



Patērētāju tiesību aizsardzības centrs

# **AWARENESS OF POPULATION OF LATVIA ABOUT CONSUMER RIGHTS AND EXPERIENCE WITH PURCHASING POOR QUALITY OR UNSAFE GOOD AND SERVICES**

**Main conclusions  
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# **MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

# Main conclusions (1)

## Awareness of population about consumer rights

- According to the survey results, overall, less than half or 46% of inhabitants consider themselves well informed about their consumer rights (answer *rather well informed* was given by 41% but *very well informed* — by 5% of respondents). On the other hand, 51% of the population consider their knowledge about their consumer rights to be poor (answer *rather poorly informed* was given by 36%, but *very poorly informed* — by 15% of respondents). Comparing this year's data with the results from previous years, it can be concluded that this year the awareness level assessment has decreased slightly. The data of this year's survey also show that with the increase of educational level, as well as with the increase of income, knowledge about consumer rights increases. These trends can be observed in all surveys since 2014.

## Possibilities to reach a solution acceptable to consumer in problem situations

- Inhabitants of Latvia still have rather pessimistic view on possibilities in Latvia to reach a solution acceptable to consumer in case a poor quality product or service has been purchased. In total, half of respondents (50%) consider it is difficult (answer *rather difficult* was given by 38%, but *very difficult* — by 12% of respondents). On the other hand, 29% consider it is easy to reach a solution acceptable to the consumer (answer *rather easy* was given by 27%, but *very easy* — by 2% of respondents). 20% of the inhabitants could not provide their assessment. It is noticeable that the older the respondents, the less often they believe that reaching an acceptable solution is easy. Respondents with a higher level of education, higher income, and respondents living in Riga view this issue more optimistically.

## Sources of information about action after purchasing a poor quality product

- The most frequently mentioned sources of information about action in case a poor quality or unsafe product has been purchased still are stores (47%), friends, acquaintances (24%), as well as television (24%). Comparing with the results of surveys carried out in previous years, it can be seen that the most popular sources of information about actions after purchasing a poor quality product remain unchanged but the importance of television as a source of such information continues to decline. Since 2014, with each measurement, gradually increases the proportion of respondents who note that information about action in a situation where a poor quality or unsafe product has been purchased is received in stores.
- The most convenient ways to receive information have also not changed significantly since 2014. Inhabitants more often would like to get the information about the action in case of purchasing a poor quality product in a store (50%), on the Internet, on a specific website (32%) and on television (19%).

## Awareness about action in case an product or service unsuitable to contract is purchased

- About half of population (51%) evaluate their awareness about action in case an product or service unsuitable to contract is purchased as good (answer *rather good* was given by 41%, but *very good* — by 10% of respondents). On the other hand, 45% of population consider their knowledge as weak (answer *rather weak* was given by 29% but *very weak* — by 16% of respondents).

- Compared to the results of the 2022 survey, respondents' self-assessment of awareness has decreased and returned to the 2020 level. Relatively higher their own awareness value respondents aged 25–54, those speaking Latvian in their family and respondents with high incomes. With the increase of educational level, there is an increase of the population who value their awareness about action in case an product or service unsuitable to contract is purchased as good.

## Action in case an product or service unsuitable to contract would be purchased

- Respondents who know very well, rather well or rather weak what to do and where to turn to in case an product or service unsuitable to contract is purchased were asked which would be the first authority they would turn to in such case. Results reveal that the most part of the respondents or 85% would turn to the vendor or provider of services. Much smaller proportion of the population (10%) would turn to the Consumer Rights Protection Centre. Compared to surveys carried out in other years, the results have not changed significantly.

## Opinion on the Consumer Rights Protection Centre

- Almost half of the respondents (48%) has a positive opinion about the Consumer Rights Protection Centre (answer *rather positive* was given by 43% but *very positive* — by 5% of respondents), while 20% has a negative opinion (answer *rather negative* was given by 16% but *very negative* — by 4% of respondents). One third of respondents (33%) could not give a specific answer to this question. Comparing the indicators with the data of previous years, it can be concluded that there are no significant changes. Relatively more positive opinion towards the Consumer Rights Protection Centre have those speaking Latvian in their family, inhabitants with higher education, high income and residents of Riga.

## Awareness of the Consumer Rights Protection Centre's Dispute Resolution Commission

- A little more than half (52%) of the population indicate that they did not know before that a dispute with the seller of an unsuitable and poor quality product can be resolved in the Dispute Resolution Commission of the Consumer Rights Protection Center. On the other hand, 43% indicate that they had previously known about it — up from 38% in the 2022 survey. Women, respondents with a higher level of education and high income have known about it more often. Respondents aged 18–24 are less likely to be aware of the Dispute Resolution Commission.

## Purchase of a poor quality or unsafe products and services in the last three years

- According to survey data, during the last three years 26% of respondents have purchased a poor quality product but a smaller proportion of population has purchased an unsafe product — 4%. 9% have encountered poor quality services, but unsafe services — 2% of population. There are no significant changes in these indicators since 2017.

(continued on next page)

# Main conclusions (2)

## Purchase of a poor quality or unsafe products and services in the last three years *(continued)*

- Most often mentioned poor quality or unsafe products inhabitants have purchased during the last three years are electric appliances (35%), footwear (30%) and clothing, textiles (25% — up from 19% in the 2022 survey). Among most often mentioned poor quality or unsafe services inhabitants have purchased during the last three years are car repair services (28%), electronic communications services (17%), construction services (14%) and services of rent and utilities (12%). Comparing with the results of surveys carried out in previous years, it can be seen that this year inhabitants have again encountered poor quality or unsafe car repair services (the indicator has returned to the 2020–2021 level) and electronic communication services more often. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who have encountered poor quality or unsafe air services has decreased.

## Acquaintance with the instructions for use of the product

- Among respondents who had bought a poor quality or unsafe product and complained about it to the manufacturer or trader — compared to the 2022 survey results, the proportion of respondents who had read the instructions for use of the product in great detail before using it has increased this year (35%), returning to the 2021 level. 23% had only skimmed the instructions, while 29% had not read them. 8% of respondents had not read the instructions because they had noticed a defect before using the product.

## Dealing with the situation after purchasing a poor quality or unsafe product

- Just over 2/3 of people (67%) who have purchased at least one poor quality or unsafe product in the last three years say they have complained to the manufacturer or vendor. In turn, 32% of the population have admitted that they have not filed a complaint. The complaint filing rate is slightly lower than in the 2022 survey results.
- In 56% of cases after the complaint was filed, the product was exchanged to the same or equivalent, in 21% of cases all the money spent on the product was returned, but in 11% of cases the product was repaired. Other solutions were chosen less often. Compared to the 2022 survey results, product exchange is slightly more frequent and repair is slightly less frequent, but overall there is no significant change since the 2021 survey results.

## Paying attention to the labeling of electrical appliances when purchasing it

- More than half of all respondents (60%) pay attention to its energy label when purchasing electric appliances. Compared to 2020 and 2022, the indicator has increased (from 49%). 15% of respondents do it sometimes, but 28% — do not pay attention to energy labels. Those who speak Latvian in their families, as well as respondents with a higher level of education and income, pay more attention to the energy label of a product. Relatively less often — respondents aged 18–24 and 65–75.

## Choice of household appliances with a higher class energy label

- 63% of respondents choose household appliances with a higher class energy label in their household. Compared to 2022, this indicator has increased (from 56%). 30% of respondents do not choose household appliances with a higher energy label. Household appliances with a higher class energy label in their household are more often chosen by respondents aged 25–64, Latvian-speaking in family, respondents with higher education level and high income.

## The main reason to choose electrical appliances with a higher energy efficiency class

- Of those respondents who choose higher energy efficiency electrical appliances, the majority (90%) indicate that the main reason for doing so is daily savings, followed by environmental aspects (5%). It can be observed that younger respondents (18–24 years) more often indicate environmental aspects as the main reason. Compared to 2020 and 2022, there are no significant changes.

## The main reason not to choose electrical appliances of a higher energy efficiency class

- Respondents tend not to choose electrical appliances of a higher energy efficiency class because the price of the products is too high (indicated by 34% of respondents). 18% of respondents do not trust the information provided, but 40% of respondents do not care and are not committed to it. Of these respondents, those aged 18–34 are most likely to not choose such electrical appliances due to indifference. Compared to the results of the 2020 and 2022 surveys, no significant changes are observed.

## Action in case if the electrical appliance no longer works

- If an electrical appliance no longer works, 47% of the surveyed population usually buys a new one, and an equally large proportion of respondents — 47% — usually tries to repair an existing one. As age increases, the proportion of respondents who usually try to repair an existing electrical appliance gradually increases. Respondents with higher incomes were more likely to purchase a new electrical appliance. Compared to 2020 and 2022, respondents are more likely to purchase a new electrical appliance, and the proportion of respondents who were unable to provide a specific answer continues to decrease. However, overall, no significant changes are observed.
- The most popular reasons for purchasing a new electrical appliance instead of repairing the existing one are: repair is expensive (66%), the electrical appliance is cheap or outdated (44%), the warranty period has expired (43%), the specific electrical appliance cannot be repaired (35%). Other reasons are mentioned relatively less often. Compared to previous survey results, the frequency of mentions has increased for almost all reasons offered in the answer options. The largest increases are for the reasons that the electrical appliance is cheap or outdated (from 31% in 2022 to 44% this year) and that repairs are expensive (from 54% in 2020 and 58% in 2022 to 66% this year).

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