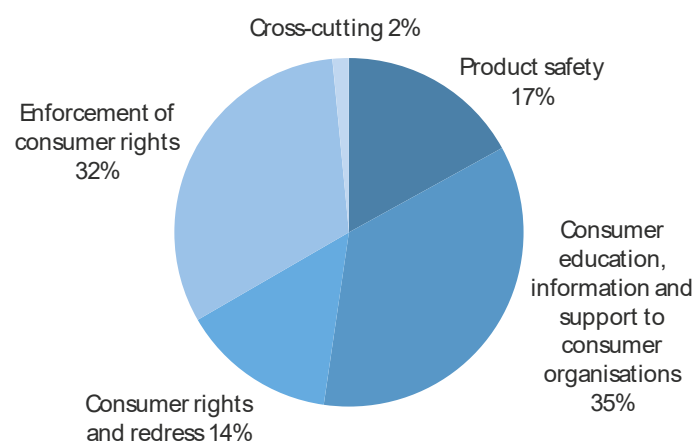
ANNEX II: OVERVIEW OF DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS UNDER THE CONSUMER PROGRAMMES

Figure 1. Overview of distribution of funds among the Programme areas under the Consumer Programme 2007-2013, years 2007 to 2013



Note: preliminary data

Figure 2. Overview of distribution of funds among the Programme areas under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020, years 2014 to 2016



Note: preliminary data

Annex X Detailed analysis of costs and benefits

The following tables present the following items for each main activity:

- **Name** of activity;
- **Action** under which the activity was financed;
- **Year** in which the activity was implemented (mostly the duration of the Programme so far, i.e. the period 2014 to 2017);
- **Programme costs** committed under the Programme for the activity in thousands of Euro, and the percentage of total Programme costs they amount to;
- **Outputs and results** of the listed activities;²⁵²
- **Benefits achieved**, considering stakeholder assessments regarding benefits achieved by the Programme, previous evaluations conducted regarding specific activities, and unit costs (where they make sense).²⁵³

The table below presents the costs and benefits of the main activities under Objective I of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

²⁵² Based on the fact sheets on the specific actions under the Programme in the Annex.

²⁵³ Note that the unit costs have to be interpreted with care, as most activities have more than one output, but unit costs are calculated on basis of the main outputs of the activity. In other words, these costs include the costs for secondary tasks conducted under the activity (e.g. the costs of the European Consumer Complaints Registration System of EUR 0.24 per complaint include the costs for the related support measures). For some activities (e.g. joint actions or support to BEUC), calculation of unit costs is not meaningful.

Table 128: Costs and benefits of activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 – product safety

Name of activity	Action	Year	Programme costs (in '000 €, % of total)	Outputs and results	Benefits achieved
Non-food scientific committees	1	2014-2017	1 137.8 (1.2% of total Programme costs)	<p>Key figures for the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS), the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) during the reporting period of April 2013 to March 2016 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 87 adopted documents (SCCS 66, SCENIHR 15, SCHER 6) - 306 meetings (SCCS 107, SCENIHR 143, SCHER 56) - 15 science fact-sheets and 4 web summaries explaining the opinions in plain language; and - 33 scientific articles published in scientific journals. <p>The scientific committees adopted opinions in various areas including hair dyes, cosmetic ingredients, nanomaterials, medical devices, physical risks and public health.</p>	<p>The non-food scientific committees (SCCs) were assessed by EC officials as very useful to the DG services concerned and the produced contributions were assessed to be successful. The 2016 Evaluation of the Functioning of the SANTE non-food Scientific Committees had confirmed that the SCCs have generally been fully responsive to the information needs of the relevant Commission Services, although with some variations between opinions, depending on the nature of the questions addressed and the availability of data and scientific literature on the subject. It also found that the cost of the SCCs' activities was adequate overall and aligned with that of comparable risk assessment bodies.</p>
Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)	2	2014-2017	2 900.4 (3.0%)	<p>Between 2014 and 2017, the number of notifications in the RAPEX system was 8 658, with on average 46% of notifications entailing at least one reaction in 2017, and a ratio of the number of reactions to the number of serious risk notifications of 1.66 in 2017.</p> <p>In 2017, the types of measure taken by the national authorities in response to notifications were voluntary measures in 77% of cases, no measure in 18% of cases, and compulsory measures in 5% of cases (with similar breakdowns in the previous years in the period).</p>	<p>Given that the number of notifications in the RAPEX system was 8 658 in this period, the average Programme cost per notification was EUR 335 (equivalent to EUR 10.8 per notification and participating country – see section 4 for the approach to calculating unit costs), which appears proportionate, when considering the benefits of better information on product safety related risks for consumer health, consumer trust and market functioning.</p> <p>According to stakeholders the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit of <i>better information on unsafe non-food products for enforcement authorities</i> with a high average rating of 4.0 (on a scale of 1 to 5). This was the highest assessed benefit discussed with stakeholders regarding product safety.</p> <p>Stakeholders also assessed that the Programme achieved the benefits of <i>better information on unsafe non-food products for consumers and for businesses</i>, although with lower average ratings of 3.5 and 3.4 respectively. While the system has</p>

improved in the past years, some limitations remain which may reduce the potential benefits of this activity, such as imbalances in the number of notifications from different Member States and delays in notification.

As planned, five joint actions on product safety have been undertaken each year that led to enforcement actions on many of the products tested. In our consultation activities, such actions were assessed as effective (see section 6.1.1 on effectiveness). In particular, stakeholders noted that joint actions provided participants with good knowledge of new products and new market surveillance methods and enabled them to share experiences on best practices and apply similar approaches in the Member States as well as save resources and test products which they would otherwise not have been able to test. According to interviewed stakeholders the Consumer Programme achieved the benefits of *better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States* (3.6) and *improved market surveillance and enforcement of product safety legislation* (3.4). The implementation of such joint actions require large amounts of resources and coordination, management and reporting, which has raised questions of effectiveness and efficiency over the last years. In response, under the Consumer Work Programme 2017, the financing modus for these joint actions was changed from action grants to procurement. This is expected to also address the need to support more flexible and more strategic activities and a better communication of joint action results as well as the need to have as many national market surveillance authorities on board as possible.

Participation in these exchanges is funded through a grant system with special indemnities and the resulting average costs per exchange are about EUR 2 000. According to stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefits of *better trained enforcement officials* (3.7 on a scale of 1 to 5) and *better cooperation with enforcement authorities in other Member States* (3.6). Most of the national ministries or authorities that mentioned exchanges of GPSD officials assessed this activity positively, especially as they are considered to be good knowledge sharing opportunities.

Joint cooperation and enforcement actions in the area of non-food consumer product safety

2

2014-2017

6 210.7 (6.5%)

Note: This amount covers 70% of the budget for such actions as co-financing requirements apply.

Five joint actions on product safety have been undertaken each year between 2014 and 2016 and focused on products such as childcare articles, toys, appliances, fireworks, power tools and other types of equipment. Between 7 and 14 EU/EEA countries participated in these joint actions (on average about 11 countries). Following the actions, the participating national authorities took enforcement actions on many of the products tested, including voluntary market surveillance measure, recalls, sales-bans, withdrawals, and RAPEX notifications.

Exchange of safety enforcement officials (GPSD)

2

2014-2017

422.0 (0.4%)

The number of exchanges of product safety officials for the period 2014-2017 was 126, with a high of 56 in 2017. Officials from 21 EU and EEA states took part in these exchanges. The top three Member States of beneficiaries have been Poland (36 officials), Bulgaria (26 officials), and Croatia (10 officials). The top three hosting Member States have been Poland (23 officials), Malta (18 officials), and France (14 officials).

Networking and events	2	2014-2017	930.9 (1.0%)	<p>The Consumer Safety Network (CSN) met 13 times between January 2014 and January 2018. The CSN permanent subgroup of RAPEX contact points met 4 times between January 2014 and January 2018.</p> <p>DG Justice and Consumers hosted the International Product Safety Week in 2016 in Brussels, which gathered regulators, manufacturers, e-commerce actors and consumer organisations from more than 40 countries.</p> <p><i>The European Commission database for information on cosmetic substances and ingredients (COSING)</i> includes an inventory of 25 938 cosmetic ingredients, and it was updated with around 6000 new ingredients in the period 2014-2017. COSING has an average of almost 1 200 000 views per month and is by far the most visited DG GROW database.</p> <p>As of December 2017 more than 1 600 000 products have been notified in the <i>Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP)</i> by 42 208 organisations (38 864 cosmetic products responsible persons and 3 344 distributors of cosmetic products).</p>	<p>In the stakeholder interviews, networking and events were highly rated (see section 6.1.1 on effectiveness). Interviewees considered them to be an opportunity to share best practices and improve coordination between Member States as well as at the international level in the area of market surveillance.</p>
EU databases on cosmetics	3	2014-2017	1 629.3 (1.7%)	<p>Both the COSING and CPNP databases are considered to function well, they are continuously updated, and the large numbers of ingredients listed, notifications and visits to the databases make them beneficial for concerned stakeholders. If the amount committed for this activity is allocated equally between COSING and CPNP, the average cost per view on the COSING website is EUR 0.01 and the average cost per notified product in CPNP is EUR 0.51. While no inefficiencies were identified regarding the tools, it is currently the only activity of the Consumer Programme that is managed by another Commission service (DG GROW).</p>	

Source: Own compilation based on fact sheet for CP 2014-20, Actions 1 to 3, interviews results, and cost data. See section 4 for the approach to calculating unit costs. Note: While product safety officials implementing the GPSD also participate in the E-Enforcement Academy, it is formally carried out under Action 10 of the Consumer Programme and not under Action 2. See the table on Costs and benefits of activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 for enforcement for information on the E-Enforcement Academy.

The table below presents the costs and benefits of the main activities under Objective II of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Table 129: Costs and benefits of activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 – education and information

Name of activity	Action	Year	Programme costs (in '000 €, % of total)	Outputs and results	Benefits achieved
Support to EU-level consumer organisations (BEUC)	5	2014-2017	5 950.0 (6.2% of total Programme costs)	<p>BEUC's self-reported key indicators (available for the period 2014-2016) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Web page hits (unique users): 407 401 - Downloads: 53 676 - Twitter followers: 28 674 - Press quotations: 10 750 - Interviews delivered: 281 - Press releases: 128 - Conferences organised: 18 - Conferences participated in (as speaker): 643 - Working groups participated in: 157 - Training sessions organised: 28 - Commissioner meetings: 29 - Expert meetings: 41 <p>BEUC also reports achievements in which its demands were taken into account as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of regulatory initiatives, including guidelines; - Legislation in the making; - Policy developments within the EU institutions; - Communications achievements; - Acknowledgement of BEUC as a key stakeholder. <p>The <i>European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG)</i> met twice a year in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 (8 meetings in total). As of 2017 it has 34 members, 26 alternate members and 4 observers. In this period, the ECCG has issued 3 opinions.</p> <p>In the 2014-2017 period, 6 <i>EU Presidency events</i> took place.</p> <p>The <i>Consumer Markets Expert Group (CMEG)</i> met twice a year in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and once in 2017 (7 meetings in total). As of 2017 it has 40 member authorities representing the 28 Member States, Iceland and Norway.</p>	<p>A previous evaluation of this activity had found that BEUC was a reasonably efficient and well-functioning organisation. Outputs and results appear to be proportionate to spending levels. According to stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit of an <i>improved representation of consumer interests at EU level</i>. This was the highest assessed benefit discussed with stakeholders regarding consumer education and information. BEUC represents the consumer interest regarding Union policies and legislative actions in a wide range of areas, including Financial Services, Food, Digital Rights, Consumer Rights and Enforcement and Sustainability. BEUC's consistent funding has led to successful functioning of the organisation, which has grown and found other sources of funding (with the Commission's core grant under the Consumer Programme constituting just over a third of the organisation's total funding, and other resources coming from membership fees, projects funded by the EU, and private resources).</p>
Networking and events	4-6	2014-2017	486.3 (0.5%)	<p>In our interviews at EU level and in all Member States, stakeholders consistently emphasised the high level of benefits achieved by networking and events in general across Programme areas, such as experience sharing and interaction with key stakeholders representing various points of view.</p>	

Consumer scoreboards and surveys	4	2014-2017	8 903.4 (9.3%)	Surveys of consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection and business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection were carried out in 2014 and in 2016. These surveys fed into the Consumer Conditions Scoreboards that were published in 2015 and 2017.	In summary, the activities produced are as follows:
				The consumer market monitoring survey was carried out in 2015 and fed into the 2016 edition of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Two surveys of consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection- Two surveys on business attitudes towards cross-border sales and consumer protection- Two editions of the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard, based on the above-mentioned surveys- One consumer market monitoring survey- One edition of the Consumer Markets Scoreboard, based on the above-mentioned survey- Two additional online consumer surveys- A total of ten consumer markets studies that provide in-depth analyses of the functioning of specific markets for consumers, as well as consumer problems and behaviour in these markets
Consumer market studies	4	2014-2017	5 095.9 (5.3%)	Ten consumer market studies have been financed in this period:	Due to the large amount of resources required for consumer and market research across the EU (with the requirement of having representative sample sizes from all 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland) for all surveys and market studies, these outputs and results can be considered to be proportionate to the costs. The main benefit of this activity is better evidence on consumer problems and markets as an essential requirement for better regulation, providing both in-depth analyses (in the context of market studies) and regular monitoring to analyse long-term trends (scoreboards) and the benefits they bring, with <i>better information on consumer markets and problems across the EU to benchmark the situation in my country with the situation in other Member States</i> rated on average 3.5, and <i>better information on consumer markets and problems in my country</i> 3.4. Conclusive evidence illustrates the importance of the evidence collected under this action for the policy process in terms of better regulation.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Study on measuring consumer detriment in the EU- Consumer study on pre-contractual information and billing on the energy market- Study on residential prosumers in the European Energy Union- Study on the sharing economy- Consumer market study on online market segmentation through personalised pricing/offers in the EU- Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate for consumers in the EU- Consumer market study on the functioning of the M-Payment for consumers in the EU- In-depth market study on consumer risk and opportunities in on-line selling of retail financial services and on the barriers to the cross-border provisions of consumer credit- Mystery Shopping Survey on territorial restrictions and geo-blocking in the European Digital Single Market	The resources for this activity were used for a credit-related campaign covering two Member States (following a first wave in four Member States), a general consumer rights campaign covering the newest member of the Union, Croatia, and an ongoing pilot campaign on energy efficiency. As media campaigns require a large amount of resources, the costs
Consumer rights and information campaigns	6	2014-2017	9 045.8 (9.5%)	Knowing your consumer rights with regard to credit agreements campaign: Covered Ireland, Malta, Spain and Cyprus (as part of a first round launched in 2013, financed under the previous Programme) and Austria and the Czech Republic (second round launched in 2015). In order to reach the target audience, a range of tools and channels were used and led to the following:	

Capacity building for consumer organisations (Consumer Champion)	5	2014-2017	1 879.9 (2.0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 60 articles were published in the media in Austria and 50 in the Czech Republic;- The Facebook reach through the European Commission’ central channels was 92 000 for Facebook and potentially 3 million for Twitter;- The reach of owned social media channels was 754 000 in AT and 126 000 in CZ for Facebook and 300 000 in AT and 175 000 in CZ for Twitter;- The reach of the social media channels on which coverage was purchased was 1.9 million in AT and 860 000 in CZ for Facebook and 11 000 in AT and 216 000 in CZ for Twitter;- Dedicated pages on europa.eu drew [...] 6 000 unique visits for the German-language page targeting Austria and 3 500 visits for the Czech-language page. <p><i>Information campaign on consumer rights in Croatia:</i> The campaign included a TV campaign, social media presence, public events and PR actions. In the twelve month period while the campaign was carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 23 press releases were published, which resulted in 351 articles published by the media;- The TV campaign was executed in three bursts. In total, the display campaign generated 37 923 217 impressions and 33 481 clicks;- The Facebook campaign had 4 931 224 impressions and 50 615 clicks, and a community of 16 368 Facebook fans was gathered. <p><i>Awareness-raising campaign on energy efficiency targeting energy poor households:</i> As the campaign is ongoing, outputs and results of the campaign are not yet available.</p>	<p>allocated appear in principle to be proportionate to the activities undertaken or planned, although the data on outputs and results is too fragmentary to make any conclusion with respect to the specific campaigns funded. Two separate evaluations for the two waves of the credit campaign were conducted, which both found mixed results in terms of efficiency, mainly questioning the extent to which the right people (the target group) were efficiently reached, and the large number of different tools and channels used in comparison to the available budget (see fact sheet on Action 6 for more details). In the interviews with key stakeholders across the EU, the benefit of <i>better information for consumers</i> (e.g. <i>when taking out credit, or on energy efficiency</i>) was assessed as having been achieved to a moderate extent (rating of 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5). Benefit deficiencies were identified, particularly with regards to multi-country single issue campaigns, such as the one on consumer credit, where stakeholders questioned the longer term sustainability of such campaigns. The question was also raised as to whether the EU was best placed to conduct campaigns which by definition have to be adapted to the specific situations and knowledge levels of consumers in the specific Member State.</p>
				<p>The activity has a wide reach in the consumer professional field (with more than 1 000 organisations and close to 1 600 professionals registered), and has so far trained 279 participants in 9 Member States in local courses. While the costs allocated seem to be proportionate to the activities undertaken, so far unit costs per output are considerable. Under the assumption that from the allocated budget 40% is used for the website and e-learning, and 60% for local training courses, the resulting costs per registered user are EUR 473.82, and the costs per consumer professional trained are</p>	

European Consumer Complaints Registration System (ECCRS) and related support measures	6	2014-2017	527.0 (0.6%)	including 6 upcoming courses, have been organised in 9 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries: Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Cyprus. These courses have resulted in 279 trained Consumer Professionals in these countries.	EUR 4 042.80 (note that these figures include all costs of the activity, including the costs of website maintenance, organisation of training programmes, management etc).						
					BEUC, which is implementing the activity, noted that the Consumer Champion platform did not have the success expected, and that e-learning modules had a low participation rate compared to the considerable efforts put into developing, translating and promoting them. In contrast, local courses are reported to be the most appreciated services within the programme. This self-assessment by BEUC was confirmed through our country interviews, in which in-country courses were positively assessed for effectiveness and benefit, but the online platform and e-learning courses were considered to be less efficient and did not entirely justify the resources spent on them; some of the interviewees considered that the e-learning website is too expensive to run for the number of people who use it.						
					In terms of wider benefits of capacity building efforts under the Consumer Programme, the interviewed stakeholders assessed that the benefit of <i>improved capacity of national consumer organisations</i> was only achieved to a limited extent (2.8 on a scale of 1 to 5), mostly due, however, to the limited staff and financial resources of consumer organisations in many Member States.						
					With a cost of EUR 0.24 per complaint submitted, the outputs of this activity are proportionate to the costs involved. A complaints database covering all Member States can have significant benefits for policy makers at EU and Member State level, if data is collected on the basis of a harmonised methodology (which is in place), is consistently collected by all relevant institutions in the EU, or at least from a representative sample, and long-term data series are available (which is currently not yet the case for the latter two). So far, this activity has only brought moderate benefits to stakeholders, which assessed the benefit of <i>better data on consumer complaints in other Member States</i> on average with 3.0 (on a scale of 1 to 5). In the stakeholder interviews, issues were reported with the classification and IT system as well as the training of staff at local level. The activity was also ranked						
					The number of complaint bodies and countries submitting complaints data to the ECCRS increased from 37 complaint bodies representing 13 countries in 2014 to 73 complaint bodies representing 20 countries in 2015. The total number of complaints registered from 2014-2017 are: <table><tr><td>Year</td><td>Total number of complaints</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>351 308</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>1 236 156</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>425 505</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>193 080</td></tr></table>	Year	Total number of complaints	2014	351 308	2015	1 236 156
Year	Total number of complaints										
2014	351 308										
2015	1 236 156										
2016	425 505										
2017	193 080										

lowest for affordability of the costs of stakeholders compared to the benefits received. Further research is needed to better understand the inefficiencies reported and possible measures to address them, and to safeguard that the potential benefits of this data source are realised for the further development of EU consumer policy and legislation.

Consumer education resources (Consumer Classroom)	7	2014-2017	3 089.6 (3.2%)	<p>The following indicators were reported on the Consumer Classroom website as of the end of 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 277 241 unique users, - 25 048 registered users (out of which 6 721 were teachers), - 223 ready-to-use teaching resources collected from across the EU, - 544 lessons created by users, and - 78 partnerships built across Europe with consumer organisations, school associations and other interested NGOs. <p>From December 2014 to 14th December 2016, the Forum Moderator created 246 topics and 45 replies for a total of 291 posts.</p> <p>In the Inter-School Competition, 40 schools participated in 2014, whereas only 20 submitted a project in 2015.</p>	<p>Consumer education that provides early competences and empowerment to pupils on topics such as Consumers in the digital era, Consumer rights and protection, Sustainable consumption and circular economy, Climate change and renewable energy, Food safety and nutritional education (which are addressed in the Consumer Classroom) can provide significant benefits. While 6 721 teachers are reported as registered user of the Consumer Classroom, there was no information available to the evaluation team regarding the actual use of the resources by teachers, which would be the key result to be considered. Also, if the total budget committed is divided by the total number of resources submitted and lessons created by users, the resulting unit costs of EUR 1 653 per item appear to be considerable as this concerns content created by users (data for 2015 and 2016 is considered, as it is reported in the same format: 997 items). Note that this figure includes all costs of the activity, including the costs of website maintenance, organising school competitions, management and administration, etc).</p> <p>According to the assessment of stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit linked to the Consumer Classroom of <i>better resources for teachers as a basis for consumer education at schools</i> to a moderate extent (average score of 3.2). Some interviewees have indicated that efficiency of the activity is influenced by the particular situation in Member States – whether, for example, there are local resources, or rules for the national curriculum in place. Further analysis of benefits of the Consumer Classroom for schools and pupils is therefore required, particularly through investigations with local education authorities and teachers.</p>
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Source: Own compilation based on fact sheet for CP 2014-20, Actions 4 to 7, interviews results, and cost data. See section 4 for the approach to calculating unit costs.

The table below presents the costs and benefits of the main activities under Objective III of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Table 130: Costs and benefits of activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 – rights and redress

Name of activity	Action	Year	Programme costs (in '000 €, % of total)	Outputs and results	Benefits achieved
Behavioural studies (on consumer decision making)	8	2014-2017	2 392.8 (2.5% of total Programme costs)	<p>Six behavioural studies have been financed or planned in this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study on consumers' decision-making in insurance services: a behavioural economics perspective - Behavioural study on food choices and eating habits - Behavioural study on advertising market practices in online social media - Behavioural study on the transparency of online platforms - Behavioural study on consumers engagement in the circular economy - Behavioural study on the digitalisation of financial services 	<p>Due to the large amount of resources required for behavioural research, the costs can be considered to be proportionate to the activities conducted or planned. In interviews, stakeholders generally considered behavioural studies to be effective and helpful for policymaking, both at the national and EU levels. According to the assessment of stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit of a better understanding of consumer decision making as a basis for consumer policy to a moderate extent (rating of 3.2 on scale from 1 to 5). The findings of these studies fed into policy and other Commission initiatives, and are generally expected to contribute to activities of different DGs, however several interviewees considered that policymakers do not make enough use of these studies or suggested that the studies could be better promoted.</p>
Other EU consumer policy studies (e.g. evaluations)	8	2014-2017	1 891.6 (2.0%)	<p>Five other EU consumer policy studies have been financed in this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study on enforcement authorities' powers in the application of the Regulation 2006/2004/EC on Consumer Protection Cooperation - Mid-term evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020; ex-post evaluation of the Consumer Programme 2007-2013 (this study) - Consumer market study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for consumers in the EU - Foresight study to prepare for the future of EU consumer policy 2020-2030 - Follow-up to the initiatives in the field of retail financial services 	<p>Interviewees generally considered other EU consumer policy studies to be effective and helpful for policymaking. The policy uptake of these studies seems to be clearer than what has been reported for behavioural studies, as evidenced by several examples of studies in which a clear policy uptake was noted (see section 6.1). In particular a number of interviewees specifically mentioned the evaluation of the CPC regulation as an example of an effective consumer policy study, which was an input into the review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) network that was conducted between 2012 and 2016. Overall the outputs and results of this activity seem proportionate to the costs involved.</p>

Consumer Summit	8	2014-2017	874.9 (0.9%)	<p>Consumer Summits were held in 2014, 2015 and 2016, bringing together respectively 400, 440 and 450 participants representing national authorities and governments, European institutions, consumer organisations and ECCs, businesses, as well as academics.</p> <p>Three Consumer Summits were organised with increasing numbers of participants representing a variety of stakeholders. As this activity requires an overall limited amount of resources, the costs allocated appear in principle proportionate to the activities undertaken. However, in our interviews, opinions were divided regarding the Consumer Summit, which was assessed to be moderately effective (with an average rating of 3.2 on a scale of 1 to 5), and not achieving its full potential. While it is acknowledged to be a good learning and networking opportunity, a number of interviewees considered that the topics covered had become too broad, leading to a lack of focus on actual consumer issues.</p>
Citizens' Energy Forum	8	2014-2017	53.0 (0.1%)	<p>The Citizens' Energy Forum was held in London in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Key topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy consumer empowerment; - Roll-out of smart meters; - Consumer vulnerability and energy poverty; - Market design in the retail sector, smart and innovative services for consumers/prosumers; - The 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' legislative package. <p>As far as DG Justice and Consumers is concerned – note that the fora are co-organised with DG Energy – the outputs and results appear to be very proportionate to the committed amount under the Consumer Programme. In interviews with EU and national stakeholders, the Citizens' Energy Forum was assessed to be very successful and beneficial for consumer protection in the area of energy. Some interviewees noted that the Citizens' Energy Forums had gained importance over the years, that its conclusions were reflected in the legislation and that it should be a model for similar activities in other fields. No inefficiencies were reported.</p>
Networking and events	8,9	2014-2017	1 789.8 (1.9%)	<p>In this period, the <i>Financial Services User Group (FSUG)</i> had 25 meetings, released 12 studies/papers and issued 35 opinions. The <i>Vulnerable Consumer Working Group</i> met 12 times between March 2012 and January 2016. It released a Working Paper on Energy Poverty, which was presented to the Citizens' Energy Forum in 2016.</p> <p>The <i>Working Group on Consumers as Energy Market Actors</i> has been meeting approximately twice per year in the context of the Citizens' Energy Forum in order to prepare a Report on new forms of active energy use.</p> <p>The <i>Multi-Stakeholder Group on Environmental Claims</i> presented a report with [its] main findings and recommendations at the 2013 European Consumer Summit and</p> <p>In our interviews at the EU level and in all Member States, assessments of networking and events related to rights and redress were almost uniformly positive and this activity was the second highest-rated activity in terms of effectiveness (with an average score of 3.6 on a scale of 1 to 5). No inefficiencies were identified.</p>

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform	9	2014-2017	2 990.7 (3.1%)	<p>a dedicated Commission study commissioned by the group was published in 2015 on EU consumer markets and environmental claims for non-food products.</p> <p>The <i>Multi-Stakeholder Group on Comparison Tools</i> concluded its work in 2016 with agreed Key Principles for Comparison Tools to guide operators of comparison tools towards better compliance, notably with the UCPD, and user-friendliness. These Principles have fed into the UCPD Guidance and other communications.</p> <p>The <i>Expert Group on ADR</i> met twice in 2015.</p> <p>The <i>Expert Group (technical group) on ODR</i> held four meetings in 2014, in addition to a hands-on exercise with stakeholders to test the platform in 2014.</p> <p>The <i>ODR contact points</i> have met twice a year since 2015.</p> <p>Since the launch of the platform on 15 February 2016, over 55 000 consumer complaints have been registered, of which more than a third concerned cross-border purchases within the EU.</p> <p>The number of ADR bodies connected to the platform has grown from 208 in the second quarter of 2016 to 347 at the end of 2017.</p> <p>Current statistics show a steady increase in unique visitors on the platform from February 2017 – August 2017 to over 180,000 per month, with over 2,300 complaints being filed per month.</p> <p>The outcome of cases submitted between 15 February 2016 and 15 February 2017 was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automatically closed within 30 calendar days: 85% - Refused by the trader: 9% - Both parties withdrew before going to ADR: 4% - Complaint submitted to ADR body: 2% <p>A survey revealed that although a large number of traders did not follow through using the ODR platform, 40% of consumers who submitted a complaint on the ODR platform that was automatically closed after 30 days had been contacted directly by the trader to solve the problem without any further progression of the complaint on the platform. More generally, available information reveals that 44% of the total cases submitted to the platform were settled bilaterally outside the platform.</p> <p>In around half of the cases where the complaints were submitted to ADR bodies, the ADR bodies refused to deal with the case on procedural grounds such as lack of competence or</p>
			<p>Note that the 2015 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Work Programme also contributed to the deployment of the ODR platform and to its operation and maintenance, therefore the Consumer Programme only covers part of the costs of the ODR Platform.</p>	<p>The 2017 Commission Report on the functioning of the European ODR platform concluded that the platform's structural functionality and its reach among consumers in its first year of operation was very positive. It was estimated that only about 2% of the complaints submitted to the platform are transferred to an ADR body. However, the platform has been found to have contributed to solving a substantial number of cases outside of the platform. Overall, 44% of the total cases submitted to the platform were settled bilaterally between the traders and the consumer and less than 1% reached a final outcome through an ADR procedure. Looking only at the amount committed through the Consumer Programme, and including set-up costs, the average Programme cost per complaint registered on the ODR platform is EUR 37.4 and the average cost per settled case (within or outside the platform) is EUR 83.0. If only those complaints are considered which were transferred to an ADR body and reached a final outcome, this cost increases to more than EUR 3 700 per case (based on a figure of less than 1% of complaints registered for which this is the case), which could not be considered proportionate in light of the lower value of most consumer claims. These calculated figures should be interpreted with care at this stage as they rely on early outputs and results of the platform, which should be further monitored in order to draw robust conclusions in</p>

				<p>the consumer's failure to attempt to contact the trader first. Furthermore, either consumers or traders in some instances withdrew from the procedure before it was completed. This explains why the ADR procedure reached a final outcome in less than 1% of the total cases submitted to the platform.</p>	<p>terms of efficiency.</p> <p>Deficiencies in benefits achieved were identified with regard to limitations of the ODR platform, such as the automatic closing of complaints within 30 days if the consumer and trader do not agree on an ADR body. The benefits of <i>better access for consumers in my country to ADR in other countries through the ODR platform</i> and <i>better access for consumers in my country to ADR in my country through the ODR platform</i> received the lowest assessments with respect to achievement in the area of rights and redress (2.9 and 2.7 on a scale of 1 to 5, respectively).</p>
Communication campaigns on Alternative Dispute Resolution/ ODR	9	2014-2017	3 072.6 (3.2%)	<p>The two waves of the 2016 ODR video campaign achieved a total of 12 842 899 views (compared to a campaign forecast of 3 million views) and 285 623 website clicks (compared to a campaign forecast of 132 000 views). The Facebook video campaign achieved the following social media results: 23 060 post likes, 3 534 shares, 789 comments, 311 new fans. The Twitter video campaign achieved the following social media results: 1633 tweet likes; 584 retweets; 127 replies; 383 new followers.</p> <p>By the end of 2016, awareness-raising campaigns on ADR/ODR had a Facebook reach of 21 million users and a Twitter reach of 9 million users compared to an overall target of 10 million people reached.</p> <p>In 2017, the Commission contracted a web-scraping study of EU traders' websites to examine the state of compliance of online traders in the EU with the ODR Regulation, which requires online traders to make the link to the ODR platform and their e-mail address available on their website. The findings of the web-scraping show that only 28% of the investigated traders include a link to the ODR platform on their website.</p>	<p>The resources for this activity were used for promoting the ODR platform amongst consumers and traders, events with traders in 2017, and a web-scraping exercise of more than 20 000 web shops across the EU in 2017.</p> <p>The data on outputs and results of these activities provided in the relevant documentation that was reviewed for this evaluation is however fragmentary. As media campaigns require a large amount of resources, the costs allocated appear in principle to be proportionate to the outputs: the two waves of the 2016 ODR video campaign achieved a substantial number of views and so did the Facebook and Twitter campaigns. The related wider effects are however difficult to assess, especially as the launch of the ODR platform is recent.</p>

Source: Own compilation based on fact sheet for CP 2014-20, Actions 8 and 9, interviews results, and cost data. See section 4 for the approach to calculating unit costs.

The table below presents the costs and benefits of the main activities under Objective IV of the Consumer Programme 2014-2020.

Table 131: Costs and benefits of activities under the Consumer Programme 2014-2020 – enforcement

Name of activity	Action	Year	Programme costs (in '000 €, % of total)	Outputs and results	Benefits achieved
Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network	10	2014-2017	1963.3 (2.1% of total Programme costs)	<p>Key outputs of the CPC Network relate to the information flow in the CPC System and are as follows for the 2014-2017 period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information requests made within the CPC Network: 402 - Enforcement requests made within the CPC Network: 660 - Alerts raised within the CPC Network: 215 - Share of enforcement requests handled within 12 months: 24% in 2017 <p>The CPC Network, under the coordination of the Commission, has also undertaken several enforcement actions. Sweeps conducted since 2014 have increased the level of compliance among traders with EU law, and related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer electronics (2014): 437 websites checked - Quality of information available to consumer online before making a purchase (2015): 743 websites checked - Online comparison tools mainly in the travel sector (2016): 352 websites checked - Telecommunication and other digital services (2017) <p>In addition, the CPC Network has concluded two coordinated enforcement actions on in-app purchases in online games in 2014 and on car rentals in 2015.</p> <p>CPC workshops are also held for specific subjects, typically six times per year. Members of these workshops are CPC contact points in Member States, though sometimes Member States delegate specialists to attend.</p>	<p>The CPC Network, sweeps and joint actions are assessed to be largely effective. However, several interviewees commented that the level of cooperation between Member States in the CPC Network needed improvement and the IT tool reportedly has certain technical limitations (see section 6.1.4 on effectiveness). Exchange of information through the new CPC Wiki is considered being very helpful to improve cooperation and develop common actions. According to stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefits of <i>improved enforcement of consumer protection legislation and better cooperation with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States</i> to a slightly better than moderate extent (with average scores of 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 5). Limited staff and financial resources of consumer protection authorities are seen as factors limiting the level of achievements of benefits related to enforcement activities.</p>
	10	2014-2017	318.0 (0.3%)	<p>The number of exchanges of CPC enforcement officials for the period 2014-2017 was 196, with a high of 72 in 2017 compared to 33 in 2016.</p>	<p>The average costs per exchange are about EUR 1 600. Exchanges of officials were generally assessed to be positive by participants. According to stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit of <i>better exchanges of best practices with consumer protection enforcement authorities in other Member States</i> to a moderate extent (3.4 on a scale of 1 to 5). Exchanges are considered by stakeholders to be helpful and</p>

Trainings for enforcement officials (E-Enforcement Academy)	10, 2	2014-2017	999,0 (1.0%)	<p>The following resources/activities were delivered during the first year of the E-Enforcement Academy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 112 blog posts - 4 newsletters - 6 wiki-pages - 3 E-Enforcement tools reports - 6 knowledge sharing webinars - 8 basic/intermediate coaching webinars - 4 advanced trainee webinars - Assistance to basic-level trainees forum - 3 Master class meetings in Brussels - Organisation of 2 CPC e-enforcement group workshops in Brussels - 5 e-learning modules - 1 promotion video and 4 additional online tutorials - Gathering of user feedback <p>Total participation at on-site and virtual events (webinars) in 2017 amounted to 120 for CPC participants and 35 for product safety officials.</p>	<p>provide important experience for participants from countries that sent officials to other Member States.</p> <p>According to stakeholders, the Consumer Programme achieved the benefit of <i>better trained consumer protection enforcement officials</i> (3.6). No inefficiencies were identified, but participation has so far remained rather low considering planned capacity, especially in web-based modules.</p>
	10, 11	2014-2017	338,7 (0.4%)	<p>The Consumer Policy Network Group meets twice per year. As of 2017 it had 31 member authorities representing the 28 Member States, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.</p>	<p>In interviews, enforcement-related networking and events were considered to be highly effective and were seen as a strong prerequisite for common work on the single market, as they provide valuable opportunities for sharing experience and knowledge and for discussing upcoming challenges.</p>

European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)	11	2014-2017	24781.6 (26.0%)	<p>Note: The level of co-financing for ECCs is 50% in most MS and goes up to 65% in some cases.</p>	<p>The indicators laid down in the Consumer Programme are presented below for the 2014-2017 period, along with other indicators related to the performance of the ECCs along the customer journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of contacts from consumers: 399 163- Number of complaints received: 168 158- Number of unique visitors/users to the websites: 21 290 801- Number of information documents downloaded from the websites: 778 361- Number of yearly national press clippings mentioning the Centre: 14 818- Number of awareness raising events/products dedicated to traders: 365- Number of brochures/ information documents distributed: 1 035 147- Number of information requests encoded: 157 034- Average time handling information requests: 4.22 days (in 2017) <p>The overall number of complaints handled has been increasing and has almost doubled since 2007. At the same time, ECCs managed to improve the time it takes to deal with complaints. In terms of the outcome of complaints, in 2015, 51% of the shared cases were resolved amicably. For around one third of the disputes in 2015 and 2016, no solution could be found. Around 16% of the cases that were dealt with and not resolved directly with traders were transferred to ADR bodies.</p>	<p>According to stakeholders, the ECC-Net is effective and the Consumer Programme has achieved the benefits of <i>better advice for consumers in cross-border cases in the EU and better training of ECC staff</i> (3.8 on a scale of 1 to 5). However, a factor that limits the benefits of the network is the still-limited visibility and consumer awareness of the network. The 2017 status review of the ECC-Net found that it had in many ways contributed to a higher level of consumer protection in the internal market, and confirmed through stakeholder interviews that the costs for running the ECC appear to be adequate as well as “the added-value of ECCs in relation to their costs”. However, the status review noted that the level of achievement varied greatly between ECCs.</p>

Source: Own compilation based on fact sheet for CP 2014-20, Actions 10 and 11, interviews results, and cost data. See section 4 for the approach to calculating unit costs.

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