



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Buying consumer credit on-line: following EU action, over 75% of websites checked now give satisfactory information to clients

Before consumers enter into a loan, they need to understand its real cost and take the time to reflect, especially on the monthly repayment. The Consumer Credit Directive lists the information that needs to be given in advertising of credits and as part of credit offers and provides for a 14 days reflexion time, during which the consumer may back out of the agreement without charge. Following a crackdown on websites offering consumer credits, more than 3 out of 4 sites checked a year ago now comply with EU law (compared with only 30% in September 2011). Further improvements should come as national authorities pursue their actions on outstanding cases. In this EU co-ordinated "Sweep" investigation, which took place in September 2011, national enforcement authorities checked 565 websites across the 27 Member States, Norway and Iceland. Of the 70% of sites flagged for further investigation at the time, 10% were finally deemed compliant and 35% were corrected after action by national authorities. The remaining websites either no longer exist or are subject to on-going administrative or court proceedings.

Background:

A "sweep" is an exercise to enforce EU law. It is led by the EU and carried out by national enforcement authorities who conduct simultaneous, coordinated checks for breaches in consumer law in a particular sector. The national enforcement authorities then contact operators about suspected irregularities and ask them to take corrective action. The **Consumer Credit sweep** took place in September 2011.

The market under scrutiny is used by consumers every day. In 2010, financial institutions in the eurozone had more than €600 billion outstanding consumer credit.¹

Results

Of the **565 websites** checked in 2011, 30% passed the test for compliance with the relevant EU consumer rules and 70% of these sites (393) were flagged for further investigation. A year

¹ ECB, Euro Area Statistics, www.ecb.int/stats/money/aggregates/bsheets/html/index.en.html

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later, 57 additional sites were finally considered to be compliant, 18 no longer exist, 194 were corrected following action by national authorities and 124 are still the subject of administrative or legal proceedings in the countries concerned.

The main problems detected in this sweep were:

- **Missing information in consumer credit advertising** (e.g. on the annual percentage rate of charge (APR): 258 sites were failing to display all the standard information required by the Consumer Credit Directive.
- **Omission of key information on the offer and/or misleading presentation of the costs** (e.g. type of interest rate (fixed, variable or both), duration of the credit): 244 sites failed to give clear information about all the different elements of the total cost.²

For more information:

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweeps_en.htm

[MEMO/12/2](#)

² See IP/12/6 on the first phase of the Sweep 2011

Annex

Number of websites still open on 15 November 2012, checked, corrected and now compliant:

Country	Websites checked	Websites corrected	Websites compliant as of 15 November 2012	% of websites compliant / websites checked
Austria	10	1	7	70%
Belgium	91	44	62	68%
Bulgaria	6	0	6	100%
Cyprus	10	7	10	100%
Czech Republic	10	8	10	100%
Denmark	10	2	4	40%
Estonia	15	8	12	80%
Finland	5	2	3	60%
France	50	11	50	100%
Germany	26	9	20	73%
Greece	4	0	4	100%
Hungary	15	2	8	53%
Iceland	10	0	10	100%
Ireland	2	0	2	100%
Italy	15	11	15	100%
Latvia	9	7	9	100%
Lithuania	5	2	5	100%
Luxembourg	20	5	14	70%
Malta	5	1	5	100%
Netherlands	40	25	34	85%
Norway	27	0	13	48%
Poland	9	4	9	100%
Portugal	39	8	39	100%
Romania	18	6	18	100%
Slovakia	10	8	8	80%
Spain	26	15	15	58%
Sweden	15	6	11	73%
United Kingdom	45	2	20	44%
Total*	547**	194	423	77%

*: Slovenia participated to the sweep but did not find any websites offering online consumer credit.

** : From the 565 websites checked in 2011, 547 remain in operation and 18 do not exist anymore.