

PRESS RELEASE

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EU Consumer legislation fit for purpose but cosmetic changes are needed

The Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU hosted the seminar „Fit for shopping?“ on future EU Consumer legislation on 25th September. The event was organised together with CEBRE – Czech Business Representation to the EU in Brussels and focused on the follow-up actions of the Fitness check of EU Consumer and Marketing legislation published at the end of May.

Current EU Consumer and Marketing law is largely fit for purpose, but it has to be properly enforced and applied. Still, there is a room for improvement. Digitalization, new business models and increase in online retail trade are among elements that stress the need for targeted legislative changes. For instance, many consumers are uncertain about whether they enter into B2C or C2C contracts on online marketplaces.

In May, the European Commission published its Reports of the Fitness Check on EU Consumer and Marketing Law and Evaluation of Consumer Rights Directive. The exercise pointed out the need for more transparency on online marketplaces, extension of consumer rights to contracts for "free" digital services, individual remedies in the area of unfair commercial practices, more effective and deterrent penalties and simplification of some rules on pre-contractual information and withdrawal right.



“The REFIT exercise is probably the biggest evaluation of Consumer legislation since the Green Paper on the Review of Consumer Acquis back in 2007. Its goal is to find out whether the current legislation is still appropriate, whether there are gaps, and whether the rules are known well enough and are enforced properly”, says Jaroslav Zajíček, Czech Permanent Representative to COREPER I.

The speakers from different institutions and stakeholder groups diverge in opinions on the remedies and sanctions, however they agree on the need for better information of consumers. They also agree that awareness and education among consumers but also businesses is crucial in order to increase the trust in EU Consumer legislation. Helpful tools are soft legal instruments. The European Commission is preparing a guidance on unfair contract terms directive as well as self-regulatory project on better presentation of consumer information.



Targeted legislative amendments of Consumer legislation will be tabled by the Commission at the beginning of the next year on the basis of the inception impact assessment and public consultation which runs till 8th October.

More information can be found on brussels@cebre.cz.