Aide et conseil pour les consommateurs en Europe
ECC-Net
Centre Européen des Consommateurs Luxembourg

Press release
European Consumer Centre Luxembourg

Luxembourg, 23 November 2026

Black Friday: Enjoying online shopping without giving in to commercial pressure

With Black Friday and Cyber Monday coming up on 27 and 30 November 2026, many consumers will be tempted to take advantage of special offers and discounts.

However, it is important not to rush into a purchase. Countdown timers, messages such as “Only two items left in stock!” and tempting discounts can all influence purchasing decisions.

With the recent publication of the European Commission’s proposal for the Digital Fairness Act, consumer protection is once again in the spotlight. Ahead of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, the European Consumer Centre Luxembourg aims to raise awareness of “dark patterns” and share practical tips on how to shop online without giving in to commercial pressure.

What are “dark patterns”?

“Dark patterns” are design techniques used on websites and apps to influence consumers’ choices in ways that may not be in their best interests. They can encourage consumers to spend more than they intended or to sign up for additional services.

However, not all marketing techniques are necessarily misleading. They become problematic when they deceive consumers, hide important information or restrict their freedom of choice. Transparency is therefore essential to help consumers make free and informed decisions.

Some examples and practical advice

Limited-time and limited-stock offers

Countdown timers and messages such as “Only two items left in stock!” can create a sense of urgency and make consumers feel that they might miss out on a good deal. As a result, they may make purchases without taking the time to consider whether they really need the product.

Our advice: Take the time to compare prices and ask yourself whether you really need the product, even if the offer is only available for a limited time.

Price reductions

Crossed-out prices and large discounts do not necessarily mean you are getting a good deal.

Our advice: Compare prices and, where possible, keep track of them in the run-up to promotional events. Generally, when a price reduction is announced for a product, the reference price must be the lowest price charged by the trader during the 30 days preceding the price reduction.

How offers are presented

Some discounts or free trials may require consumers to sign up for a subscription. Prices may be displayed per week, month or year, making it difficult to compare offers.

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Certain options may also be highlighted by their colour, size or wording. For example, paid express delivery or an annual subscription may be made more prominent than cheaper or more flexible alternatives.

Our advice: Take the time to compare the different options. Before making your choice, check the total cost, how often you will be charged, how long you are committing to and how you can cancel the contract.

A few simple tips to avoid unpleasant surprises

A few simple steps can help you make the most of Black Friday and Cyber Monday offers while shopping with peace of mind:

- Make a shopping list and set yourself a budget.
- Compare prices from different sellers.
- Check who the seller is and whether they are trustworthy.
- Check where the goods are shipped from and be aware of any customs duties, taxes or other additional costs.
- Read the terms and conditions carefully, including those relating to delivery and returns.
- Use secure payment methods.

If you change your mind, ECC Luxembourg reminds consumers that they generally have a 14-day right of withdrawal when shopping online with traders based in the European Union. When purchasing goods, this period generally starts on the day you receive them. This right also applies, in principle, to items bought at a reduced price. However, certain exceptions apply, and consumers may have to cover the cost of returning the goods.

About us – www.cecluxembourg.lu

The European Consumer Centre GIE Luxembourg (ECC Luxembourg) is part of a network of 29 European Consumer Centres in the European Union, as well as in Iceland and Norway (European Consumer Centres Network). The ECC-Net also cooperates with the International Consumer Centre in the United Kingdom. ECC Luxembourg informs consumers about European consumer law and assists them in the settlement of cross-border consumer matters. All services are free of charge.

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