

LATVIA

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1. Consumer policy institutions

1.1. MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSUMER POLICY

The Ministry of Economics is the main institution in Latvia responsible for consumer policy. The Internal Market Department with its Competition, Trade and Consumer Rights Division is responsible for the elaboration of consumer policy and consumer legislation. There are not other ministries in Latvia directly responsible for consumer policy.

Ministry of Economics of Republic of Latvia

Address: Brivibas str. 55, LV-1519 Riga

Secretariat and archive department Tel: +371 67 013 190

Fax: +371 67 280 882

Website: www.em.gov.lv

1.2. PUBLIC AGENCIES

Directives	Public Enforcement Authorities
Directive 84/450/EEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer Rights Protection Centre Address: K. Valdemāra iela 157, LV-1013 Riga Tel: +371 67 212 688 Fax: +371 67 388 634 E-mail: ptac@ptac.gov.lv Website: http://www.ptac.gov.lv/• Competition Council of the Republic of Latvia Address: Brīvības iela 55, LV-1519, Riga Tel: +371 67 282 865 Fax: +371 67 242 141 E-mail: council@kp.gov.lv Website: www.kp.gov.lv• National Council for Electronic Media Address: 1/3 Smilshu Street, LV-1939 Riga Tel: +371 67 221 848 Fax: +371 67 220 448 E-mail: nrtp@nrtp.lv Website: http://www.nrtp.lv
Directive 85/577/EEC Directive 87/102/EEC Directive 90/314/EEC Directive 93/13/EEC Directive 94/47/EC Directive 97/7/EC Directive 97/55/EC Directive 98/6/EC Directive 1999/44/EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer Rights Protection Centre Address: K. Valdemāra street 157, LV-1013 Riga Tel: +371 67 212 688 Fax: +371 67 388 634 E-mail: ptac@ptac.gov.lv Website: http://www.ptac.gov.lv/

Directives	Public Enforcement Authorities
Directive 2002/65/EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="564 264 1241 479"> <p>• Consumer Rights Protection Centre Address: K. Valdemāra street 157, LV-1013 Riga Tel: +371 67 212 688 Fax: +371 67 388 634 E-mail: ptac@ptac.gov.lv Website: http://www.ptac.gov.lv/</p> <li data-bbox="564 524 1189 734"> <p>• Financial and Capital Market Commission Address: Kungu iela 1, LV-1050 Riga Tel: +371 67 774 800 Fax: +371 67 225 755 E-mail: fktk@fktk.lv Website: http://www.fktk.lv/</p>

In Latvia there are no other publicly funded organisations neither research organisations, nor other institutions involved in consumer policy.

1.3. NATIONAL CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS

There is no official list of consumer organisations at the national level. The organisations included in the Latvian Consumer Protection Association have around 700 members.

The following organisations are *de facto* considered as consumer organisations:

- Club for Protection of Consumer Interests**
Address: 32 Valnu Street, office 313, LV-1050 Riga
Tel/Fax: +371 67 221 267
Website: www.consumer-guide.lv/english/club.htm

This is the first and longest established consumer non-governmental organisation in Latvia. It was founded in 1990.

- Latvian Consumer's Protection Association**
Address: 55 Brivibas Street, 2nd entrance, LV-1010 Riga
Tel/Fax: +371 67 296 884
E-mail: piaa@delfi.lv
Website: www.consumer-guide.lv/english/club.htm

Address: 32 Valnu Street, office 313, LV-1050 Riga
Tel/fax: +371 67 221 267
Website: <http://www.consumer-guide.lv>

It was established uniting Consumers Clubs and Societies from all over Latvia. It was founded in 1999.

After the foundation of the national Association in 1999, new regional branches were established so that the Latvian Consumer's Protection Association consists of 10 regional

organisations - eight consumer protection clubs and two landlords' and tenants' associations.

- **Consumers Support centre**

Address: 27 Tirgonu Street, LV-2015 Jurmala

Tel: +371 67 212 861; +371 67 761 366

Fax: +371 67 212 844

It was established as Consumer Protection Club "PIKS" on 24 February 1995 with support from the State Anti-Monopoly Committee. "PIKS" is the second oldest non-governmental consumer protection organisation in Latvia.

PIKS is engaged in advocacy work for consumer interests in Jurmala and Riga City.

- **Jelgava Consumers Protection Club**

Address: 15 Lielā Street, LV-3001 Jelgava

Tel/fax: +371 63 02 190

E-mail: piaa@delfi.lv

The organisation was established with the main purpose of providing inhabitants of Jelgava and its District with information about consumer rights.

Members of the organisation are professionals of different spheres such as manufacturers, market specialists, pharmacists, specialists of food industry, lecturers of Latvian University of Agriculture.

- **Daugavpils Consumers Rights Protection Club**

Address: 5a Saules Street, LV-5400 Daugavpils

Tel/fax: +371 65 421 738

The organisation concentrates on the investigation of public utilities/energy supply market and provides consumers with information about energy efficiency, comparative prices of goods and services etc.

The Club regularly advises consumer and deals with consumers' complaints and proposals.

- **Cesis District Consumers Protection Club "Aizstavis"**

Address: 15 Raunas Street, LV-4100 Cesis

Tel/fax: +371 64 121 579

The main activities of "Aizstavis" are:

- gathering, analysing and distributing information on consumer issues;
- assisting consumers in resolving their complaints and disputes;
- organising campaigns and seminars.

- **Consumer Rights Protection Organisation of Ogre**

Address: 11 Lapu Street, office 48, LV-5001 Ogre

Tel/fax: +371 65 021 158

The main objective of the organisation is to work for the protection of consumer interests and for the development of the living conditions and standards of Ogre inhabitants. The Ogre organisation works on promoting the interests of Ogre society in the local municipality.

- **Liepaja Tenants' Association**

Address: 5 Peldu Street, 402, LV-3401 Liepaja

Tel/fax: +371 62 915 5693

E-mail: consumer-guide.lv

The objective of the organisation is to work on behalf of society in the sphere of improvement of housing policy in Latvia.

The task of the organisation is to be the mediator between landlords and tenants, as well as between consumers and service providers.

The organisation works on uniting tenants for their rights' protection and providing society with information about their rights using services and purchasing of goods.

- **Gulbene Consumer Interests Protection Club**

Address: 22 Brivibas Street, LV-4401 Gulbene

Tel/fax: +371 64 472 221

Its main activities are – consumer complaints handling, organisation of public activities, consumer education and preparation of information material.

1.4. NATIONAL COUNCILS/ASSEMBLIES OF CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

A Consumer consultative council has been established under the Consumer Rights Protection Centre.

1.5. CONSUMER MEDIA

There are no consumer media in Latvia.

1.6. REDRESS BODIES: COURTS AND ADRS

The **Consumer Rights Protection Centre** (mentioned above) is the one which deals with consumer dispute settlement.

- **Ombudsman of Commercial banks**

Address: 9/11 Perses street, LV-1011 Riga

Tel: +371 67 284 562 ; + 371 67 284 561

Fax: +371 67 828 170

The Ombudsman of Commercial banks has been established under the Latvian Commercial banks association. It solves complaints of clients of commercial banks concerning clearing or payments by electronic means. The decision of the Ombudsman is not binding, but is only a recommendation.

- **Ombudsman of the Association of Latvian Insurers**

Address: 149-401 K.Valdemara street, LV-1013 Riga

Tel: +371 67 360 898

Fax: +371 67 360 838

E-mail: Office@laa.lv

Another Ombudsman in Latvia is the Ombudsman of the Association of Latvian Insurers who is designed for solving the complaints of natural persons. The Ombudsman of the Association of Latvian Insurers solves disputes concerning life insurance, accidents insurance and help insurance. The decision of the Ombudsman of Association of Latvian Insurers is not binding either, but only a recommendation.

1.7. EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE

Address: Kr. Valdemara Street 157-228, LV-1013 Riga

Tel: +371 67 388 625

Fax: +371 67 388 625

E-mail: info@ecclatvia.lv

Website: www.ecclatvia.lv

1.8. SELF OR CO-REGULATION

There are 2 self regulation organisations in Latvia:

- **Latvian Advertising Association**

Address: 23a Elizabetes street, LV-1010 Riga

Tel: +371 67 325 530

Fax: +371 67 325 531

E-mail: lra@lra.lv

- **Association of Commercial Banks**

Address: 9/11 Perses street, LV-1011 Riga

Tel: +371 67 284 528

Fax: +371 67 828 170

E-mail: office@bankasoc.lv

2. Consumer policies

2.1. CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The main consumer legislation in Latvia is:

- Consumer Rights Protection Law;
- Unfair Commercial Practice Prohibition Law;
- Advertising Law;
- Product and Services Safety Law;
- Law on the liability of product and services deficiencies.

The penalties for non-compliance with consumer legislation are specified in the Code of Administrative Penalties. The amount of penalties varies up to 500 Lats for natural persons and up to 10000 Lats for legal persons.

Some translations of the normative acts (mainly without newest amendments) can be found at www.ttc.lv.

2.2. CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS

The legal base of the non-governmental organisations is stated in the Consumer Rights Protection Law. Section 22 defines consumer organisations as public organisations (clubs, societies or associations) voluntarily regrouping consumers, which purpose is to protect consumer rights. These organisations act in accordance with regulatory enactments and articles of associations of the relevant public organisation for consumer rights protection.

There is no official list of consumer organisations at national level.

Consumer organisations are not funded by state.

Consumer organisations have no specific rights to prosecute infringements before the courts, because the courts in Latvia do not take decisions concerning prohibition of infringements.

2.3. ENFORCEMENT/REDRESS

The Consumer Rights Protection Centre has the right to take binding decisions concerning consumer complaints, also for individual complaints. Its main function is enforcement of consumer protection legislation, including protection of the collective interests of consumers.

2.4. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The Consumer Rights Protection Centre is the main institution dealing with consumer information - by preparing information materials on web pages and printed material. The Consumer Rights Protection Centre has established hot-line for consumers, where they can get information and consultation on their rights in specific cases. The Consumer Rights Protection Centre also informs consumers through the media.

There are not any specific policies concerning consumer education, however, consumer education is included in the curriculum of different subjects.

2.5. INFORMATION GATHERING/RESEARCH

In the framework of PHARE 2002 programme, a project "Market Surveillance System in the Non-food area" and in the framework of Transition Facility 2006, a project "Strengthening of market surveillance system" have been carried out. The main outcomes were strengthened administrative capacity of market surveillance institutions in the field of consumer rights protection, product safety and market surveillance.

Consumer Rights Protection Centre has carried out several social researches in 2005-2007 about consumer awareness level of their rights as well as traders knowledge regarding consumer rights. There have not been any researches or studies carried out recently.