



Recommendation 947 (1982)¹

Protection of consumers' economic and social interests

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the report on the protection of consumers' economic and social interests, presented by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ([Doc. 4920](#)) ;
2. Having regard to its [Recommendation 705 \(1973\)](#) on consumer protection, and its [Resolution 543 \(1973\)](#) on a Consumer Protection Charter ;
3. Considering that the intergovernmental activities carried out during the past ten years have helped to implement the proposals in the Consumer Protection Charter ;
4. Noting that, despite the progress made, notably through the adoption of consumer protection legislation and regulations in most member states, there are still deficiencies, particularly in the counselling of consumers on their rights and in the enforcement of regulations ;
5. Believing that the present economic situation increases more than ever the need for effective protection of the economic and social interests of consumers, in particular of those belonging to the most vulnerable social groups, who should, as their purchasing power stagnates or declines, be given full value for money as regards both goods and services ;
6. Observing that the level of development of public and private consumer protection institutions differs widely from one country to another, and that there is a sharp divergence in this respect between the North European and the South European countries ;
7. Considering that all consumers should be able to obtain objective information on conditions governing the purchase of goods and the use of private or public services, on the nature and enforceability of rights conferred on them by legislation and regulations, and on the remedies available to them in the event of a dispute ;
8. Believing that consumer organisations should be encouraged and financially supported in their work of informing, educating, advising and representing consumers ;
9. Believing that the work already completed or in progress in the various international organisations is adequately harmonised thanks to the participation by observers from these organisations, particularly OECD and the European Communities, in Council of Europe meetings and to the exchange of information between secretariats ;
10. Considering that the Council of Europe has a specific part to play in the devising of means to further the protection of consumers' economic and social interests by virtue of its avowed mission to defend and protect the individual and its special competence in the matter of legal cooperation ;
11. Considering that public authorities at national, regional and local level have a duty to carry out a policy calculated to reconcile the interests of the various economic partners, while affording consumers fair treatment,

1. See [Doc. 4920](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 2 July 1982.



12. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
- a. instruct the ad hoc Committee of Experts on the Protection of Consumers in the Socio-economic Field to propose ways and means of informing consumers and promoting their interests in the following spheres :
 - 1. consumer credit ;
 - 2. building loans ;
 - 3. insurance ;
 - 4. public services ;
 - 5. negotiations between consumer associations and trade bodies ;
 - 6. vulnerable social groups ;
 - 7. unlawful commercial understandings ;
 - 8. access for consumer organisations to television ;
 - 9. redress for damage suffered ;
 - 10. mail-order selling, correspondence teaching, door-to-door selling ;
 - 11. product tests ;
 - b. arrange for a thoroughly prepared meeting of representatives of member countries' consumer organisations, both private and public or semi-public, for the purpose of comparing their strategies and seeking ways of making it easier for such organisations to reach all consumers, particularly those hardest hit by the economic crisis ;
 - c. convene, if appropriate, ministers responsible for consumer protection, so that they may express their views on whatever proposals are made at the above-mentioned meeting and work out measures to ensure the necessary balance between the interests of the various economic partners : producers, distributors, suppliers of public or private services, consumers and users.