

Learned from Ofcom

How the Toolkit has been adapted at the EU level, and the scope for further use

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Overall

- Treaty : integration of a high level of consumer protection
- Decision-making in the European Commission: collegiality
- Need for upstream co-ordination – Group of Commissioners in charge of Competitiveness : VP. Verheugen, Mr Potočnik, Ms Vassiliou, Ms Kroes, Mr McCreevy, Mr Mandelson, Ms Kuneva.

Integration: context

- EC Treaty – article 153
- Single Market Review launched in May 2006, delivered on 20 November 2007
- 2007-2013 Consumer Policy Strategy
- Single Commissioner in charge of consumer matters

➤ *Positive momentum*

Previous experiments

- Anti-dumping Community Interest Test
- Trade Sustainability Assessments
- Competition Consumer Liaison Officer
- SANCO prioritisation scheme (retail financial services, energy and telecoms)

Needs

- Political Commitment
- Data strategy/research
- Stakeholder input: economic operators **but also** consumer NGOs
- Involvement of lead policy players

2008: from planning to mapping

- Articulated decision-making process with priorities
 - SANCO Consumer Interests « fiche »
 - The Consumer's Interest Checklist
- Consumer market scoreboard
- Upgrade the ECCG - Improve consumer NGO's expertise

Consumers' Interests ?

- **Both market and non-market based**
(consumers can choose the best available option to meet his/her needs - safety, social, territorial cohesion,...)
- **Qualitative and quantitative indicators**
(price, consumer satisfaction, complaints, switching rates, disconnection rates, safety risks, ...)
- **Various tools**
(market screening/analysis, legislation, information, enforcement, ...)

The Ofcom Consumer Interests Toolkit

- A unique tool - no comparable consumer integration mechanism in other Member States
- A precedent on which to build at EU level
- A process that colleagues in SANCO and in another DG (MARKT) have accepted to test

SANCO's consumer interest checklist

- A consumer interest checklist adapted from the Ofcom model
- Move away from audit approach towards assessment and evaluation (mapping)
- Towards an easy-to-use checklist identifying main points for relevant services to ensure consumers' interests are taken into account – no additional red tape
- To be tested on well-defined and non contentious policy areas

Plans in the Internal Market DG

- DG Internal Market (MARKT) accepted to test the simplified version of the toolkit (consumers interest checklist)
- Area: copyright, for its complexity and involvement of interest groups
- MARKT is seeking approval from their top level hierarchy to go ahead with the testing on the basis of a paper assessing consumers' interest in the copyright area.
- Further work: wider exercise involving other interested DGs : Information Society (INFSO) and Education and Culture (EAC)

Plans in the Public Health Policy area

- Public Health Directorate to test the checklist
- **Area:** initiatives related to patient information (pharmaceuticals)
- Further work: consider the method could be expanded to other areas, such as patients safety



**Further information
on
the Consumer Affairs website:**

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

Thank you !