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Parliament pushes through EU-wide class action in deal on collective redress

Consumer protection

Last night, a deal on a new directive on class action for the protection of the collective interests of consumers was struck between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. Consumer organisations and independent public bodies will be able to bring claims in the name of consumers in courts in order to stop infringements and even to demand compensation, in what is known as 'collective redress'. The European Parliament succeeded in gaining its demand to make air and train passenger rights enforceable in a collective action before the courts throughout the EU in the final deal.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the file in the Legal Affairs Committee, comments:

"This directive fills the legal vacuum in the EU consumer legislation. With such new ground breaking instrument European consumers will no longer be left on their own, like in the Volkswagen emission cheating scandal.

"Empowering consumers and citizens is the way of the future. This is just a first step - collective and representative actions could strengthen the enforcement of environmental legislation as well as human rights in business."

Kim van Sparrentak MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the file in the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, comments:

"We see too often that the internal market benefits companies and not consumers. This is an important step for better protecting consumers at the European-level against unfair treatment by companies."

"As a result of the pandemic we have been witnessing recently how airlines are trying to get from under their passenger rights' obligations on a massive scale. I hope this new legislation will work as a deterrent in the future for such scandalous violations of consumers' rights."

Background

The Greens/EFA had long been calling for EU-wide class action, the diesel scandal was the trigger for

strengthening consumer protection and the possibility for consumers to enforce their rights in court in class action. The EU has now decided to enforce its rights in other EU countries as well.

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