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Cross border e-commerce. How international standards can help transparency of online platforms

ANEC and Consumers International (CI) welcome the publication of the [European Commission communication on online platforms](#)¹, and proposals on [new e-commerce rules](#),² to create a stronger regulatory framework to protect consumers and increase confidence in online markets.

Online platforms are a part of everyday life for millions of European consumers who use the internet to purchase goods and services such as transport, accommodation, holidays, financial services and healthcare.

ANEC's 2015 study, '[Cross-border Online Shopping within the EU](#)³', found that online reviews do influence online purchasing decisions, with 78% of European consumers referring to them before making choices.

ANEC and CI are currently collaborating on the development of a new International Standard for Online Reviews, expected in early 2018. They represent the voice of European and international consumers in ISO TC 290 'Online reputation', to ensure the standard addresses essential consumer requirements such as choice, fairness, accessibility, transparency etc. Inclusive international standardisation is key in light of the global nature of the digital market. It is hoped that the best practice models identified by this work could be usefully applied to online platforms, also noting the objective in the Commission Communication to tackle misleading online reviews.

Standards for services have the potential to play a vital role in consumer protection, underpinning legislation and providing the detailed guidance that organisations need to deliver services that meet consumer expectations. Accordingly, ANEC and CI will continue working on the development of the standards needed to increase consumer confidence and protection in online markets.

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¹ Communication - Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market Opportunities and Challenges for Europe (COM(2016)288). http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1887_en.htm

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1873_en.htm

³ <http://bit.ly/1RpYuhz> and <http://bit.ly/1OMQOGp>