



Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection

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Study visit to LATVIA, 1ST July 2021

- **Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection** (further LNACP, www.pateretajs.lv) is founded in 1999 with main aim to protect consumers with their rights protection what is set under the national legislation and relevant European Union (EU) regulations and directives. For this reason, LNACP is using network of regional consumer organizations covering regions of Latvia.

- There are currently 10 regional LPIAA organizations.
- Each organizations has consultants who inform consumers about legal norms, help consumers prepare applications for submission to a state institution.
- We represent consumers in court.
- We have also platforms for submitting complaints **www.pretenzija.lv**

VEIKALS



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Founding organizations:

- 1) Patērētāju interešu aizsardzības klubs Rīgā, Zinta Kovaļevska (1992);
- 2) Jūrmalas Patērētāju atbalsta centrs, Silvija Vīksniņa (1993);
- 3) Jelgavas Patērētāju interešu aizsardzības klubs, Tekla Žabova (1996);
- 4) Rēzeknes Patērētāju interešu aizsardzības centrs, Marija Zeltiņa (1995);
- 5) Ogres Patērētāju interešu aizsardzības klubs, Ilga Vecziediņa (1996).

Founding organizations:

- 6) Cēsu Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības biedrība, Olita Ansons;
- 7) Gulbenes Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības klubs, Natālija Kokare;
- 8) Daugavpils Patērētāju tiesību aizstāvības biedrība, Inna Griņoka;
- 9) Dzīvojamo māju īrnieku un saimnieku asociācija "Tautas kontrole", Jeļena Garbuzova;
- 10) Biedrība "Profesionāļu Solidaritātes biedrība", Aleksandrs Poika, Guntra Vīksna.

LPIAA activities

Description of consumer complaints received:

- in 2020, PIAA received the most complaints about consumer goods (53.10%);
- universal service 11.42%;
- postal and electronic communications services (10.94%);
- leisure services (5.10%).

LPIAA activities

During the pandemic, there were many complaints about leisure trips and canceled cultural events.

Consumers more likely complain about repeatedly canceled / postponed measures.

The number of complaints in distance trade increased significantly - in 2019 there were 125 complaints, but in 2020 - already 192 complaints, in the five months of 2021 - 93 complaints.

Consequently, it is not diminishing here either.
Problems: -Delay of delivery times

LPIAA activities

Failure to comply with the right of withdrawal.

Misleading indications about the availability of goods on merchants' websites.

Delivery problems.

Right of withdrawal. There are problems with orders from China (Alibaba), information on the right of withdrawal and other consumer rights is difficult to find, and consumers have difficulty exercising these rights.

We hope that the European Commission will be able to find a solution in the negotiations with the Republic of China, as set out in the Commission's latest action plan for the coming years. A new category of complaints also emerged: the unavailability of various services or goods due to restrictions imposed by Covid-19.

LPIAA activities

Tourism industry during a pandemic.

As we know, there are many problems in the industry.

The pandemic has clearly shown how fragile it is. In part, we can talk about objective difficulties; in the end, the situation with the spread of Covid-19 reached unprecedented proportions.

However, we are concerned about the dominant business model in the sector.

Everything is based on prepayment, often 100%. This created huge problems for operators who, due to an emergency, were unable to provide services to travelers and could not make a timely refund. As a result, consumers were essentially asked to lend to the industry. This indicates that the business model needs to change.

LPIAA activities

E-commerce, social networks during a pandemic.

The pandemic, of course, contributed to the boom in e-commerce.

Many companies that did not trade online began to do so due to pandemic containment measures.

However, e-commerce has its own legal rules of the game that all businesses, regardless of size, must follow.

Many are not even aware of these rules of the game. This poses major risks to consumers. The industry is also weakened by hitherto unresolved problems: - Unprofessional and sometimes unscrupulous entrepreneurs - we constantly observe situations when online stores go through the bubble, leaving consumers without goods and money.

LPIAA activities

Energy, insulation, heating bill challenges in Latvia

With 75% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions coming from energy use and production, decarbonisation of the energy sector is an important step towards a climate-neutral EU. Two major initiatives are being developed.

The most important in this regard is just transition and tackling energy poverty.

LPIAA activities

Financial sector.

Legislation that limited the total cost of credit was necessary and contributed.

However, in recent years, millions of euros have been lost to consumers. They have to be reimbursed, but businesses are reluctant to do so. We are trying to do something about it, but we need legislative changes, such as the introduction of collective redress, to change this sad situation.

LPIAA activities

Cooperation with national level authorities and organizations:

Ministry of Economics, State Chancellery, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Welfare, Parliament, the Consumer Rights Protection Centre, the Food and Veterinary Service of Republic of Latvia, the Public utilities Commission and many others.

LPIAA projects

- 2019 – 2022 European Commission Horizon 2020 “Solutions to Tackle Energy Poverty” (STEP);
- 2016 – 2019 LNACP is partner organization of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Scheme in Latvia (Consumer Rights Protection Centre);
- 2017 – 2018. BEUC “Angel Funding” project “Consumer First Aid Toolkit”;
- 2017 – 2018. European Commission representation in Latvia, EC funding, No. 43_2017 project “Regional information and educational activities on the opening of the natural gas market for households in Latvia”;
- 2017 – 2018. Project funded by the European Parliament and the European Commission, managed in cooperation with the European Commission, LNACP as national partner organization “ConsumerLawReady”;



LNACP is a member of the European Consumer Organization (BEUC) and at the European consumer voice in standardisation (*ANEC*) and LNACP have representatives at the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG); ECCG subgroup on Energy and *European Economic and Social Committee* (EESC).



LPIAA





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