

Sample Stories (each story to a different group)

Sample story 1

Mirek ordered a laptop, which appeared to work well. However, more than a year after buying it, he discovered that it had less memory than it was supposed to have.

Although this problem had not been obvious to him immediately, and the laptop was still functional, it nonetheless did not conform to what was advertised or agreed when he bought it. Mirek was therefore able to obtain a partial refund from the shop.

Sample story 2

Carla bought a hairdryer with a 6-month seller's guarantee.

When it broke after 8 months, she took it back to the shop. The shop assistant told her that her guarantee had run out, and that she was not entitled to a refund.

Carla rightly pointed out that she had a full 2-year guarantee free of charge under EU consumer protection law, and that the seller's 6-month guarantee only offered additional services. The shop agreed to replace the hairdryer.

Sample story 3

Ewa from Poland bought some books from an online trader. However, her credit card was charged more than the final amount displayed at the point of sale on the trader's website. Ewa realised the company had not included delivery costs, and had only added this on after she had completed her purchase.

As EU rules oblige traders to display correct and complete pricing information before a customer makes a purchase online, Ewa reported this matter to both the company and the Polish authorities. After intervention by the authorities, she was refunded the difference.

Sample story 4

Bart, from the Netherlands, visited his friend in Germany and went to a swimming pool. He was charged a higher price than local residents, and wondered if this is unlawful price discrimination.

In this case, the price difference is justified. The swimming pool is run by the local authority and financed by local taxes, so local residents have already contributed to the running of the pool and therefore enjoy a lower entry price.

Sample story 5

Hilda from Denmark wanted to book a hire car in Spain for her summer holidays. She chose the car she wanted to book on the website of a Spanish car rental company.

However, when she entered her address to finalise the reservation, she saw that the total price for her car rental increased by EUR 140.

Hilda contacted her local European Consumer Centre to complain about this price discrimination. They requested that the car rental company bring their website in line with EU rules.

Sample story 6

Lucie, from Belgium, orders a book from a large online retailer in the UK. When she pays for the order and enters her address, she notices that the price has suddenly gone up. She checks the reason and discovers that the company has charged her Belgian VAT at 6% instead of UK VAT at 0%.

In Belgium, the threshold for the country of destination rule to apply is EUR 35 000. This means that a company who sold more than EUR 35 000 in goods to Belgium during the previous financial year must apply the VAT rate of the country of destination. The company Lucie has ordered from delivers frequently to Belgium and therefore has to charge her Belgian VAT, even though her book is being shipped from the UK.

Sample story 7

In mid-November Andrej from Slovakia ordered a case of wine online from Italy for his family's Christmas celebrations. Christmas came and went, without the wine being delivered.

As the product was not delivered within 30 days, even though he had reminded the trader and given him some additional time to deliver, Andrej is entitled to a refund from the trader.