

What information can you receive?

The assistance body will inform you on:

- o the rules applicable to businesses in another EU country,
- o the means of redress available to you in case of dispute with a provider as well as the associations and organisations from which you can obtain practical assistance in the event of disputes with traders from another country.



HAVE YOUR DISPUTES RESOLVED QUICKLY

The Services Directive requires businesses to respond rapidly to complaints from consumers and do their best to settle disputes in a satisfactory manner. In particular, they have to provide you with their contact details, such as a telephone number or an e-mail address to which you can send any complaint or request for information if you are not satisfied with the service provided.

KM-32-09-185-EN-D



TO KNOW MORE:

Visit the Services Directive website and find the contact details of the assistance body of relevance to you:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/index_en.htm

Contact the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net):

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress_cons/index_en.htm

Contact Europe Direct, a service which will help you find answers to your questions about the EU:

http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm

Freephone number throughout the EU:

00 800 67 89 10 11



Publications Office

You will be provided with key information by businesses

To create more transparency and help you choose, businesses in the sectors covered by the Services Directive are required to provide you with specific information before they supply their service (whether they offer the service via a website, door-to-door or on their premises).

For example, they have to inform you with regard to:

- o the price and main features of their service,
- o the general conditions and clauses they intend to apply when providing their service,
- o the competent authorities or professional bodies which are responsible for supervising them in their own country, etc.



GET THE SERVICES YOU NEED WHEREVER YOU ARE



The Services Directive should give consumers: wider choice, better value and easier access to services across the EU

WHY ARE THOSE NEW RULES OF THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU AS A CONSUMER?

As a consumer, services are a key part of your daily life. You are using services when you shop at a supermarket, when you buy products online, when you go to the hairdresser, when you sign a contract with a firm to build or renovate your house, when you book your holidays at a travel agency, when you hire a lawyer, and in countless other situations (1).

Today, offering and buying services in and from other EU countries can still give rise to difficulties for consumers and businesses alike.

Businesses are often deterred or hindered by legal or administrative barriers. As a result, either they decide not to sell services to consumers from other countries or their services become more costly. As a consequence, consumers are not fully seizing the opportunities offered by the EU internal market.

In addition, many consumers are not sufficiently informed about businesses in other countries and can therefore be reluctant to use their services or else run into difficulties when they try to use them.

That is why the EU adopted the Services Directive to ensure that both consumers and businesses reap the full benefits of the internal market by being able to easily offer and buy services.

(1) Don't forget, though, that certain sectors are not covered by the Services Directive, notably financial, healthcare and transport services.



HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT FROM THESE NEW RULES?

USE SERVICES THAT YOU NEED, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE

- **You should suffer no more territorial discrimination**

Today, consumers sometimes face restrictions applied by public authorities or by businesses because they come from or live in another EU country.

For example:

Tourists hiring a car over the Internet in another EU country may be asked to pay higher rates just because they are not resident in the country of hire.

Consumers seeking to buy music or books from a website in another EU country are sometimes prevented from doing so or are redirected to their national web-store.

In addition to discriminatory measures by public authorities, discriminatory practices by businesses based on the nationality or place of residence of consumers are now banned by the Services Directive.



- **You should be able to use services from other countries without obstacles**

You cannot be requested to obtain a specific authorisation or to inform the public authorities in your home country when you want to use services from other EU countries.

If the national authorities in your home country offer a financial contribution linked to the use of certain services, you should be entitled to it whether you receive the services from a business based in your own country or in another EU country.

HAVE ACCESS TO BETTER INFORMATION WHEN YOU RECEIVE SERVICES IN THE EU

- **You can contact the assistance bodies in your home country**

Today many consumers still hesitate to use services from abroad because they do not have and cannot easily obtain information about the rules that businesses from other countries have to comply with.

For example:

When considering hiring an architect based in another EU country, you would probably like to know if the architect has had to prove his or her qualifications, if he or she is under an obligation to take out insurance, if you can have recourse to alternative means of resolving problems, etc.

If you have a question on rules applicable to services in other EU countries, you can ask the assistance body directly in your home country. The assistance body will find the information for you.

How do you find the assistance body?

Details of the assistance body (or bodies) in your country of residence can be found on the Services Directive website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/index_en.htm

