

- ADA – Austrian Agency for Development (project on the energy efficiency and on raising consumers' awareness with the emphasis on using the Solar Water Heaters),
- Anne Fransen Fund – Netherlands support to the project of monitoring the prices in several supermarkets in Skopje.

## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

### *Dear consumers!*

If you have considered that your rights have not been respected when you buy products or use services, call us, we will do our best to help you!

When you do not know your rights, or have a problem with using your rights in the domain of warranties or guarantee documents, door step selling, on-line buying, public utilities services, other certain services, financial services, health insurance rights, health care etc., you can call the COM Advisory Bureau in Skopje or the Advisory Bureaus of other consumers' organisations, where you will be advised about your problem.

## HOW TO BECOME COM MEMBER?

*The Consumers' Organisation of Macedonia reacts to the business operators or to the authorized institutions on your behalf and approval, if you are a subscribed and affiliate member.*

*Call us in case you have suggestions even if you do not have a specific problem! In that way you will help and support the organisations activities!*

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Consumers' Organisation  
of Macedonia  
(COM)

Consumers' organisation (COM) of Macedonia is established in 1996 as an independent, non-political and non-profit organisation.

COM represents consumers' interests, works on increasing the public awareness by informing, advising and education, improvement and implementation of the appropriate legal regulation and the consumer policy.

## HOW ARE WE ORGANIZED?

COM has a Central Office and Advisory Bureau for the consumers in Skopje.

Consumers' Organisation of Bitola, Shtip, Tetovo, Ohrid and Kochani along with their Advisory Bureaus are members of COM.

- The Central office carries out the Organisation's activities, coordinates its members' operations in the other cities, issues informational materials, contacts the media at regular basis, organises thematic tribunes, forums and educational lectures.
- The advisory bureaus conduct the advising and informing the consumers either by phone or by letter (electronic mail inclusive) and in the Advisory Bureau by an appointment.
- COM's expert support is realized by the work of many Committees which help in the preparation of the brochures, the newsletter and the updating of the information within their scope of work. The Expert Committees are formed in order to work in regard to the following topics: legal and financial, food and nutrition, housing and energy efficiency,

patients' rights and education of young consumers.

## HOW DO WE REPRESENT THE CONSUMERS' INTERESTS?

### On central level

We have constant communication and cooperation with the authorized Ministries, inspection and other administrative bodies which are authorized for the consumers' protection, the Ombudsman Office, the Food and Veterinary Agency, Agency for electronic communication, Energy Agency, Directorate for Personal Data Protection, Accreditation Institute, Standardization Institute and other institutions that operate within the domain of consumers' protection, the local self-government and related non-profit organisations.

Also, we have our representatives who participate in the work of: Consumers' protection Council of the Government of RM, Accreditation Institute, the Court of Honour within the Tourist activity Chamber, the Managing Board of the Health Insurance Fund, Waste Management Committee, Bio safety Committee, Agro-council, as well as other committees and bodies where issues on consumers' protection are being discussed.

### On local level

Cooperation with the local self-government, where we initiate and support establishment of the Consumers' protection councils within the Municipalities Councils. The Consumers' Councils with our support were established in 25 municipalities.

We help the municipalities in the preparation and implementation of Programmes of Consumers' protection on a local level, by the assistance of the local self-government.

We organise trainings on consumer protection policy and on consumer legislation for the members of the Consumers' Councils of the municipalities where they are formed.

### Internationally

COM is a member of the European Consumers' Organisation – BEUC and member of Consumers International since 2000. In performing our activities we follow the guidelines, directions and scope of activities of these organisations.

## WHERE DO WE GET THE ASSISTANCE FROM?

*The Consumers' protection programme of the COM for 2010, 2011 and 2012 is supported by CIVICA Mobilitas programme implemented by CIRa and financially supported by SDC – Swiss Agency for development and cooperation.*

*Since 2005 we are involved in the realization of the consumer protection policy and legislation through implementation of all the programmes on Consumers' protection adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.*

### COM has been working on several projects in the recent years:

- GTZ bilateral projects (establishing a system for consumers' protection in RM, raising the awareness of the legislation, carrying out researches, issuing brochures, organisation campaigns), and establishing a consumer protection system on the local level as well.
- USAID – ITZ projects, (initiating and adopting of the Law on Consumer protection and campaigns for its implementation, creating Consumers' Councils within the Municipalities' Councils, improving services of public utilities toward consumers).