

PRESS RELEASE

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NGOs joint campaign on Collective Redress

Concrete action on Collective Redress needed to effectively protect EU consumers' and citizens' rights

AGE has joined forces with other NGOs in a campaign led by the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) addressing a joint open letter to the European Commission urging them to move forward the discussions on Collective Redress which have been lasting for a long time without any concrete outcomes.

“Older people increasingly buy consumer's products and services, including long-term care and health services, provided by cross-border providers as a result of the implementation of the Services directive. However, national law provisions fail to address today's single market reality and this results in discrepancies in access to justice. We therefore consider that a legal instrument that is easily accessible and enables individuals to collectively submit claims against a defendant for compensation of their individual damages is essential to guarantee older people's rights not only as consumers but also as citizens residing in the EU”, says Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary-General of AGE Platform Europe.

In a joint letter sent to Mrs Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission, the coalition of 12 NGOs underlines that the right to compensation, the right to access to justice and the right to effective remedy should not remain theoretical. In practice, many citizens are unable to exercise these rights due to the inadequacy of existing means of redress in mass claim situations and the cross-border dimension is lacking. The civil society strongly believes that the possible abuses should no longer be used as an excuse which jeopardizes the effective enforcement of citizens' rights as the shortcomings have long been identified and solutions have been proposed. Up to now, the lack of action from the Commission has allowed wrong-doers to retain illegal profits and has failed to create incentives for fair competition in the Internal Market.

AGE replied to a recent EU consultation on Collective Redress in its capacity as member of the Financial Services Users Group (FSUG) but also as civil society organisation representing older people. In its contribution, AGE stresses the added value of Collective Redress mechanisms for the 50+ generation and presents some essential recommendations for making this tool truly effective and protective of older citizens.

The joint letter is available at: http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/Joint_letter_on_CollectiveRedress_May2011.pdf

For more information on the added value of a collective redress and to read the responses drafted by AGE and FSUG please follow this link:

<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/social-protection/consumers-rights?start=2>.

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