

Travel dominates consumer complaints

Written by Catherine Kurzawa

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Complaints about cancelled holiday plans increased at consumer support organisations. Photo: Matic Zorman

The Luxembourg Consumer Association (ULC) and the European Consumer Centre in 2020 saw a spike in requests linked to travel complaints, with the trend continuing in 2021 as the pandemic drags on.

The pandemic has made planning ahead difficult as travel restrictions change and many customers find their holiday plans cancelled or postponed by operators. The number of requests for information of support from disgruntled holidaymakers with consumer advice organisations has ballooned.

The ULC reported 251 requests linked to package holidays in 2020, a six-fold increase compared to 2019. For air transport, cases tripled to 213, said the association, which provides legal support for members.

At the European Consumer Centre, the number of complaints linked to flight cancellations quadrupled to reach 1,100 requests in 2020.

“Even today, we receive new calls, either because flights or trips are cancelled or because people who received vouchers or promises of reimbursement a few weeks or months ago have not received anything and come back to us,” said Jean-Loup Stradella, a legal advisor at the ECC.

“The covid situation is not quite resolved, and it is even getting a little more tense; there are again cancellations,” added Stradella, who also deals with complaints about cancelled events.

For 2020 as a whole, the ECC saw a 46% increase in cases. Other than holidays, this includes cancelled language stays, venue bookings or educational courses. The organisation specialises in cross-border complaints, while the ULC focuses on the domestic market.

The latter saw an increase in overall complaints of 2.33% in 2020, just over 5,000 cases.

More people filed complaints against repair scams or construction works while the number of inquiries relating to leases and rent guarantee payments decreased. “Perhaps tenants gave up plans to change housing, given the context of the crisis,” said Aline Rosenbaum, lawyer and head of the litigation department at the ULC.

The organisation has seen different waves of complaints, with a first quarter marked by travel, followed by a second quarter more in line with the ULC’s regular activities, although concert cancellations and gym subscriptions also ranked high.

Rising complaints were also observed in e-commerce, a sector that saw a significant boost during the pandemic. E-commerce complaints also tripled at the consumer mediation office, the organisation said [last week](#).

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Consumer complaints

coronavirus pandemic

covid-19

travel

Union luxembourgeoise des consommateurs (ULC)

European Consumer Centre Luxembourg
