Studia Administracji i Bezpieczeństwa
nr 19 (2025)
s. 303–317

ISSN 2543-6961
e-ISSN 2720-3093
LICENCJA: CC BY-NC

Mira Malczyńska-Biały
ORCID: 0000-0003-3083-800X
University of Rzeszów

Information as an element of consumer safety in the European Union[1]

Informacja jako element bezpieczeństwa konsumentów w Unii Europejskiej

Abstract
The article seeks to present information as a key aspect of consumer safety within the European Union. It examines consumer information safety as an ongoing objective in the consumer policy programmes of both the European Economic Community and the European Union. The concept of protecting consumer information in the European Union was realised through a range of legal and organisational measures, including consumer legislation along with informational and educational initiatives by consumer protection bodies. The necessity to guarantee consumer information safety arose from the significant power imbalance between professionals and consumers. It was essential for buyers to have sufficient knowledge of contract terms, product safety, unfair market practices, and complaint procedures to fully participate in the market.

Keywords: consumer safety, information, consumer, consumer policy, European Union

Abstrakt
Artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie informacji jako elementu bezpieczeństwa konsumentów w Unii Europejskiej. Przeanalizowano w nim bezpieczeństwo konsumentów w zakresie informacji jako celu powtarzanego w programach polityki konsumenckiej w Europejskiej Wspólnocie Gospodarczej oraz Unii Europejskiej. Idea ochrony konsumentów w zakresie informacji w Unii Europejskiej realizowana była poprzez szereg działań prawno-organizacyjnych, tj. tworzone prawodawstwo konsumenckie, jak również, działania informacyjne i edukacyjne podmiotów ochrony konsumentów. Potrzeba zapewnienia konsumentom bezpieczeństwa w zakresie informacji wynikała z dysproporcji, jaka występowała pomiędzy profesjonalistą a konsumentem. Odpowiednia wiedza nabywców w zakresie warunków zawierana umów, bezpieczeństwa produktów, nieuczciwych praktyk rynkowych czy sposobów dochodzenia roszczeń konieczna była do pełnego uczestnictwa w procesie rynkowym

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo konsumentów, informacja, konsument, polityka konsumencka, Unia Europejska

[1] The text has been produced with funding from the project "Migrants from Ukraine in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Socio-Economic Implications" and funded by the Ministry of Science under the Regional Excellence Initiative programme 2024-2027, No. RID/SP/0011/2024/1.

Introduction

This article aims to present information as an element of consumer safety in European Union consumer policy strategies. The article poses the following research questions: first, is ensuring consumer safety and protection in terms of information the primary objective of EU consumer policy? Second, is consumer information one of the elements necessary to ensure consumer safety?

Security means not only guaranteeing the inviolable survival of a given entity but also its freedom of development.[2] In the context of the consumer purchasing process, security assumes a special significance. Effective consumer policy guarantees the safe use of the benefits of the free market. Consumer policy can be defined as a set of legal and organizational activities undertaken by institutions and non-governmental organizations under consumer policy programs for a given period. These activities aim to protect consumer rights in the areas of health, economic interests, redress, information, education, and organizing.[3]

The need to protect consumer information arose from the gap between professionals and consumers. For consumers to fully participate in the market, it was vital to have a comprehensive understanding of contract terms, product safety, unfair market practices, and ways to claim their rights. While companies generally had extensive knowledge in these areas, consumers often only had limited and scattered information, which constitutes a key aspect of consumer policy. The aim was to increase consumer awareness, prevent irrational and mistaken purchases, and defend consumer rights. Well-informed buyers who knew their rights and could assert them—either on their own or with the help of specialised institutions—became partners to producers and sellers, which encouraged compliance with good commercial practices and ethical business principles.[4]

In addressing the problem, we drew on research methods and techniques significant in the field of social sciences. Primarily dogmatic analysis was used to analyse legal acts regulating the discussed issues. The article also utilises a comparative method to compare specific information security measures across successive consumer policy programmes of the European Economic Community and the European Union.

[2] P. Majer, *W poszukiwaniu uniwersalne definicji bezpieczeństwa*, „Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" 2012, no. 7, p. 11.

[3] M. Malczyńska-Biały, *Consumer protection in the chosen system of human rights*, „Polityka i Społeczeństwo" 2018, no. 4, pp. 104-114.

[4] M. Malczyńska-Biały, *Education and information in consumer policy in the Republic of Poland*, „Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne" 2019, no. 2, pp. 47- 63.

1. Information security in consumer policy programmes of the European Economic Community

The need to guarantee consumers information security was present in the consumer policy of the European Economic Community.

The concept of consumer information security was developed in legal acts in the form of consumer policy programs and implemented through a range of legal and organisational activities, including consumer legislation, as well as informational and educational activities of consumer protection entities.

The 1975 Consumer Protection and Information Policy Annex[5] outlined consumers' right to information. Article 34 of the Annex stipulated that consumers were to be provided with adequate access to information on goods and services, the necessary knowledge to understand their basic characteristics (the type, quality, quantity, and price[6]). It enabled making rational choices between competing goods and services. The secondary intention of the regulation was to facilitate safe and satisfactory use of selected goods and services. Therefore, the legislation at the time, for instance the Directive on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States relating to labelling, presentation, and advertising of foodstuffs intended for sale to an individual consumer,[7] regulated several detailed, very strictly observed obligations for businesses related to labelling products with appropriate information. Educated consumers with comprehensive knowledge would be confident of their rights and thus would seek compensation for any harm or damage resulting from the use of goods or services.[8]

The Second Consumer Policy Program of 1981[9] reiterated consumer rights to information in point 2 of the annex. Point 3 added a specific consumer right to the catalogue, i.e. protection in goods and services. This right was related, among other things, to the provision of comprehensive information, particularly those placed on labels.[10] It primarily concentrated on the prices of goods and services, information about the quality and the names of specific goods,[11] as well

[5] Council Resolution of 14 April 1975 on a preliminary program of the European Economic Community for a consumer protection and information policy, O.J. C 92, 25/04/1975.

[6] In Community legislation these issues are regulated by: Council Directive 79/581/EEC of 19 June 1979 on consumer protection in the indication of the process of foodstuffs, O.J. EC L 16/19, 26/06/1979.

[7] Council Directive 79/112/EEC of 18 December 1978 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labeling, presentation, and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer, O.J. EC L 33/1, 08/02/1979.

[8] K. G. Grunert, *The consumer Information Deficit: Assessment and Policy Implications*, "Journal of Consumer Policy" 1984, no.3, pp. 362-364.

[9] Council Resolution of 19 May 1981 on a second program of the European Economic Community for a consumer protection and information policy, O.J. C 133, 3/06/1981.

[10] "Bulletin of the European Communities" 1981, no. 5, p. 25.

[11] "Bulletin of the European Communities " 1983, no. 10, p. 37.

as misleading information about products. An important element of the right to information was the protection from unfair advertising, which aimed to prevent consumers from making decisions that were unfavourable to them and based on false premises. Misleading advertising constituted an act of unfair competition.[12] Counteracting misleading or false information in advertising was reflected in Directive 84/450/EEC.[13] When determining whether an advertisement was misleading, a few factors were considered, i.e. the information concerning the characteristics of the goods or services contained therein, such as, the price, type, properties, and rights of the advertiser.[14]

A summary of activities related to the implementation of existing consumer protection programs was included in the Communication from the European Commission to the Council of the European Communities on a new impetus for consumer protection policy of 27 June 1985.[15] According to point 18 of the Communication, the Community should focus on achieving three fundamental objectives. The second of these concerned the right to benefit from the free market, to be achieved, among other things, by standardizing knowledge on goods and their prices in all EU Member States.[16] The notification was given through advertising on satellite television. The development of new technology used to provide data to consumers in the form of computer databases was also mentioned.

The Commission continued to work on improving the quality of information consumers receive about price differences that could occur in the case of identical goods. For this reason, several studies were conducted, either in cross-border regions or in individual Member States.[17]

The three-year action plan on consumer policy of the European Economic Community of 3 May 1990[18] focused in its "B" part, among other things, on the right to information. According to point 2, the right to consumer information concerned increasing their confidence in the benefits of a single market through making appropriate information about products and services more available. The idea had many aspects. It encompassed information services, understandable

[12] B. Lipińska, *Dyrektywa Rady Wspólnot Europejskiej nr 84/150/EEC, w sprawie zbliżania ustaw, rozporządzeń i przepisów administracyjnych państw członkowskich w zakresie reklamy wprowadzającej w błąd*, „Biuletyn Urzędu Antymonopolowego" 1994, no. 3, pp. 5-6.

[13] Council Directive 84/450/EEC of 10 September 1984 relating to the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning misleading advertising, O.J. L 250, 19/09/1984.

[14] Ibidem, article 3.

[15] A New Impetus for Consumer Protection Policy. Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM (85) 314, 27/06/1985.

[16] Council Directive 88/314/EEC of 7 June 1988 on consumer protection in the indication of the process of non-food products, OJ EC L. 142/19, 09/06/1988.

[17] Bulletin of the European Communities 1986, no. 9, p. 62.

[18] Three years action plan of consumer policy in the EEC (1990-1992). COM (90) 98 final, 3/05/1990.

information and comparative testing, and information contained in advertising.[19] The services were to ensure appropriate data flows that would meet consumer needs. It depended on developing information standards among economic and social entities, including entrepreneurs, and both consumer and professional advisory organizations. Information about sales promotions was not a sufficient basis for making purchasing decisions. Consumers needed access to information and advice throughout the entire transaction process. Council Directive 90/496 of the European Economic Community of 24 September 1990[20] aimed at introducing uniform rules for including nutritional information on foodstuffs in all Member States, allowing for the elimination of technical barriers to trade.

Transparency in consumer information rights was linked to the need to strive for the highest possible level of clarity of information. This was particularly important for the maximum directness regarding the presentation and delivery of goods and services. Many of the regulations in force, at the time, governing market transactions did not provide clear information for consumers. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to establish uniform requirements across all market sectors, with particular emphasis on food products. It should also be recognized that transparency requirements were changing and evolving. Therefore, there was an urgency for reviewing existing standards in terms of rationalising them and ensuring that new regulations addressed the issue. The program provided a detailed analysis of the development of product labelling legislation. The goal was to eliminate misunderstandings and meet anticipated consumer demands. The necessity to develop appropriate symbols regarding production quality was also highlighted.[21] Information transparency also concerned the adoption of legislative measures to facilitate consumer choice when making cross-border payments and financial transfers.[22] It was essential to consequently implement and adapt Directive 79/112 on food labelling to consumer needs.[23] This was to be achieved by increasing the amount of relevant consumer information by providing comparative tests, that would influence consumer choices, by facilitating price and quality comparison on the internal market, including, the credibility of advertised products.[24]

[19] V. Kendall, *EC Consumer Law,* , London-New York-Chichester 1994, pp. 163-178.
[20] Council Directive 90/496 EEC of 24 September 1990 on nutrition labeling for foodstuffs, O.J. EC L 276/40, 06/10/1990.
[21] Ibidem, point 2b.
[22] *25th General Report on the Activities of the European Communities 1991,* Brussels-Luxembourg 1992, p. 214.
[23] Council Directive 79/112/EEC of 18 December 1978 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labeling, presentation, and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer, OJ EC L 33, 8/02/1979.
[24] Council Directive 84/450/EEC… op. cit.

2. Information security in the European Union's consumer policy programmes

The idea of information security was further developed in the Council Resolution of 13 July 1992 on future priorities for the development of consumer protection policy.[25] The Resolution emphasized that the information in the single market should serve to safeguard the interests and rights of consumers by providing better education on services, which was to be granted by establishing cross-border centres and improving the pricing of consumer goods and services. What was also accented was the need to expand consumer knowledge on product recycling programs, the rational use of natural mineral resources, and of ecological packaging.

The second three-year consumer policy program[26] implemented the concept aiming at improving consumer protection and raising awareness of their rights. This prioritized developing and strengthening consumer information. On October 26, 1992, the report "The Internal Market after 1992: Meeting the Challenge" was presented to the Commission.[27] It contained a list of recommendations intended to address consumer ignorance. The report emphasized the need to develop an information strategy and highlight the issue of access to justice. In general, freedom of choice could not be effective if market conditions were unclear and if available information was not disseminated.[28]

Consumer information security ensured the inclusion of truthful information in contracts concluded with consumers.[29] The Commission also took steps to ensure that reliable information is given on labels. The program attempted to achieve consensus on the required labels and ensure the widest possible range of solutions. It was also essential to strengthen information enabling consumers to choose products in an informed manner regarding their potential environmental impact. The Commission supported price reviews, which constituted an invaluable source of information. Comparative tests also demonstrated their beneficial impact on consumer responsibility. At the Community level the instructions were developed and disseminated by the Commission to consumer organizations and institutions, information centres, and the media.[30]

[25] Council Resolution of 13 July 1992 on future priorities for the development of consumer protection Policy, Journal of Laws O.J. EC C186, 23/07/1992.
[26] Second Commission three-year consumer policy action plan 1993-1995, KOM (93) 378, 28/07/1993.
[27] The text of the report is available on the University of Pittsburgh website, http://aei.pitt.edu/1025/ , [date of access: 21.05.2024].
[28] Council Resolution 93/C 110/01, O.J.C 110/1, 20/04/1993.
[29] Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993 on unfair terms in consumer contractsL 95, 21/04/1993.
[30] 27th General Report on the Activities of the European Communities 1993, Brussels and Luxembourg 1994, p. 135.

The next consumer policy program for 1996-1998[31] concentrated on the idea of information security. Improving and developing consumer information was linked to counteracting the spread of inappropriate information about goods and misleading information about their prices.[32] When presented with accurate information, consumers would make rational choices, without being misguided and thus protected appropriately. The practical development of information services would facilitate the elimination of consumer problems. It was found that erroneous information on products challenged the process of selecting the right product from among the goods and services available.[33]

The demand to develop information security continued in the Consumer Policy Action Plan for 1999-2001.[34] It was achieved, among other things, by ensuring adequate and reliable consumer information. A key element of this action was focusing on a single priority topic, greater involvement of consumer organizations in information issues, and the creation of national information offices.[35]

Under Article 12 of Directive 2001/95/EC[36], a Community Rapid Alert System, regarding measures and actions taken in relation to products posing a serious risk to consumer health and safety, was developed for the swift exchange of data between Member States and the Commission. The RAPEX system helped prevent introduction of products posing a serious risk to consumer health and safety into the European market. It facilitated monitoring of the effectiveness and consistency of market surveillance, and the enforcement activities in Member States. It also provided a basis for identifying the urge for action at Community level, helping, at the same time, to ensure steady application of EU product safety requirements and a smooth functioning of the internal market. The detailed scope of the system is included in Annex II to the directive under review.[37]

Providing information to consumers in the European Union related to establishing legal regulations promoting consumer protection in the field of information. This concerned the right to information, with the intention of providing consumers with free, independent choices and guarantees of safety. We can essentially

[31] Communication from the Commission – priorities for consumer policy 1996-1998, COM (95)519, 31/10/1991.

[32] Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 June 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers, O.J. EC *L 080, 18/03/1998.*

[33] Pt. 1 Communication from the Commission – priorities for consumer policy 1996-1998... op. cit.

[34] Communication from the Commission. Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001, COM (98), 14/01/1998.

[35] Pt 3.4 Communication from the Commission. Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001… op. cit.

[36] Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 December 2001 on general product safety, O.J. L 11, 15.1.2002.

[37] Annex II Procedures for the application of the RAPEX system and guidelines for notifications to Directive 2001/95/EC…., op. cit.

distinguish two types of information that consumers could expect: product information and information about the terms and conditions of consumer contracts. Product information can be defined as the principle that every product intended for consumers should be accompanied with information regarding its characteristics, intended use, and a manual. Consequently, EU legislation developed a series of detailed, very strictly observed labelling obligations, including both requirements for properly provided information, and prohibitions concerning specific content.[38]

The obligation to provide information on the terms and conditions of the concluded contract, its subject and the subject of the service, as well as its effects in a true, factual and complete manner, while maintaining a specific form, for example in writing, was considered a general feature of contract law and resulted from the obligation of loyal contracting.[39]

The successful implementation of the rules concerning consumer information security involved performing information activities on product safety, which focused on eliminating unfair practices used against consumers. Application of these objectives was further specified in the provisions of Directive 2005/29/EC.[40] The issue of misguiding information was regulated by Article 6 of the act, stipulating that a commercial practice was considered misleading if it contained false information and was therefore untrue, or in any way misled or was likely to mislead the average consumer. A practice was also unfair if the information was factually incorrect in one or more respects, and caused or was likely to cause the consumer to make a transactional decision they would not have made otherwise. The practices were associated with factors such as the sole existence or type of the product, the main characteristics of the product, the scope of the trader's responsibilities, the price, necessary services, type, characteristics and rights of the trader or their representative, and consumer rights. A commercial practice was considered misleading if, in a specific case, considering all its features and circumstances, it caused or was likely to cause the average consumer to take a transactional decision that they would not have made otherwise. This included, among other things, misleading information in the form of comparative advertising that created confusion between the products, the trademarks, the trade names, or other distinguishing marks of the trader and its competitor.

[38] A. Streżyńska, *Ochrona konsumentów w Unii Europejskiej i Polsce,* Warszawa 2000, p. 98.
[39] S. Grzybowski, *System prawa cywilnego*, *vol. I, Część ogólna*, Wrocław 1974, p. 550.
[40] Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, O.J. L 149, 11.6.2005.

Under Article 7, a commercial practice was also considered misguiding if, in a specific case, considering all its features and circumstances and the limitations of the communication medium, it omitted material information necessary for the average consumer. Thus, it caused or was likely to cause the average consumer to take a transactional decision that they would not have made if it had not been for the practice. An omission when a trader concealed or provided material product information in an unclear, incomprehensible, ambiguous, or untimely manner, was also treated as a misleading practice. Additionally, the list included situations when the trader failed to disclose the commercial purpose of the practice if it was not clear from the context.[41]

In 2006, the issue of unfair information in the form of misleading and comparative advertising was regulated in accordance with the concept.[42] According to Article 2 of the Directive of 12 December 2006,[43] misleading advertising was any advertising that, in any way, including its form, misled or was likely to mislead the persons to whom it was addressed, and one that, because of its deceptive nature, was likely to influence their economic conduct, or for these reasons, harmed or was likely to harm a competitor. Comparative advertising, on the other hand, meant any advertising that explicitly or by implication identified a competitor or goods or services offered by a competitor.[44]

Proper regulation of labelling of certain product categories was intended to eliminate unfair information practices.[45] The directions in this regard were outlined, among others, in the Council Resolution of 1 March 2002.[46]

Between 2002 and 2006, providing consumer information concentrated on creating and implementing legal regulations aimed at protecting consumers by ensuring that the prices of offered products are indicated properly.[47] All Member States adopted national legislation transposing Directive 98/6/EC on consumer protection in the indication of prices of products offered to consumers. The main

[41] Article 7 Directive 2005/29/EC... op. cit.

[42] "Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 5, p. 75.

[43] Directive 2006/114/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 concerning misleading and comparative advertising, O.J. L 376, 27/12/2006.

[44] "Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 10, pp. 87-88; "Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 11, pp. 82-83.

[45] "Bulletin of the European Union" 2002, no. 1/2, pp.105-106, "Bulletin of the European Union" 2005, no. 5, pp. 40-41.

[46] Council Resolution of 1 March 2002 on the protection of consumers, in particular young people, through the labeling of certain video games and computer games according to age groups, C 65/2, 14.3.2002.

[47] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Directive 1998/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of prices of products offered to consumers, COM (2006) 325, 21/06/2006, "Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 6, pp. 102-103.

objective of this directive was to guarantee that the economic operators display the selling price and the price per unit of measurement (unit price) for all products offered to consumers to fully inform consumers and make price comparisons easier. The selling price had to be unambiguous, easily visible, and legible.[48]

Introducing data on the packaging of specific product categories was yet another element of providing consumer safety.[49] According to Article 11, for the safe use of toys, appropriate warnings were required to indicate restrictions on their use. Specific warnings were not to be displayed on toys if they were inconsistent with the intended use based on their function, size, and characteristics. Manufacturers were to display warnings in a clearly visible, easily legible, understandable, and accurate manner.[50]

From 2007 to 2013, consumer information security was driven by the development of the RAPEX rapid alert system for non-food products. In October 2012, „Global Recalls" portal was launched,[51] extending the reach of the RAPEX system beyond the European Union. It allowed global exchange of information on dangerous products withdrawn from the market. The project was developed jointly by the member states of the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, including Australia, Canada, and the United States.[52] During the reviewed period, the principles, requirements, and responsibilities for food information, and in particular food labelling, were regulated by the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011.[53]

In accordance with the Consumer Policy strategy[54] the marking and labelling of selected product categories were regulated between 2007 and 2013. The Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance played a particular role in this regard. Article 7 imposed information reporting obligations on each

[48] Directive 98/6/EC of the European Union Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers, O.J. L 80, 18/03/1998.

[49] Directive 2009/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the safety of toys, O.J. L 170, 30/06/2009.

[50] "Bulletin of the European Union" 2008, no. 9, p. 93.

[51] https://globalrecalls.oecd.org [date of access: 1.06.2025].

[52] *General report on the activities of the European Union 2012,* Brussels-Luxembourg 2013, p. 120.

[53] Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council , Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, O.J. L 304, 22/11/2011.

[54] Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee - EU Consumer Policy strategy 2007-2013 - Empowering consumers, enhancing their welfare, effectively protecting breath, COM(2007) 99, 13.3.2007.

national accreditation body, which informed other national accreditation bodies about the conformity assessment activities performed in the accreditation process and about any changes in this regard[55].

In 2014-2020[56] providing information to consumers focused on creating and improving the availability of a universal information base on consumer product safety. The transparency of markets and consumer information was also increased. The RAPEX system served as an information base for dangerous non-food products. Year after year, the system recorded an increase in published product information.[57] Market transparency and consumer information were enhanced and reinforced by developing consumer legislation. In early January 2019, Directive 2019/2161 on the better enforcement and modernization of EU consumer protection rules reached the statute book.[58] The new ruling enabled changes to consumer regulations, particularly those related to increased transparency in online marketing and sales activities.[59]

The adoption of selected laws aimed at improving information, as defined in the directive on better enforcement and modernization of EU consumer protection rules, contributed to increasing market transparency and consumer information.[60] The directive connected consumer rights to new technologies by introducing important requirements related to online transactions and digital services, and prohibited, for example, hidden advertising in browser search results and "fake" consumer reviews. It also introduced a requirement concerning consumers being informed about the identity of digital platform partners (whether individuals or professional retailers), the parameters determining result rankings, and the personalization of prices through automated decision-making.[61]

The current trends in consumer information security are outlined in the Consumer Program for 2020-2025.[62] Due to the epidemiological situation,

[55] Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 339/93, O.J. L 218, 13/08/2008.

[56] Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer program for the years 2014-20 and repealing Decision No. 1926/2006/EC, O.J. L 84, 20/03/2014.

[57] *General report on the activities of the European Union in 2016,* Brussels-Luxembourg 2017, p. 67.

[58] Directive (EU) 2019/2161 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directives 98/6/EC, 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the better enforcement and modernization of Union consumer protection rules, O.J. L 328, 18.12.2019.

[59] *General report on the activities of the European Union in 2018,* Brussels-Luxembourg 2019, p. 102.

[60] Directive (EU) 2019/2161... op. cit.

[61] *General report on the activities of the European Union in 2018...,* op. cit., p. 95.

[62] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council New Consumer Agenda Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery, COM(2020)696, 13/11/2020.

the program aims to counteract the impact of COVID-19 on consumer rights. This includes fraud, travel-related issues, exploiting financial instability, misleading information about products and services, and unfair commercial practices (in particular, online influence techniques and personalization).[63]

The Commission plans to finance the project creating "EU e-Lab", a platform that could be used by authorities to conduct online investigations and monitor dangerous products purchased online. Facilitating individual redress will remain a priority. There is also a plan to continue EU funding and modernization of European Consumer Centres, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and online dispute resolution tools.[64]

Conclusion

The idea of developing consumer information was already present in the consumer policy of the European Economic Community. In 1993, with the Treaty on European Union becoming effective, consumer policy gained a new dimension, growing into one of the Community's strategic objectives.

The need to guarantee consumer information security was present in the consumer policy of the European Economic Community and continued in the European Union. Essentially, it protected consumers against their ignorance and inexperience. Its primary purpose was to welcome diverse consumer attitudes into informed decision-making and the selection of goods and services. It also involved creating an appropriate legal environment. It involved the creation of legal regulations containing guidelines for consumer information provided by sellers and entrepreneurs (on packaging, labels, and in advertising).

Based on the analyses conducted in the article, the research questions were answered. It was confirmed that ensuring consumer safety and protection in terms of information is an overriding objective in subsequent European Union consumer policy strategies and programmes. It is implemented through a series of measures during specific periods of consumer strategy validity. Consumer information is also one of the elements necessary to ensure consumer safety.

[63] Directive (EU) 2019/2161 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directives 98/6/EC, 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the better enforcement and modernization of Union consumer protection rules, O.J. L 328, 18.12.2019.

[64] Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument, O.J. L 57, 18/02/2021.

Bibliography

1. A New Impetus for Consumer Protection Policy. Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM (85) 314, 27.06. 1985.
2. „Bulletin of the European Communities" 1981, no. 5, p. 25.
3. „Bulletin of the European Communities" 1983, no. 10, p. 37.
4. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 5, p. 75.
5. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 10, pp. 87-88.
6. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2006, no. 11, pp. 82-83.
7. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2002, no. 1/2, pp. 105-106.
8. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2005 no. 5, p. 40-41.
9. Communication from the Commission – priorities for consumer Policy 1996-1998, COM (95)519, 31.10.1991.
10. Communication from the Commission. Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001, COM (98), 14.01.1998.
11. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Directive 1998/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of prices of products offered to consumers, COM (2006) 325, 21.6.2006. „Bulletin of the European Union" 2006 no. 6, p. 102-103.
12. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee - EU Consumer Policy strategy 2007-2013 - Empowering consumers, enhancing their welfare, effectively protecting them, COM(2007) 99, 13.3.2007.
13. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council New Consumer Agenda Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery, COM(2020)696, 13.11.2020.
14. Council Resolution of 14 April 1975 on a preliminary programme of the European Economic Community for a consumer protection and information policy, O.J. C 92, 25.4.1975.
15. Council Directive 79/581/EEC of 19 June 1979 on consumer protection in the indication of the process of foodstuffs, O. J. EC L 16/19, 26.06.1979.
16. Council Directive 79/112/EEC of 18 December 1978 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labeling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer, O.J. EC L 33/1, 08.02.1979.
17. Council Directive 84/450/EEC of 10 September 1984 relating to the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning misleading advertising, O.J. L 250, 19.9.1984.
18. Council Directive 88/314/EEC of 7 June 1988 on consumer protection in the indication of the process of non-food products, O.J. EC L. 142/19, 09.06.1988.
19. Council Directive 90/496 EEC of 24 September 1990 on nutrition labeling for foodstuffs, O.J. EC L 276/40, 06.10.1990.
20. Council Directive 79/112/EEC of 18 December 1978 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labeling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer, O. J. EC L 33, 8.02.1979.
21. Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993 on unfair terms in consumer contracts
22. O.J. L 95, 21.4.1993.
23. Council Resolution 93/C 110/01, O.J. C. 110/1, 20.04.1993.

24. Council Resolution of 1 March 2002 on the protection of consumers, in particular young people, through the labelling of certain video games and computer games according to age groups, C 65/2, 14.3.2002.
25. Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 June 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers, O.J. EC L 080, 18.03.1998.001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 December 2001 on general product safety, O.J. L 11, 15.1.2002.
26. Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, O.J. L 149, 11.6.2005.
27. Directive 2006/114/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 concerning misleading and comparative advertising, O.J. L 376, 27.12.2006.
28. Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers, O.J. L 80, 18.3.1998.
29. Directive (EU) 2019/2161 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directives 98/6/EC, 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the better enforcement and modernisation of Union consumer protection rules, O.J. L 328, 18.12.2019.
30. Directive (EU) 2019/2161 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directives 98/6/EC, 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the better enforcement and modernisation of Union consumer protection rules, O.J. L 328, 18.12.2019.
31. *General report on the activities of the European Union 2012*, Brussels-Luxembourg 2013, p. 120.
32. *General report on the activities of the European Union in 2016*, Brussels-Luxembourg, 2017, p. 67.
33. *General report on the activities of the European Union in 2018*, Brussels-Luxembourg 2019, p. 102.
34. Grunert K. G., *The consumer Information Deficit: Assessment and Policy Implications*, „Journal of Consumer Policy" 1984, no. 3, p. 362-364.
35. Grzybowski S., *System prawa cywilnego*, *t. I, Część ogólna*, Wrocław 1974.
36. http://aei.pitt.edu/1025/
37. https://globalrecalls.oecd.org
38. Kendall V., *EC Consumer Law*, London-New York-Chichester 1994.
39. Majer P., *W poszukiwaniu uniwersalne definicji bezpieczeństwa,* „Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" 2012, no.7, p. 11.
40. Malczyńska-Biały M., *Consumer protection in chosen system of human rights*, „Polityka i Społeczeństwo" 2018, no. 4, pp.104-114.
41. Malczyńska-Biały M., *Education and information in consumer policy in the Republic of Poland*, „Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne" 2019, no. 2, pp. 47-63.

42. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, O.J. L 304, 22.11.2011.
43. Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 339/93, O.J. L 218, 13.8.2008.
44. Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 and repealing Decision No 1926/2006/EC, O.J. L 84, 20.3.2014.
45. Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument, O.J. L 57, 18.2.2021.
46. Second Commission three-year consumer policy action plan 1993-1995, KOM (93) 378, 28.07.1993.
47. Strężyńska A., *Ochrona konsumentów w Unii Europejskiej i Polsce,* Warszawa 2000.
48. Three-year action plan of consumer policy in the EEC (1990-1992). COM (90) 98 final, 3.05.1990.
49. *XXVth General Report on the Activities of the European Communities 1991,* Brussels-Luxembourg 1992, p. 214.
50. *XXVIIth General Report on the Activities of the European Communities 1993*, Brussels-Luxembourg 1994, p. 135.