



Survey of Consumers' Attitudes Towards Cross-border Trade and Consumer-related Issues 2025

Executive Summary

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Survey of Consumers' Attitudes Towards **CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND CONSUMER-RELATED ISSUES 2025**

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FOREWORD

The Consumer Conditions Survey assesses consumers' attitudes, behaviours and experiences with respect to domestic and cross-border trade as well as other, related themes. Key topics include consumer confidence and knowledge; online purchasing; product safety; problems and complaints; and unfair and illicit commercial practices.

The survey was conducted by telephone with representative samples of the general public aged 18 and older in each of the **27 European Union Member States (EU27)**, as well as Iceland and Norway. The sample size is 1,000 per country except in Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus and Iceland where the sample size is 500. Fieldwork took place between 4 November and 30 November 2024.

Based on findings from the survey, this executive summary explores the evolution of EU consumer experiences from prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2018, during the pandemic in 2020 to the current situation measured at the end of 2024. It paints the picture of trends observed during this period. Furthermore, it focusses on how consumer experiences differ across socio-demographic profiles.

The full details of the survey can be found in the accompanying slide decks and country factsheets.

SUMMARY

THE FACTS ABOUT CONSUMERS IN THE EU

CONSUMERS CONFIDENCE IN ORGANISATIONS HAS RETURNED TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

6 p.p

drop in consumer confidence that retailers/service providers/public authorities respect/protect consumer rights since 2022

68%

think most non-food products are safe

46%

agree it is easy to settle disputes through an out-of-court body

After reaching a peak during the COVID-19 pandemic, confidence in organisations to either respect or protect consumer rights has returned to the pre-pandemic levels of 2018.

Confidence in retailers and service providers to respect their consumer rights is the highest, currently at 70%.

CONSISTENT LEVEL OF PROBLEMS WITH GOODS/SERVICES SINCE 2022

1 in 4

experienced a problem with goods/services in the last 12 months

17%

experienced a problem and took action to solve it

6%

experienced a problem but took no action

The majority of consumers have not experienced any problems with goods or services they have purchased in the previous 12 months. This proportion has remained about the same since 2022. Nonetheless, compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2018, there is a 4 p.p. increase.

Compared to 2022, the proportion of consumers who took action to solve a problem remained stable at 17%, but there is a small decrease in the share of those who experienced a problem but did not take action (- 2 p.p.).

PROPORTIONS WHO EXPERIENCED UNFAIR COMMERCIAL PRACTICES IS LARGELY STABLE

45%

felt pressured by persistent sales calls/messages urging them to buy something or sign a contract during the past 12 months

38%

came across advertisements stating that a product was only available for a limited period of time, but they later realised that it was not the case

Pressure selling in the form of persistent sales calls/messages remains the most prevalent unfair commercial practice.

There is stability when it comes to experiencing unfair practices when making purchases from domestic retailers. However, unfair practices from non-domestic traders have slightly increased since 2018 and 2022, particularly regarding advertisements falsely claiming limited product availability.

1. CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

1.1. CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN ORGANISATIONS

After reaching a peak during the COVID-19 pandemic, **confidence in organisations to either respect or protect consumer rights has returned to the pre-pandemic levels of 2018.**

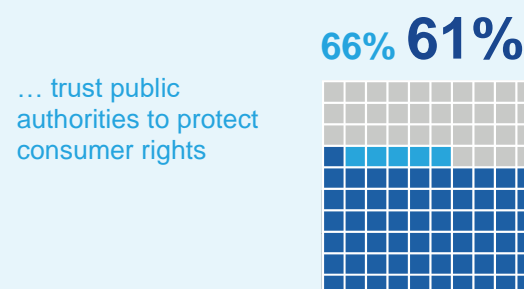
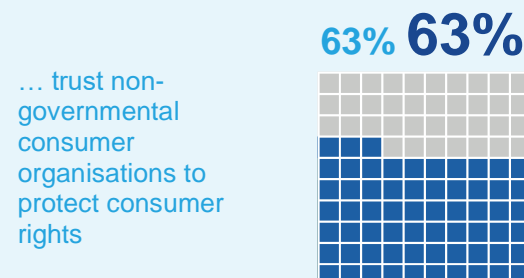
- Amongst the organisations consumers were asked about, **confidence in retailers and service providers** to respect their consumer rights is the highest, currently at 70%. This confidence peaked in 2022 at 76% but is now 6 percentage points (p.p.) lower than in 2022.
- The majority of consumers has **confidence in non-governmental consumer organisations** to protect their consumer rights (63%, no change since 2022).
- Six in ten consumers (61%) have **confidence in public authorities** to protect their consumer rights. This is the lowest level of confidence amongst the three organisations consumers were asked about. Moreover, the level of confidence in public authorities has decreased by 6 p.p. since 2022.

A regression analysis shows that the level of confidence in organisations to respect or protect consumer rights is not the same amongst all consumers.

Confidence is highest amongst the youngest consumers (18-34) compared to those aged 65 and older. Consumers who have made an online purchase in the 12 months prior to the survey are also more confident in these organisations.

On the other hand, those who find it very difficult to manage financially have **lower levels of confidence** in all three types of organisations to respect/protect their consumer rights compared to those who find it fairly/very easy.

% of consumers who...



% 2022 % 2024

1.2. CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN PRODUCT SAFETY

Confidence in product safety covers the proportion stating that either all consumer products are safe or only a small number are unsafe. **Two thirds (68%) think most non-food products are safe.** This includes a **sixth of consumers (17%) who are fully confident in the safety of consumer products** (i.e., non-food products) given that they agree that essentially all consumer products are safe. In addition, **half (51%) of consumers believe that only a small number of these products are unsafe.** At the other end of the spectrum, **a quarter (24%) think a significant number of consumer products are unsafe.** A very small proportion (4%) state that it depends on the product.

Confidence in product safety has fluctuated since 2018 (pre-pandemic). It increased by 5 p.p. from 2018 to 2020 and remained about the same from 2020 to 2022 (-1 p.p.). **Confidence in product safety is currently at 68%, this is 4 p.p. below the 2022 level and 1 p.p. above the pre-pandemic level of 2018.** Moreover, the proportion agreeing that a significant number of consumer products are unsafe has increased by 4 p.p. in comparison to 2022.

Confidence in product safety is lowest amongst consumers who find it very difficult to manage financially: 58% in this group believe either essentially all non-food products are safe, or a small number are unsafe. Confidence in product safety is above 70% amongst those who find it easy to manage financially. This pattern is also observed for those who have not purchased online in the last 12 months (63% compared to 70% of those who have purchased online).

1.3. CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS

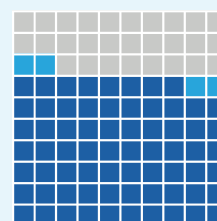
Consumer opinion on the reliability of environmental claims about goods or services is almost evenly split: 50% of consumers either agree or strongly agree that most such claims are reliable, 47% either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Confidence in environmental claims increased by 7 p.p. during the pandemic. Since then, confidence has declined, by 5 p.p. between 2020 and 2022 and by 6 p.p. between 2022 and 2024 (the current wave). Confidence in environmental claims is now 4 p.p. lower than before the pandemic in 2018.

% of consumers who...

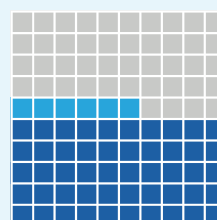
... think most non-food products are safe

72% 68%



... agree that most environmental claims about goods or services are reliable

56% 50%



% 2022 % 2024

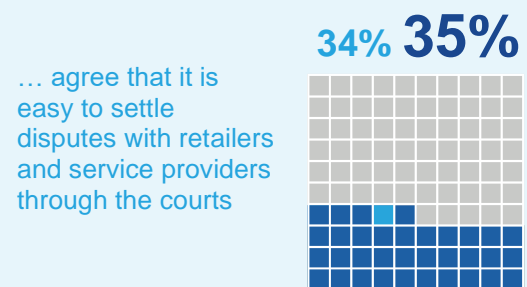
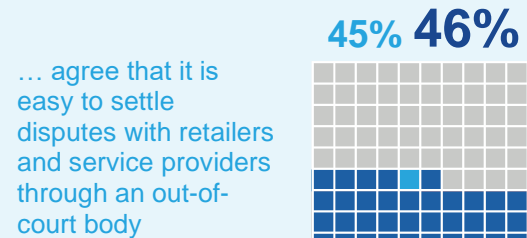
The proportion who trust environmental claims is highest amongst the youngest consumers. The majority of those aged 18-34 (55%) trust environmental claims, while this share is under 50% for those aged 35 and older. The same is true for those who find it very easy or fairly easy to manage financially (52% and 53% respectively compared to 43% of those who find it very difficult to manage financially).

1.4. CONFIDENCE IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

There is a persistent perception across all waves of the survey that it is easier to settle a dispute through an out-of-court body when compared to doing so through the courts. In the latest wave, **almost half (46%) agree that it is easy to settle disputes with retailers and service providers through an out-of-court body.** Whilst under four in ten (35%) believe it is easy to do so through the courts.

The youngest age group (18-34) is more likely to agree with the ease of settling disputes in court (40%) compared to all other age groups; the 55-64 age group is the least likely to perceive this as easy (31% agree). When it comes to settling disputes through an out-of-court body, those who find it very difficult or fairly difficult to manage financially are less likely to agree this is easy (40%-42% compared to 48% of those who find it fairly or very easy to manage financially).

% of consumers who...



% 2022 % 2024

2. CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

Since 2020, consumers have been questioned about four specific consumer rights. These cover:

- the right to return goods bought at distance **within a cooling off period**,
- the fact a contract cannot include a clause to raise the price significantly without offering the **possibility to cancel**,
- the right to a free repair or replacement should a new product **break down within a certain period from delivery**, and
- the right **not to pay for or return unsolicited products**.

Knowledge of consumer rights



- **29% High** (4 or 3 questions correctly answered)
- **36% Medium** (2 questions correctly answered)
- **35% Low** (1 or none correctly answered)

Based on aggregated results from four separate knowledge-testing questions

- the cooling-off period for distance purchases
- faulty product guarantee
- unsolicited products
- one-sided changes to contracts

Based on being able to correctly identify the right answer to each question about these individual rights, consumers are categorised according to their overall level of knowledge of their consumer rights:

- **high** – people correctly identify 3 or 4 of their consumer rights,
- **medium** – people are aware of 2,
- **low** – people answer none or only 1 question correctly.

There has been almost no change since 2022 in the proportions demonstrating low, medium or high knowledge of their rights. It remains the case that similar shares have either a low (35%, -2 p.p. change since 2022) or medium (36%, +1 p.p.) level of knowledge about their consumer rights, whilst just three in ten (29% +1 p.p.) are considered to have a high level of knowledge.

Furthermore, there are very few differences between consumers from a socio-demographic viewpoint. Men (32% compared to 26% of women) as well as those who have made an online purchase in the past 12 months are more likely to have a high level of knowledge about their consumer rights (30% compared to 26% of those who have not made online purchases).

Regression analyses also looked at whether (controlling for other socio-demographic characteristics of age, education, urbanisation, financial status and having made an online purchase) there is a relationship between consumer knowledge and

- Consumer confidence in organisations to respect/protect consumer rights,
- Experienced a problem with a consumer good or service in the previous 12 months as well as whether consumers took action once they experienced a problem,
- Consideration given to the environmental impact of consumer goods/services bought in the previous two weeks.

The analysis reveals that consumers with a high level of knowledge are somewhat more likely to trust non-governmental organisations to protect consumer rights compared to those with less knowledge. Nearly two thirds (65%) of highly knowledgeable consumers trust non-governmental organisation; this is in comparison to six in ten (60%) of consumers with a low level of knowledge. No significant relationship exists between consumer knowledge and trust in public authorities to protect consumer rights or trust in retailers and service providers to respect consumer rights.

Consumers with a high level of knowledge are also more likely to have experienced a problem with a consumer good or service in

the 12 months prior to the survey (26% compared to 22% of those with a lower knowledge level. They are also more likely to have taken action to resolve the problem (19% vs 15% respectively). This suggests that higher knowledge empowers consumers to be more proactive in addressing problems they encounter, or alternatively, that those who have experienced a problem become more knowledgeable about their consumer rights as a result.

No significant relationship is found between consumer knowledge and being environmentally conscious in purchase behaviour (controlling for other socio-demographic characteristics of age, education, urbanisation, financial status and having made an online purchase).

3. EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS AS A CONSUMER

The majority of consumers, three quarters (76%), did not experience a problem with a good or service they have purchased in the previous 12 months for which they felt there was legitimate reason to complain. Nevertheless, a quarter (24%) experienced a problem; this proportion has remained relatively stable since 2022 (-1 p.p.). However, compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2018, there is a 4 p.p. increase in the proportion of consumers who experienced a problem.

Out of the 24% (experienced a problem), 17% took action to solve the problem, while 6% experienced a problem but took no action to solve it. Compared to 2022, the proportion of consumers who took action to solve a problem remained stable at 17%, but there is a small decrease in the share of those who experienced a problem but did not take action (- 2 p.p.).

A regression analysis looked at which demographics amongst age, education, financial status, urbanisation, having purchased online and consumer knowledge are related to having experienced a problem.

% of consumers who experienced a problem with a good/service in the previous 12 months



Online shoppers are much more likely to experience problems than non-online shoppers: **26% of those who have made an online purchase in the past 12 months have experienced a problem compared to 16% of those who have not purchased online during this period.** The two youngest age cohorts (18-34 year olds and 35-54 year olds) are also more likely to have experienced a problem (25% and 27% respectively compared to 22% amongst 55-64 year olds and 19% amongst 65+ year olds). Those who are highly knowledgeable about consumer rights are more likely to have experienced a problem in comparison to those with a low level of knowledge (26% of those with a high level of knowledge experienced a problem in comparison to 22% of those with a low level).

Looking specifically at whether consumers took action in response to the problem or not, the same profiles are more likely to have done so. This refers to consumers aged 54 or younger, those who have made online purchases, and those with high or medium levels of knowledge.

Amongst consumers who took action after experiencing a problem, more than eight in ten complained about it to the retailer or service provider (85%, +4 pp since 2022). Although complaints to manufacturers are less common (32%), there is a significant increase in this type of complaint over the waves of the Consumer Conditions Survey. This proportion rose by 10 p.p. from 2018 to 2022, with a further 6 p.p. increase from 2022 to the current wave. Complaints to public authorities have also increased by 5 p.p. since 2022 (from 10% to 15%). Taking the business concerned to court (5%) and joining collective redress actions (4%) remain last resorts and have shown minimal changes since 2022.

Action taken after experiencing a problem

| | | Change Since 2022 (in pp) |
|---|----|---------------------------|
| Complained about it to the retailer or service provider | 85 | +3,7 |
| Complained about it to the manufacturer | 32 | +5,7 |
| Complained about it to a public authority | 15 | +5,3 |
| Complained about it to a consumer association or a European Consumer Centre (ECC) | 14 | +3,1 |
| Brought the matter to an out-of-court dispute resolution body (ADR) | 9 | +3,0 |
| Took the business concerned to court | 5 | +1,9 |
| Joined a collective redress action | 4 | +1,1 |

Base: Adults (aged 18+) who have experienced a problem in the past 12 months and took action to solve it

Irrespective of the action that consumers took when they experienced a problem with a good or service, **the majority are either fairly or very satisfied with how their complaint was dealt with.** This holds true for almost all types of actions.

Amongst the 6% who **took no action after experiencing a problem**, the **primary reasons** were due to consumers believing it would take too long, because consumers felt it was unlikely they would get a satisfactory solution to the problem and the sums involved being too small.

Reasons for not taking action when a problem was experienced

| | | Change Since 2022 (in pp) |
|---|----|---------------------------|
| Thought it would take too long | 57 | +7,8 |
| Were unlikely to get a satisfactory solution to the problem you encountered | 51 | +15,5 |
| The sums involved were too small | 45 | +2,7 |
| Felt the process would be too complex or would require filling a lot of documents or using a different language | 43 | +18,1 |
| Did not know how or where to complain | 41 | +16,7 |
| Thought complaining would have led to a confrontation, and you do not feel at ease in such situations | 35 | +8,7 |
| Were not sure of your rights as a consumer | 33 | +14,1 |
| Tried to complain about other problems in the past but were not successful | 32 | +11,2 |

Base: Adults (aged 18+) who have experienced a problem in the past 12 months but did not do anything

4. EXPERIENCED UNFAIR COMMERCIAL PRACTICES

More than four in ten (45%) EU consumers report having felt pressured by persistent sales calls/messages urging them to buy something or sign a contract. This remains the most common unfair commercial practice encountered by consumers during the past year. More than a third (36%) experienced this type of pressure selling specifically from domestic traders.

This experience is more prevalent amongst particular demographics:

- It rises to half – or more – of consumers who are managers (50%), self-employed (51%) or seeking a job (54%). This experience is also more common amongst those with a medium (46%) or high (45%) level of education, compared to those with a low level (39%).
- It is higher amongst those who could be considered 'vulnerable' consumers. This includes those who find it very difficult (53%) or fairly difficult (51%) to manage financially, compared to those who manage fairly easily (42%) or very easily (39%), as well as single parents (47%).

45 %

of EU consumers felt pressured by persistent sales calls/message urging them to buy something or sign a contract during the past 12 months



Almost four in ten EU consumers (38%) have come across advertisements stating that a product was only available for a limited period of time, but they later realised that it was not the case. This is the second most common unfair practice that EU consumers have experienced during the same time period. A quarter

(25%) experienced this specifically from domestic traders.

When it comes to demographics, different patterns are observed in this case. That is, those who find it very easy to manage financially (35%), those aged 65+ (31%), those lower educated (31%) or retired (31%) are all less likely to report having experienced this practice.

38 %

of EU consumers came across advertisements stating that a product was only available for a limited period of time, but they later realised that it was not the case



About a quarter of consumers report that they experienced other forms of unfair commercial practices.

27 %

of EU consumers said they had been offered a product advertised as free of charge which actually entailed charges. **18% experienced this from domestic traders.**

24 %

Indicated that they had been informed they won a lottery they did not know about but were asked to pay some money in order to collect the prize. **10% experienced this from domestic traders.**

In all cases the proportions having experienced unfair commercial practices from domestic traders has remained relatively stable since the pre-pandemic wave of this survey in 2018 (or since 2020 in the case of items introduced in that wave). Focussing the trend from 2022 to 2024, the proportion changed by no more than 3 p.p. in all cases.

On the other hand, **all of these unfair commercial practices experienced from non-domestic traders are slightly more commonplace** than they were in 2018 and 2022. In particular, the proportion having experienced the second most common unfair practice of having come across advertisements stating that the product was only available for a very limited period of time, but realising later that it was not the case when purchasing from non-domestic traders had increased by 4 p.p. between 2018 and 2022. The current data show a further 3 p.p. rise since 2022.

33 %

have had difficulty understanding bills because of the way the information was presented



Between a sixth and a third of consumers have experienced difficulties with bills, contracts and unfair contract terms:

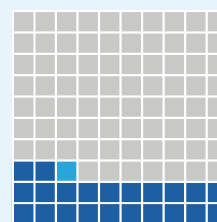
- 33% have had difficulty understanding bills because of the way the information was presented.¹

- 22% have found it difficult to cancel a contract concluded online for example, because they could not find the cancellation option on the website or app.

% of consumers who...

23% 22%

... found it difficult to cancel a contract that had concluded online for example, because you could not find the cancellation option on the website or app



% 2022 % 2024

- 19% have encountered unfair terms and conditions in a contract (for instance, enabling the provider to change the contract terms unilaterally or imposing excessive penalties for breach of the contract) and 18% had to pay unanticipated extra charges or fees.¹

19 %

have encountered unfair terms and conditions in a contract (for instance, enabling the provider to change the contract terms unilaterally or imposing excessive penalties for breach of the contract)

18 %

had to pay unanticipated extra charges or fees

In all cases the largest proportions of consumers report having experienced difficulties with bills, contracts or unfair contract terms from domestic traders.

¹ There is no evolution to report for these items given that they are newly introduced or reformulated in comparison to previous waves.

Experience with unfair commercial practices is more common amongst consumers who have a very or fairly difficult financial situation. This is particularly true when it comes to having paid unanticipated extra charges: 25% and 22% respectively of those who find it very/fairly difficult to manage had to pay unanticipated extra charges compared to 15%-17% of those who find it fairly/very easy. A similar pattern

is observed for those who had difficulty understanding bills because of the way the information was presented.

Younger consumers are more likely to have experienced difficulties cancelling a contract concluded online (28% of those aged 18-34 have experienced this compared to 14%-22% of those aged 55 and older).

5. PRODUCT SAFETY AND PRODUCT RECALLS

Consumers were also asked **if they, or someone in their household, experienced an accident, injury or health problem from using any products bought during the previous two-year period**. The incidence is relatively low across the EU, representing 4% of consumers who state this happened. This marks **a decrease of 3 p.p. compared to 2022**, reversing the increase of 2 p.p. observed from 2020 to 2022.²

4 %

of EU consumers or someone in their household experienced an accident, injury or health problem from using any products bought in the previous two years



Consumer were also asked **if they, or someone in their household, noticed a safety issue with a product bought during the previous two-year period**. **One in seven consumers (14%) have noticed a safety issue**: 6% have complained to the relevant business, 1% have complained to a public authority, and 8% did not complain about it to anyone.³

Awareness of **product recalls** is evident amongst EU consumers. **The majority of consumers (56%) saw or received information notices or announcements about the recall of specific products within the previous two years**. Whilst visibility of such recall notices can be considered widespread, it typically did not

concern a product that consumers owned themselves (46% came across a notice for a product they did not own); nonetheless, this has increased since the previous wave in 2022 (+11 p.p.). On the other hand, more than one in ten (13%) received these kinds of notifications for products that they did in fact own; this figure shows a slight rise of 2 p.p. since 2022.

56 %

of EU consumers have seen or received information notices/announcements about the recall of a specific product in the past 2 years



13 %

of EU consumers have seen or received information notices/announcements about the recall of a specific **product that they own** in the past 2 years



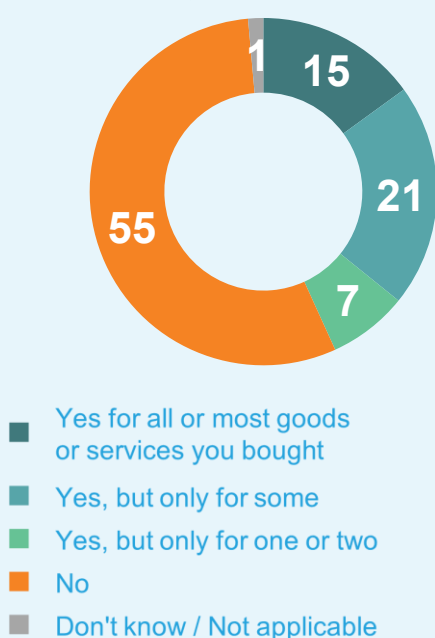
² This question was asked for the first time in 2020.

³ This question was asked for this first time in the current wave.

6. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Compared to the previous wave, **consumers seem to be less concerned about the environmental impact of the goods/services they purchase.** Over four in ten (43%, -13 p.p. since 2022) consumers were influenced by the environmental impact of the goods or services they purchased within the two weeks prior to the survey; 15% for all or most goods or services, a further 21% for only some and 7% for only one or two. The majority of consumers (55%, +13 p.p.) were not influenced by any environmental concerns when it came to their purchase decisions.

Considering everything you have bought during the last two weeks, did the environmental impact of any goods or services influence your choice?



Base: Adults (aged 18+)

Despite previous indications of increasing consumer concerns about the environment,⁴ the results of the Consumer Conditions Survey present a different image. Between 2018 and 2022, there was only a marginal increase in those being influenced by environmental concerns in all or most of their purchases, with no change amongst those who said 'no' or that it only influenced some/one or two purchases. In the current wave, a substantial decrease of 11 p.p. is seen in the proportion of consumers stating that environmental considerations influenced all or most of their purchases.

This trend underscores the complex relationship between awareness, concern and action in consumer behaviour regarding environmental issues, suggesting that economic factors play a significant role in sustainable purchasing decisions.

Regression models were run to determine which socio-demographic factors could be linked to sustainable consumer behaviour. Consideration was given to consumer knowledge, age, education, financial situation, urbanisation and online purchasing.

Consumers with a low level of education are most likely to say that the environmental impact of their purchases did not influence their purchasing decisions (66% compared to 58% of those with a medium level of education and 50% of those with a high level of education). Older age groups (aged 55-64 and 65+) are also more likely to say this compared to the youngest group (aged 18-34). Those who have not made an online purchase in the last year are also less environmentally conscious (68% compared to 51% of those who made an online purchase).

⁴ Ipsos survey data shows this time and time again. For example, Ipsos found that 83% of people say we are heading for environmental disaster unless we change our

habits quickly. [Global Trends 2021: Aftershocks and continuity | Ipsos](#)

Conversely, the more educated are more likely to have considered the environmental impact for all or most of their purchases (18% of those with a high level of education compared to 12% of those with a low level). Vulnerable consumers - those who find their financial situation very difficult - are the least likely to have considered the environmental impact for all or most of their purchases.

6.1. BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Consumers were also asked about what stops them from buying sustainable products and services more frequently. **The most important obstacle is cost, with 67% stating sustainable goods are more expensive.** Confusion about which products are truly environmentally friendly and distrust in environmental claims are also prevalent concerns, both cited by 62% of consumers. Quality concerns (45%) and limited availability of sustainable products (44%) are also substantial barriers. Difficulty in changing habits is a barrier for 38% of consumers. Less common barriers include feeling unaffected by climate

change or resource scarcity (23%) and longer delivery times for sustainable goods (22%). These findings highlight two key challenges for sustainable consumption: the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on consumers' ability to afford eco-friendly options, and the perceived lack of reliable information about product sustainability.

Certain barriers to sustainable consumption are more pronounced amongst specific demographics. The cost of sustainable goods is a greater concern for younger consumers, with 71% of those aged 18-34 citing this as an issue compared to 61% of those aged 65+. This barrier is also more important for those facing financial difficulties, with 72% of those who find it very difficult and 70% who find it fairly difficult to manage financially mentioning this, compared to 63% of those who find it very easy and 67% who find it fairly easy. Education level also plays a role. Those with a high level of education are more likely to mention confusion about which products and services are truly environmentally friendly compared to those with a low level of education (66% vs 54%). Older consumers (aged 65+) (48%) and single parents (50%) are more likely to express concern about the quality of sustainable products and services.

Barriers to buying sustainable products

| | |
|--|----|
| Sustainable products and services are more expensive | 67 |
| Confusion about which products and services are truly environmentally friendly | 62 |
| Information about environmental claims is not always trustworthy | 62 |
| Concerns about the quality of sustainable products and services | 45 |
| Limited availability and choice of sustainable products and services | 44 |
| You find it hard to change your habits | 38 |
| You are not personally affected by climate change or scarcity of resources | 23 |
| Sustainable products and services often have longer delivery time | 22 |

Base: Adults (aged 18+)

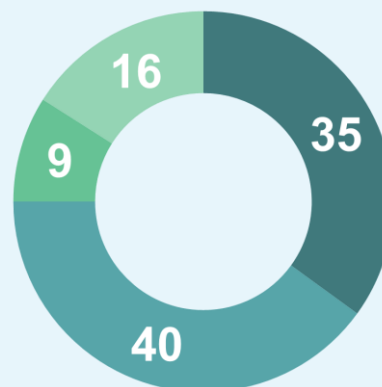
6.2. ATTENTION TO LONGEVITY AND REPAIRABILITY OF ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS

Consumers were asked about their experiences with durable products that stopped working properly after the legal guarantee period ended. Nearly one-third (31%) of consumers reported experiencing such situations in the past 12 months. Focusing on those who had a broken product, 35% had the product repaired, while 40% opted to replace it with a brand-new product. Notably, only 9% chose to replace the faulty item with a second-hand or refurbished product. Finally, 16% did not repair nor replace the product.

Certain socio-demographic groups are less likely to repair a durable product that stopped working after the legal guarantee period ended. For instance, young consumers are less prone to this behaviour, with 25% choosing not to repair (i.e. they either replace the product, or neither repair nor replace), compared to 14% of those aged 65+. Financial constraints also play a role, as those who find it very or fairly difficult to manage financially are less likely to repair products compared to those who find it fairly or very easy (23%-25% vs 17%-19%). Additionally, online shopping habits appear to influence repair decisions, with 22% of those who purchased online in the past 12 months opting not to repair, compared to 14% of those who did not shop online.

Amongst those who did not repair their product(s), cost was the primary barrier, with 61% citing that the repair would have been too expensive. Nearly half (49%) preferred to replace the product entirely, while about a third (32%) felt that repairing would require too much effort. Notably, 28% report that the product could not be repaired, and the same share (28%) thought that the repair process would have taken too long.

Likelihood to repair durable product which stop working.



- Had the product repaired
- Replace it with a brand-new product
- Replace it with a second hand/refurbished product
- Did not repair nor replace the product

Base: Adults (aged 18+) who owned a durable product that stopped working properly after the legal guarantee period ended in the past 12 months

Consumers who did have their product(s) repaired generally report satisfactory experiences. Three quarters (76%) are satisfied with the repair service and think that the repair was completed within a reasonable timeframe. Moreover, 71% consider the repair cost reasonable, and 70% report that the problem was fully resolved without reoccurrence.

7. ONLINE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AND CONCERNS

Three quarters of consumers (76%) made an online purchase in the past 12 months. This share remained stable across the time span from the pre-pandemic year of 2018 and the pandemic wave in 2020 to 2022. Compared to 2022, the current overall share of online consumers has increased by 5 p.p. (from 71% to 76%).

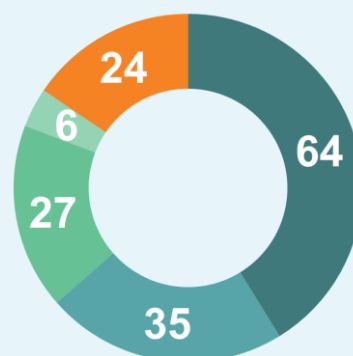
This experience is less common amongst those aged 65+, i.e. four in ten (41%) have not made an online purchase in the past 12 months. A similar share (41%) of those with a low level of education have also not made any online purchases in the previous 12 months compared to only a quarter (26%) of those with a high level of education. Online consumption is also less likely amongst retired consumers (40% 'no') and those not in employment (30%), compared to those in other occupational categories (9%-20%).

Domestic online purchases are still the most common form of e-commerce, with 64% of EU consumers having done so in the last year. Since 2022, the proportion reporting they have purchased online from a retailer/service provider located in their own country has increased by 3 p.p..

More than a third of EU consumers (35%, +7 p.p. since 2022) report having made online purchases from a retailer/service provider located in another EU country and just over a quarter (27%, +7 p.p. since 2022) from a retailer/service provider located outside the EU.

Consumers aged below 55 are more likely to engage in online purchases from retailers or service providers located outside their own country. Compared to those aged 65 and older, those aged under 55 are about twice as likely to have made online purchases from other EU countries (41%-42% vs 21%) and also twice as likely to have bought online from retailers outside the EU (32%-35% vs 16%).

In the past 12 months, have you purchased any goods or services via the Internet?



- Yes, from a retailer or service provider located in your country
- Yes, from a retailer or service provider located in another EU country
- Yes, from a retailer or service provider located outside the EU
- Yes, you purchased online but do not know where the retailer or service provider is located
- No

Base: Adults (aged 18+)

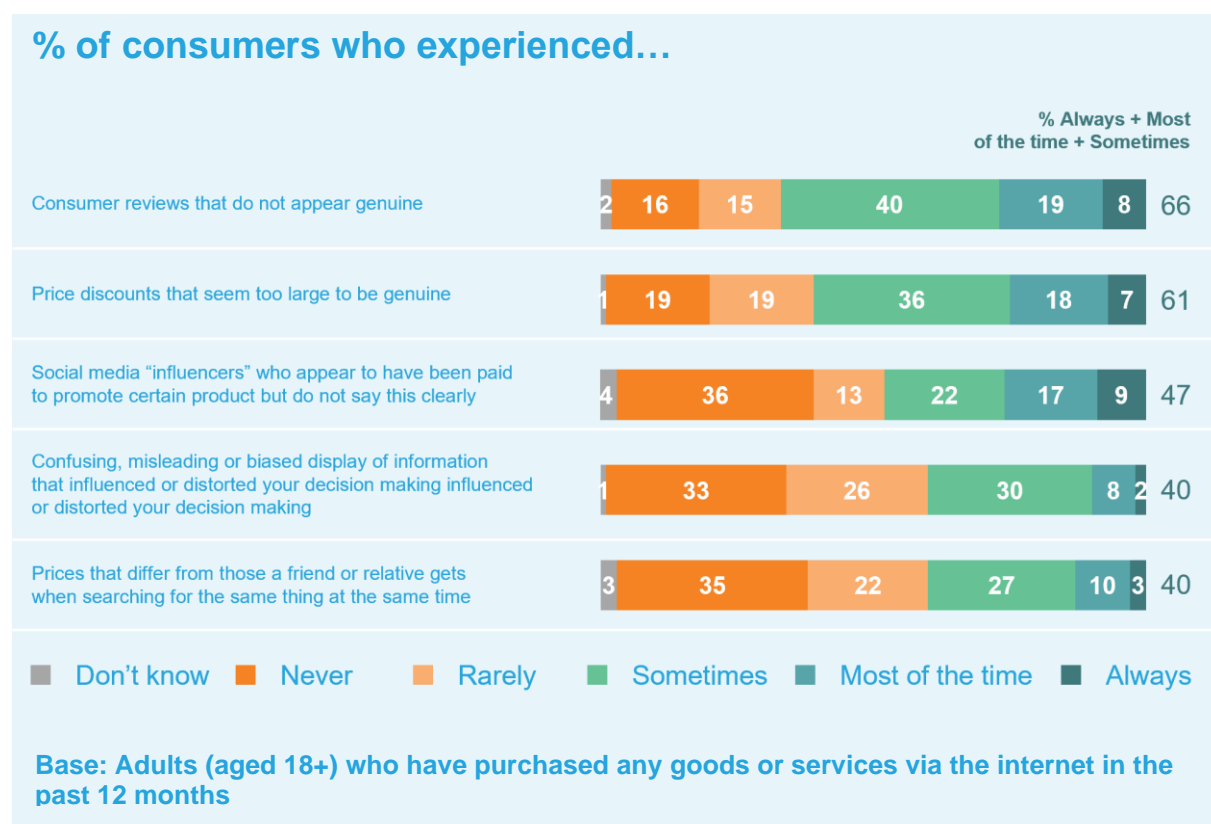
7.1. EXPERIENCED PROBLEMATIC COMMERCIAL PRACTICES ONLINE

When consumers are searching for and buying products online there are a number of commonplace problematic practices they come across either always, most of the time or sometimes. **Six in ten – or more – consumers who have made an online purchase in the past 12 months have experienced consumer reviews that do not appear genuine (66%) and price discounts that seem too large to be genuine (61%).** Nearly half (47%) have encountered social media "influencers" who appear to have been paid to promote certain products but do not say this clearly. Smaller shares have faced confusing, misleading or biased display of information

that influenced or distorted their decision making (40%) or prices that differ from those a friend or relative gets when searching for the same thing at the same time (40%).

Looking at the trend compared to 2022⁵, two items show a significant change. Encountering social media "influencers" who appear to have been paid to promote certain products without clear disclosure has declined by 8 p.p.. Additionally, experience of consumer reviews that do not appear genuine has slightly decreased (-2 p.p.).

When it comes to social media "influencers" who appear to have been paid to promote certain products but do not say this clearly, this is experienced by 61% of the youngest consumers (aged 18-34) compared to 48% of those aged 35-54, 39% of those aged over 55 and 36% of those over 65.



⁵ This question has been modified since previous waves. In the current wave, the number of items has been reduced to 5, compared to 10 in the 2020 and 2021 waves. Of these 5 items, 4 are from previous waves and 1 is new. Changes in trends for the 4 continuing items will be discussed, but caution is advised when interpreting these findings. The

new response option ('Confusing, misleading or biased display of information that influenced or distorted your decision making') was introduced in this wave, for which trend data are not available.

Those aged over 55 are also less likely to have come across most other problematic practices. This is not by virtue of having not purchased online as these questions were asked only to those who made an online purchase. However, it is possible younger cohorts are more frequently online (not measured here) which would explain why they are more likely to experience these practices.

Consumers with a low level of education are least likely to report having experienced certain problematic online practices. Specifically, price discounts that seem too large to be genuine are reported by 55% of those with a low level of education, compared to 61%-62% of those with higher levels of education. Similarly, consumer reviews that do not appear genuine were experienced by 56% of the least educated consumers, versus 67%-68% of those with higher levels of education. Finally, undisclosed paid promotions by social media "influencers" were noticed by 39% of those with a low educational level, compared to 47%-50% of those with

medium or high levels of education. Other problematic online practices, such as prices that differ from those a friend or relative gets when searching for the same item at the same time, and confusing, misleading, or biased display of information that influenced or distorted decision-making, do not show significant differences based on consumers' educational level.

Those who find it very or fairly difficult to manage financially are more likely to have experienced the problematic practices listed in the survey. The largest differences are observed for experiencing prices that differ from those a friend or relative gets when searching for the same item at the same time (45%-48% of those who find it difficult, compared to 35%-40% of those who find it easy to manage financially) and encountering confusing, misleading or biased display of information that influenced or distorted decision-making (43%-46% of those who find it difficult, compared to 37%-41% of those who find it easy to manage financially).

7.2. ONLINE FRAUD

Consumers were also surveyed about their experiences with various type of online fraud (scams and fraudulent activities) in the past 12 months. **Overall, 45% of consumers report having experienced at least one of these fraudulent activities.** Nearly a quarter of consumers (23%) had been contacted about sending money to someone who claimed to be in financial hardship. Similarly, 21% were contacted by someone pretending to be from a legitimate organisation, asking for personal information or money.

Other types of online fraud were experienced by less than one in ten consumers. These include 9% who made purchases from fake online shops, 7% who were tricked into recurring subscriptions, 5% who fell victim to deepfake scams in phone or video calls, 4% who were convinced by influencers to invest in fraudulent financial schemes, and 2% who bought fake tickets for events, concerts or travel online.

In line with the findings discussed in the previous section, older consumers – aged 65 and older – are overall less likely to have experienced online fraud compared to their younger counterparts (38% versus 49% of those aged 18-34). For example, while 25% of those aged 18-34 were contacted by someone pretending to be from a legitimate organisation and requesting personal information or money, this figure drops to 17% among those aged 65 and older.

Consumers with a high level of education are more likely to report having experienced online fraud overall, with 48% reporting at least one incident compared to 38% of those with a low level of education and 43% with a medium level of education. For example, higher educated consumers are more likely to have been asked to send money to someone who claimed to be in financial hardship (27%) or to have received fraudulent requests for personal information or money (23%).

Finally, consumers who find it very or fairly difficult to manage financially are also more likely to have to have experienced online fraud (49% vs 43% of those who find it very or fairly easy to manage financially).

% of consumers who have experienced in the last 12 months...

| | |
|---|----|
| Were contacted about sending money to someone who claimed to be in financial hardship | 23 |
| Were contacted by someone pretending to be from a legitimate organisation, asking for personal information or money | 21 |
| Made a purchase from an online shop, and the shop turned out to be fake | 9 |
| Were tricked into signing up for a recurring subscription online | 7 |
| Were scammed by someone using a deepfake in a phone or video call | 5 |
| Were convinced by an influencer to invest in a cryptocurrency or other financial scheme that turned out to be financially harmful (like a pyramid scheme) | 4 |
| Bought tickets online for an event, concert or travel, and the tickets turned out to be fake | 2 |

Base: Adults (aged 18+)

7.3. CONCERNS ABOUT ONLINE TARGETED ADVERTISING

The survey also captures whether **online consumers are personally concerned about online targeted advertising. It is rare that online consumers express no concerns about this type of issue (6%).**

Consumer concern about online privacy and advertising practices is focused on several key issues. Firstly, seven in ten (71%) express concern about the collection of their personal data without their consent or awareness. Secondly, two thirds (67%) are concerned about exposure to an excessive amount of advertising on websites and mobile applications. Additionally, 63% of consumers worry that online advertising that is personalised based on their online behaviour and activities is unavoidable. Almost six in ten (58%) are concerned about the difficulty in managing or refusing cookies used to track their online activities. Half of consumers (50%) express concern about personalisation of advertising limiting their choice and access to special offers and a

similar share (49%) are worried about being obliged to pay for subscriptions to use online services if they do not agree to monitoring and analysis of their online activity.

Concerns about online privacy and advertising practices are fairly widespread across all demographic groups. Nonetheless, some variations emerge. Those aged 65 and older are less likely to express concern about the collection of personal data without consent (67% compared to 72%-73% in younger age groups). Regarding unavoidable personalised online advertising, both the oldest and youngest consumers show lower levels of concern (59% of those aged 65+ and 60% of those aged 18-34) compared to middle-aged consumers (65% of 35-54 year olds and 66% of 55-64 year olds). Moreover, for all concerns listed in the survey, those with higher levels of education are more likely to express concern compared to those with a low level of education. Finally, individuals who find it easier to manage financially tend to be less concerned in comparison to those who find it difficult to manage financially.

Concerns about online targeted advertising



Base: Adults (aged 18+) who have made an online purchase in the past 12 months

8. COST OF LIVING

In recent years, global economic pressures have significantly shaped public concerns, with inflation emerging as a dominant worry. The Ipsos 'What Worries the World' survey has tracked this trend, revealing inflation's persistent grip on public consciousness. From its peak as the top global concern in early 2023,⁶ inflation has remained a significant issue, though its intensity has slightly waned in 2024.⁷

The Consumer Conditions Survey considers the increasing cost of living by asking consumers whether they are concerned about personal finances and perceived changes in product specifications, in terms of quality and quantity, while prices stayed the same or went up.

8.1. FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Projecting six months into the future, **about equal shares of EU consumers are concerned about being able to afford to go on holiday (39%) and being able to pay their bills (38%)**, closely followed by concerns about affording the food products they like (35%). A fifth (25%) express concern about being able to repay loans and credit cards, closely followed by worries about ability to pay their rent (22%). Almost a fifth are concerned about their ability to afford transport to work (19%) or being able to pay their mortgage (19%) within the following six months.

For some specific financial concerns, the share of consumers expressing worry has decreased since 2022.⁸ Concern about being able to pay bills shows the most significant decrease (-10 p.p.), followed by worry about affording preferred food products (-8 p.p.). Additionally, concern about the ability to afford transport to work has decreased by 5 p.p..

In all cases, those who find it fairly or very difficult to manage financially are more likely to express these concerns in comparison to those who find it fairly or very easy. This pattern also applies to those seeking employment and those being house persons or other people not in employment.

% of consumers who are very or fairly concerned about...

39 %

Being able to afford to go on holiday

38 %

Being able to pay their bills

35 %

Being able to afford the food and product they like

25 %

Being able to repay loans and credit cards

⁶ What Worries the World? January 2023 | Ipsos

⁷ What Worries The World? January 2025 | Ipsos

⁸ This question is a modified trend. In the current wave, a new response option was added: "Being able to pay your rent". All other response options remained the same as in the previous

wave. While changes in trends for the continuing items will be discussed, caution is advised when interpreting these findings. The addition of the new response option may have influenced how respondents answered to the question overall.

8.2. EXPERIENCE OF CHANGING PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Consumers were asked if they noticed any changes in the products they regularly purchased over the past 12 months. **Three quarters (74%) observed a reduction in the quantity or size of packaged products**, even though the prices either remained the same or increased. Additionally, **just over half (52%) of consumers noted a decline in the ingredients and quality of packaged products** while prices stayed the same or went up.

Women (76%) are more likely than men (72%) to have noticed a reduction in the quantity or size of packaged products they regularly purchased over the past 12 months. Age also plays a role, as 58% of younger consumers (18-34) noted a decline

in the ingredients and quality of packaged products they regularly buy compared to 46% of those aged 65 and older.

Consumers with a medium or high level of education (75%-76%) are more likely than those with a low level of education (67%) to have observed changes in product size of the products they regularly buy.

Finally, consumers who find it very or fairly difficult to manage financially are more likely to have seen examples of changes in quantity and quality in the past 12 months. For example, 58% of those who find it very or fairly difficult to manage financially noted a decline in the ingredients and quality of packaged products while prices stayed the same or went up, compared to 47%-50% who find it fairly or very easy to manage financially.

% of consumers who have noticed changes in the products they buy regularly in the past 12 months

The quantity or size of a packaged product was reduced while the price stayed the same or even increased

74

The ingredients and quality of a packaged product got worse while the price stayed the same or even increased

52

Base: Adults (aged 18+)

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