

Consumer Conditions Scoreboard

2019 EDITION



The 2019 Consumer Conditions Scoreboard shows that consumer conditions have become less unequal between the different regions of the EU, as eastern and southern countries are progressing and narrowing the gap to the EU average. However, significant differences remain between the countries with the best consumer conditions (mostly in northern Europe) and those with the lowest scores.

The Consumer Conditions Scoreboard monitors the quality of the consumer environment at EU and national level. It also tracks progress in the development of e-commerce by looking at attitudes and experiences of consumers and businesses in the digital single market.

The scoreboard mainly draws from two regular surveys, of consumers and of retailers. It looks at three key dimensions that form the composite **Consumer Conditions Index**:

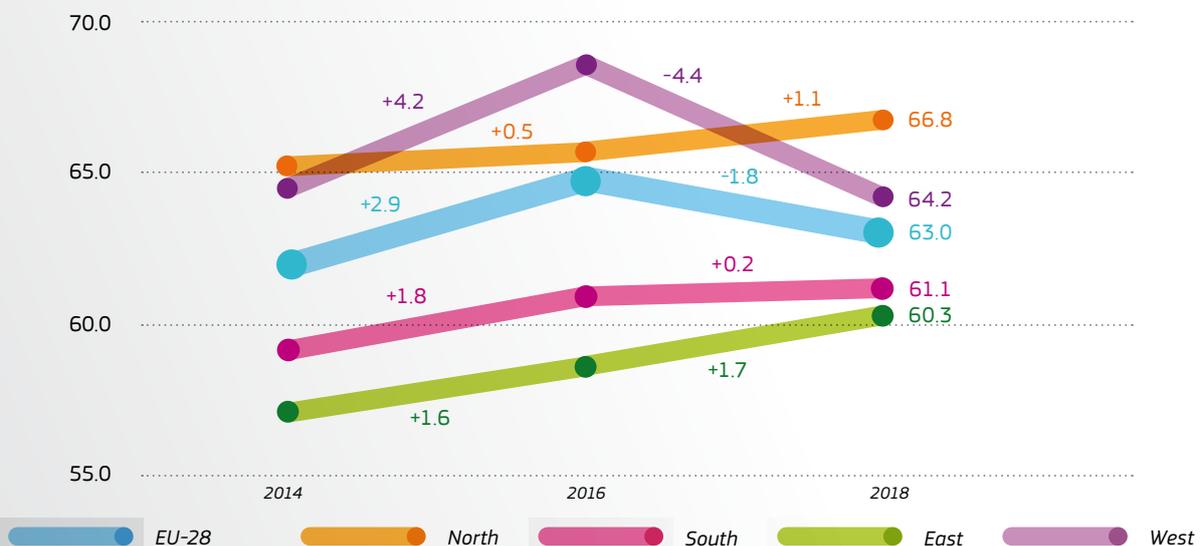
- **knowledge** of basic consumer rights and **trust** in institutional and market actors, in redress mechanisms,

in product safety, in environmental claims, and confidence to engage in e-commerce;

- **compliance** by traders with consumer law and effectiveness of public **enforcement**;
- consumer **complaints** for problems faced in the marketplace and the functioning of **dispute resolution** mechanisms.

In 2018, consumer conditions continue to improve in three of the EU's four geographic regions, while western Europe has lost the exceptional momentum seen in 2016.

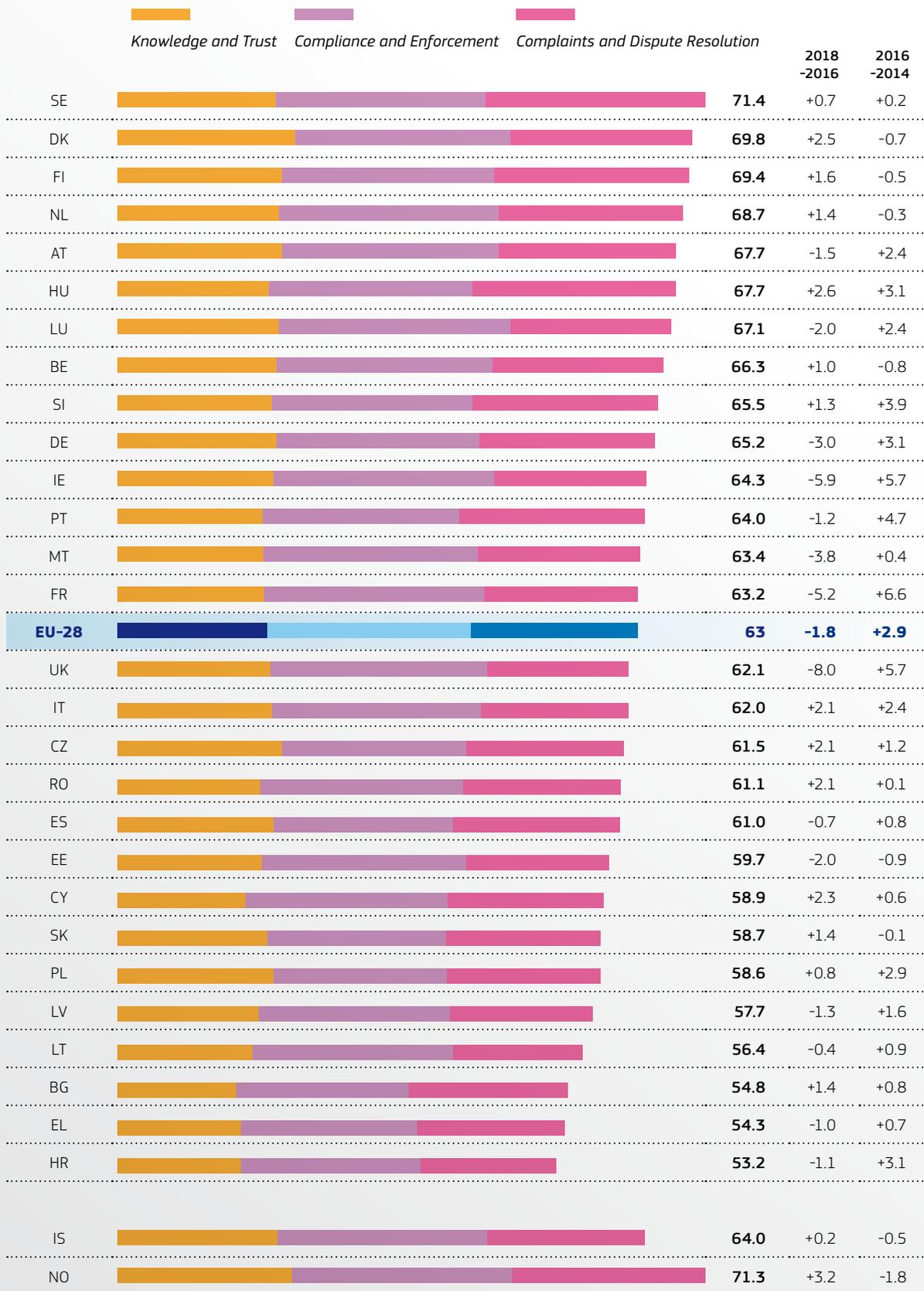
Change in the Consumer Conditions Index across different regions of the EU, 2014-2018



Source: Surveys on consumer and on retailer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection.

Considerable differences persist between the high performing and the low scoring countries

Consumer Conditions Index – overall indicator, 2018



Source: Surveys on consumer and retailer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection, Consumer Conditions Index.

Retailers have positive views on compliance with consumer legislation

A clear majority of EU retailers (71.5%) find it easy to comply with consumer legislation in their sector and their country, with percentages ranging from 51.5 % in Czechia to 83.8 % in Italy. Moreover, two thirds of EU retailers consider the related costs reasonable (67.8%) and declare that their competitors comply with consumer law (67.7%).

Equally, more than 70% of consumers trust retailers for respecting their consumer rights and over 60% are satisfied with how their complaints are dealt with by traders.

Proactive enforcement is making a difference

In 2018, 6 out of 10 EU retailers assess the enforcement of consumer and product safety legislation in their sector positively. The highest marks are given to enforcement of product safety legislation, where close to three quarters of retailers (74.8%) appreciate the monitoring work of public authorities. A strong correlation between retailers' views on enforcement and their assessment of compliance with consumer legislation suggests that proactive enforcement is making a difference.

More than half of EU consumers are influenced by environmental claims when making purchases

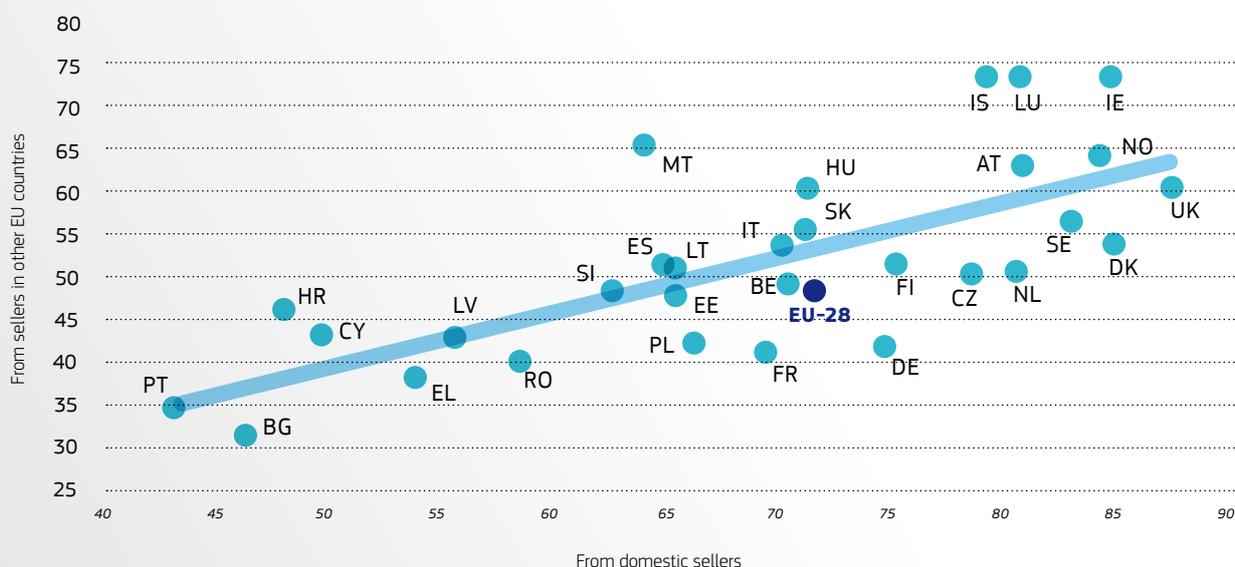
More than half of EU consumers (56.8%) report that at least some of their purchasing decisions are influenced by environmental claims. The more environmentally conscious EU consumers are those in southern (59.3%) and eastern countries (57.3%).

The number of consumers buying online keeps increasing but large differences remain across the EU

The uptake of e-commerce by consumers continues on an upward trend. According to Eurostat, in 2018 about 60% of consumers in the EU purchased online goods or services compared to only 30% in 2007. However, the proportion of consumers engaged in e-commerce varies considerably across the EU, with values ranging from 75% or more in Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany to around 20% in Bulgaria and Romania.

The scoreboard shows that average consumer trust in buying online domestically (71.7%) remains consistently higher than trust in buying cross-border from other EU countries (48.3%).

Consumer confidence in buying online, domestically and cross-border, by country (2018)



Source: Survey on consumer attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? You feel confident purchasing goods or services via the internet from retailers or services (in your country/in another EU country). Base: all respondents (N=28 037).

Only a minority of offline retailers are tempted to go online

About one fifth of all enterprises engage in e-commerce and this proportion has been fairly stable for several years (according to Eurostat data). The scoreboard reveals that e-commerce is not attracting many newcomers anymore. The vast majority (91%) of EU retailers already selling online in 2018 plan to continue to do so, less than a fifth (18.4%) of the other retailers (who only sell offline) declared any interest to engage in e-commerce in the next 12 months, and this proportion is declining compared to previous surveys.

Full information can be found on the webpage

https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/consumers/consumer-protection/evidence-based-consumer-policy/consumer-scoreboards_en

