

**NATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF ITALY IN SUPPORT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF  
THE CONSUMER POLICY STRATEGY (2002–2006)**

*Report on the implementation of the strategy*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *This model follows the outline of the Rolling Programme for Consumer Policy 2002-2006 (COM(2002)208 final*

## OBJECTIVE 1: A HIGH COMMON LEVEL OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

Action	Description	Timeframe / State of play
<p>1.1 Legislation on the economic interests of the consumer</p> <p>1.1.1 Finalisation of the code consolidating consumer affairs legislation</p>	<p>The 2001 annual consolidation bill provides for the government to issue one or more instruments to reorganise consumer protection law in accordance with the principles and guiding criteria set out in Article 20 of Act No 59 of 15 March 1997. The specific goal is to reorganise the series of national rules of law enacted over time in the field of consumer protection, applying the following guiding principles:</p> <p>a) The legislation must be brought into line with Community law and international agreements and so structured as to make it a coordinated instrument for attaining the consumer protection aims laid down at international level.</p> <p>b) The procedures on the consumer's right to withdraw from the various types of contract must be aligned.</p> <p>c) As regards distance contracts, it is necessary to end the transitional arrangement whereby the terms most favourable to the consumer apply, as provided for by Article 15 of Legislative Decree No 185 of 22 May 1999 transposing Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 1997.</p> <p>d) In out-of-court settlement procedures, the activities of consumer associations must be coordinated, in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission.</p> <p>The Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection of the Ministry of Production Activities set up an informal working group to review the legislation to be reorganised and draw up a first draft arranged as a set of articles.</p> <p>The group worked throughout 2002 and at the end of the year drew up a draft in which 25 instruments were combined into a single consolidated text.</p> <p>By the Decree of 23 December 2002, the Minister set up a Study Commission to produce a final text on the basis of the Directorate-General's work.</p> <p>This Commission scrutinised the first draft and brought the text into line with the consolidation act. It then produced the final draft, consisting of 147 articles, which consolidates about 25 instruments.</p>	<p>December 2001 - January 2002</p> <p>Work on this task was carried out throughout 2002.</p> <p>This Commission included academics in the field and worked on the text from March to June 2003.</p>

<p>1.1.2 Act No 57 of 5 March 2001</p>	<p>Act No 57 of 5 March 2001 required insurance companies, in the interest of openness and market regulation, to inform the private insurance regulator (ISVAP), the National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU) and the Chambers of Commerce of the benchmark annual premiums quoted to customers at the beginning of each half year. Under this Act, the Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection, on behalf of the CNCU, acquired the data supplied by the insurance companies (and subsequently published them on its own website). The data were collected every six months unless the tariffs were adjusted in the meantime.</p> <p>This requirement became superfluous as a result of Act No 273 of 12 December 2002 enacting measures to promote private initiative and competition.</p>	<p>At six-monthly intervals</p>
<p>1.1.3 Technical committee for monitoring the prices of goods and services in widespread use, established by the Ministerial Decree of 2 January 2003</p> <p>The Ministerial Decree of 30 April 2003 designated the representatives of the various bodies on the Committee, which is chaired by the Minister, Mr Marzano. Its composition is described in section 1.4.2.</p>	<p>The Committee's remit is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to analyse and monitor price changes throughout Italy at all stages of production, with particular reference to goods and services in widespread use, including seasonal goods and services, promoting agreements with the local authorities where appropriate;</li> <li>b) to propose steps to improve the openness of the price formation process;</li> <li>c) to identify sectors in which there is a need for information campaigns to promote and develop a culture of consumer self-help.</li> </ol> <p>The Committee will focus on the following lines of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) creation of an information system to monitor the consumer prices of a basket of basic goods and of services of public interest;</li> <li>2) analysis of the price dynamics at the various production and marketing stages for a number of types of basic goods.</li> </ol> <p>The activities required by the first line of action may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– identification of the consumer price observers already operating and the statistical sources of the available databanks, with a contribution by ISTAT, which will provide methodological and scientific support;</li> <li>– creation of a databank as a repository for information on the products monitored;</li> <li>– processing and presentation of the data, inter alia on a dedicated website.</li> </ul>	<p>The first meeting of the Committee was held on 4 June 2003.</p>

<p>1.1.4 The Ministerial Decree of 16 February 2000 established a joint body known as the Petroleum Market Monitoring and Assessment Panel.</p>	<p>The Panel's function is to support the Ministry's work on developments in the petroleum market, with particular reference to domestic and international prices, the factors giving rise to differences between prices on the domestic and international markets and the structure of the petroleum market in Italy and the ways in which it differs from that in other European countries, with a view to effective harmonisation.</p> <p>The competent Ministry unit is currently conducting surveys on the prices of petroleum products on the basis of the Panel's information.</p>	<p>The observations are made separately for the various types of product, at daily, weekly and six-monthly intervals.</p>
<p>1.2 Electronic commerce Legislation</p> <p>1.2.1 Legislative Decree No 70 of 9 April 2003 transposes Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market. Among the topics regulated are codes of conduct (Article 18), dispute settlement (Article 19) and cooperation (Article 20). The two latter topics are discussed under Objective 2.</p> <p>– Article 18</p>	<p>“1. Trade, professional and consumer associations or organisations shall promote the adoption of codes of conduct, which they shall forward to the Ministry of Production Activities and the European Commission, with all pertinent information on their application and their impact upon practices, habits or customs relating to electronic commerce.</p> <p>2. If adopted, the code of conduct shall be made accessible by electronic means and shall be drawn up in Italian and English, and in at least one other Community language.</p> <p>3. Codes of conduct shall be so formulated as to ensure the protection of minors and of human dignity.”</p>	
<p>1.2.2 E-Business Committee set up at the Ministry of Production Activities</p>	<p>The Committee includes representatives of the public authorities concerned, the trade and the National Council of Consumers and Users. Its remit covers the promotion, development and use of electronic commerce, monitoring of the main areas concerned and the</p>	<p>Set up in May 2002 and still in operation.</p>

	requirements of businesses and of consumer protection. It has four thematic subgroups dealing with certification, promotion and information, security and payment systems and logistics.	
<p>1.3 Services of general interest Legislation</p> <p>1.3.1 Decision of the Interministerial Economic Planning Committee (CIPE) of 24 April 1996</p>	<p>The CIPE Decision of 24 April 1996 laid down guidelines for the regulation of national and local services of public interest. The same Decision set up the advisory group on implementation of the guidelines for regulation of public interest services (NARS), which is attached to the CIPE secretariat.</p> <p>This group includes representatives of the Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection.</p> <p>It promotes implementation of the guidelines, checks the impact of the programme contracts and submits opinions to the CIPE.</p> <p>It makes recommendations to the CIPE on charges in the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- motorway tolls;</li> <li>- national rail service;</li> <li>- postal service;</li> <li>- airport services;</li> <li>- water supply services;</li> <li>- maritime shipping service.</li> </ul>	<p>The NARS normally meets once per month.</p> <p>The work is monitored by working groups, which meet weekly.</p>

<p><b>1.3.2 Study on the state of the art with regard to the Services Charter</b></p>	<p><b>In May 2003, the Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection released a study, begun in 2001, on the state of the art with regard to Services Charters. These are an instrument introduced by the Prime Ministerial Directive of 27 January 1994, by means of which the authorities in the public interest sectors develop quality standards to safeguard consumer rights.</b></p> <p><b>The various regulatory bodies which could be expected to provide input participated actively and directly in the study. It analysed six sectors (energy, gas, postal services, telecommunications, water resources, transport), reviewing and comparing the charters adopted for each. Its conclusions describe some cases of excellent and good practice and discuss the problems encountered and the outlook for improving the effectiveness of Services Charters and consumer protection.</b></p> <p><b>Given the amount of information contained in the study, and its value for all players in the sector, including consumer protection bodies, the Directorate is preparing to print and distribute it nationally and to set up a standing panel at the Ministry to continue the work of monitoring, put forward proposals for making consumer protection instruments more effective and disseminate periodically the results obtained and the enquiries conducted.</b></p>	
<p><b>1.4 Integration of consumer interests into other policies: policy initiatives which take into account consumer interests (e.g. environment, transport, energy, financial services, the information society)</b></p>		
<p>1.4.1 Re section 1.1.2 - Legislation on the economic interests of the consumer (Act No 57 of 5 March 2001)</p>	<p>ISVAP, Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft Trades and Agriculture, ISTAT and National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU)</p>	
<p>1.4.1 Re section 1.1.2 - Legislation on the economic interests of the consumer (Act No 57 of 5 March 2001)</p>	<p>ISVAP, Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft Trades and Agriculture, ISTAT and National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU)</p>	
<p>1.4.2 Re section 1.1.3 - Legislation on the economic interests of the consumer (Technical committee for monitoring the prices of goods and services in widespread use)</p>	<p>The Committee consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ the Director-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection;</li> <li>▫ the Director-General for Commerce, Insurance and Services;</li> <li>▫ a representative of ISTAT;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces designated by the Conference of the Presidents of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the municipalities designated by the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI);</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ a representative of the Association of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture (Unioncamere);</li> <li>▫ two representatives of consumers designated by the National Council of Consumers and Users;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Coldiretti National Farmers Confederation;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Confagricoltura General Farming Confederation;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the CIA Italian Farmers Confederation;</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria);</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Italian Confederation of Small and Medium-sized Industry (CONFAPI);</li> <li>▫ a representative of the General Confederation of Trade, Tourism, Services and SMEs (Confcommercio);</li> <li>▫ a representative of the Confederation of Trade and Tourism (Confesercenti);</li> <li>▫ a representative of the General Italian Confederation of Artisans (Confartigianato);</li> <li>▫ a representative of the National Confederation for the Craft Sector and Small and Medium Enterprise (CNA).</li> </ul>	
1.4.3 Re section 1.1.4 - Legislation on the economic interests of the consumer (Petroleum Market Monitoring and Assessment Panel)	The Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas, the petroleum companies' association (Unione Petrolifera) and representatives of fuel distributors	
1.4.4 Re section 1.3 - Services of general interest (regulation of services of public interest)	The CIPE and its participating ministries	
<b>1.5 Consumer safety and health legislation</b>	<b>Regulatory activities at the level of the EU Commission and Council, aimed at better and consistent protection of consumers' safety, as regards only the "physical" risks to which they may be exposed</b>	<b>Meetings at the EU Council and Commission. There is no particular schedule for the former, while for the latter there are on average two to four meetings per year.</b>
<b>1.5.1 Transposal of Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety</b>	<b>The new Directive has been in force since 15 January 2003. It contains innovatory provisions for further consumer protection: producer responsibility, recognition of the consumer's new role, better notification procedures, more effective administrative cooperation between Member States on market controls.</b>	<b>The Directive should be transposed by 15 January 2003.</b>
<b>1.5.1.1 Checks on the feasibility of the innovatory proposals contained in Directive 2001/95/EC</b>	<b>"Appraisal exercises" will be carried out on a voluntary basis by the national supervisory authorities to assess the applicability of the new procedures for market controls in the various national contexts.</b>	<b>Since the beginning of 2003, periodic meetings of the Member States have been held at the Commission.</b>

1.5.1.2 Comparative studies of Directive 2001/95/EC and the sectoral directives	Identification and solution of the problems encountered in applying the new general directive along with the product directives	Constant meetings and exchanges of information throughout 2003 between the Commission, the Member States, producers and consumers
1.5.2 Revision of Directive 88/378/EEC on the safety of toys	Identification of the problems relating to the effectiveness and applicability of the directive, with a view to the revision of the NA directives	Meetings at the Commission, at least once every six months
1.5.3 Preparation of a proposal for a directive on the safety of services offered to the final consumer	Scrutiny at the EU Council of the proposal for a directive on the physical safety of consumers when making use of a service	In the first half of 2003, two meetings were held at the Commission and one at the Council; the work will continue at the Council.

## OBJECTIVE 2: EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION RULES

Action	Description	Timeframe / State of play
2.1 Out-of-court settlement of disputes and consolidation of the European Extra-Judicial Network  2.1.1 Legislation: Legislative Decree No 70 of 9 April 2003 transposing Directive 2000/31/EC (cf. section 1.2). – Article 19 (dispute settlement)	“1. In the event of disagreement, an information society service provider and the recipient of the service may have recourse to out-of-court settlement bodies, including bodies which operate by electronic means. If such bodies operate in accordance with the principles laid down by Community and national law, they shall be notified at their request to the European Commission for inclusion in the European Extra-Judicial Network. 2. Out-of-court settlement bodies shall inform the European Commission and the Ministry of Production Activities, which shall forward the information to the competent authorities, of the significant decisions they take regarding information society services and any other information on the practices, usages or customs relating to electronic commerce.”	Ongoing
2.1.2 European Consumer Infocentre and national EEJ-NET clearing house	In February 2001, these functions were assigned to the National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU), which in turn entrusted the practical operations to the Rome ECC until May 2003 and then to the Bolzano ECC until such time as an operator can be chosen by invitation to tender.	February 2001 - May 2003

<p>2.1.3 National survey of out-of-court settlement bodies</p>	<p>The Ministry of Production Activities and the Ministry of Justice, which are jointly pursuing the issue of out-of-court settlement of disputes, have promoted schemes to develop greater knowledge and use of such tools and intend to launch a survey of all Italian bodies which engage in alternative dispute resolution in consumer matters. The aim of the Ministries' joint action is to set up a databank as a reference source for the State, in its supervisory role, and for the clearing house, in its role as a contact point at European level. The survey will make it possible to identify bodies which are voluntary members of the network, stating that they comply with the principles set out in Recommendations 98/257/EC and 2000/310/EC, and bodies which are not network members in that they do not yet comply with these principles or else comply with them but do not yet intend to join. The survey will thus yield all information of use in monitoring the national out-of-court settlement system and its participation in the network.</p>	<p>Two lists of bodies which will join EEJ-NET in accordance with the principles set out in the two Community recommendations will be drawn up and these bodies will be notified to the European Commission.</p>
<p>2.2 Cooperation between Member States</p> <p>2.2.1 An example is Article 20 of Legislative Decree No 70 of 9 April 2003, which transposes Directive 2000/31/EC. (Compare section 1.2)</p>	<p>“1. The national contact point for assistance to and cooperation with the Member States and the Commission shall be established at the Ministry of Production Activities, without further charge to the state budget. The contact point shall be accessible by electronic means.</p> <p>2. The Ministry of Production Activities shall ensure that the following information is made available in good time on its own website for government departments and for service recipients and providers:</p> <p>a) general information on contractual rights and obligations as well as on the complaint and redress machinery available in the event of disputes, and on the codes of conduct drawn up with the consumers' associations listed in the register mentioned in Article 5 of Act No 281 of 30 July 1998;</p> <p>b) particulars of authorities, organisations or associations from which further information or practical assistance can be obtained;</p> <p>c) particulars and a summary of significant decisions regarding information society services, including those taken by out-of-court settlement bodies, and any other information on the practices, usages or customs relating to electronic commerce.”</p>	<p>The contact point mentioned in the Article has been set up at the Ministry of Production Activities.</p>
<p>2.3 Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules</p> <p>2.3.1 Circular No 1/AMTC of 28 March 2002 on Presidential Decree No 430 of 26 October 2001, enacting "Regulations for</p>	<p>Circular No 1/AMTC of 28 March 2002 provided "Initial explanatory and procedural information on the new rules for promotional prize</p>	<p>Still in progress</p>

<p>the comprehensive revision of the rules for prize draws and competitions and prize-with-purchase promotions, and for local raffles and similar events, within the meaning of Article 19(4) of Act No 449 of 27 December 1997"</p>	<p>events".          Since 12 April 2002, the new rules on prize draws and competitions and prize-with-purchase promotions have been in force, replacing the previous rules, which date from 1938.          As from 12 April 2002, responsibility in this area has been transferred from the Revenue Agency to the Ministry of Production Activities - Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection. The new rules are intended to liberalise the sector, replacing the authorisation regime with a prior notification system for prize draws and competitions and the requirement to produce and keep self-certified rules for prize-with-purchase promotions.          Such prior notifications can be checked to establish that the promotions satisfy the requirements that they be free of charge and that a financial guarantee be in place to safeguard consumers' interests.</p>	
<p>2.3.2 Presidential Decree No 84 of 17 February 2003, enacting the "Regulations transposing Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars"          Circular No 1298441 of 14 May 2003 containing "Initial instructions on acquisition of the data for the purposes of Article 4 of Presidential Decree No 84 of 17 February 2003 enacting the Regulations transposing Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars"</p>	<p>The purpose of the Regulations is to provide consumers with information on the fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new motor cars, whether sold or leased.          The Ministry of Production Activities produces an annual guide to fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This is approved by a decree of the same Ministry, acting in agreement with the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.          The Ministry of Production Activities is responsible for carrying out the consumer information programme and draws up a report on the implementation status and effectiveness of the provisions of Presidential Decree No 84 of 17 February 2003, after consulting the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.</p>	<p>Annual</p>

	<p>The Ministry of Production Activities will forward the 2002–2003 progress report on the consumer information programme to the European Commission.</p> <p>By 15 December of each year, the manufacturers must provide the Ministry of Production Activities with the pertinent information specified in the Regulations so that it can draw up the fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions guide. For the first year, the requirement is for this information to be provided within 15 days of the date of entry into force of the Regulations.</p> <p>By 15 September 2003, the manufacturers and dealers will provide the data needed for the information programme.</p> <p>By 31 December 2003, the Ministry of Production Activities will send the European Commission the progress report on the consumer information programme.</p>	
<b>2.4 Improvement of market monitoring procedures</b>	<b>For both the general directive and the sectoral directives, the current legislation provides for administrative collaboration between Member States, producers, consumers, technical and standardisation bodies and other authorities (customs), and for such collaboration to be reviewed and improved.</b>	<b>Ongoing activity (on both the operational and the legislative levels)</b>
<b>2.4.1 Establishment of Member State working groups in the general network context provided for by Directive 2001/95/EC</b>	<b>Directive 2001/95/EC introduces an IT system at Community level for market control activities (e.g. product traceability, passing on of information on dangerous products, consumer involvement and responsibility).</b>	<b>Ongoing throughout the year, with quarterly reviews at the EU Commission</b>
<b>2.5. Controls on products available on the Italian market, with particular emphasis on those of non-EU origin</b>	<b>Controls at central level are coordinated by the Ministry of Production Activities and those at local level involve the chambers of commerce, customs, etc.</b>	<b>Ongoing throughout the year (there may be slightly greater activity for certain products at certain times of year, e.g. lighting chains in the period leading up to Christmas)</b>
<b>2.5.1 Issue of enforcement notices by the Ministry of Production Activities</b>	<b>The current legislation empowers the Ministry of Production Activities to issue notices in respect of non-compliant products (withdrawal from the market, compliance notices, etc.).</b>	<b>There is no particular timeframe for the issue of notices.</b>

### OBJECTIVE 3: PROPER INVOLVEMENT OF CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS IN EU POLICIES

Action	Description	Timeframe / State of play
<p>3.1 Machinery for participation of the consumers' organisations in the decision-making process</p> <p>National Council of Consumers and Users established by Act No 281/1998</p>	<p>The CNCU was set up by Act 281/1998 as the institutional consultancy body advising the government, Parliament and the other public authorities on consumer protection issues. It is chaired by the Minister for Production Activities or his delegate. The CNCU membership includes all consumers' associations listed in the register of nationally representative associations kept by the Ministry of Production Activities. Currently, as renewed on 4 April 2003, it is composed of the 14 associations most representative at national level and the representatives of the regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano. Associations' representativeness is assessed on the basis of various criteria, such as the number of registered members, presence on the ground, at least three years' continuous activity since establishment, lack of ties and economic links with private businesses in the sectors in which the association is active.</p> <p>The CNCU remains in office for three years. Some of its main tasks are: 1) to give advice on draft bills tabled by the government and Parliament and draft regulations; 2) to make proposals in the field of consumer protection, in the light, inter alia, of EU programmes and policies; 3) to promote studies and research on the problems of consumer rights and controls on product quality and safety; 4) to promote schemes for distributing information and for consumer access to the justice system for dispute resolution.</p> <p>On adopting its work programme for 2003, the CNCU organised its activity on the basis of ten lines of action handled by the corresponding thematic work groups (consumerism, access to justice, liberalisation of public services, safety and quality of products and services, credit and insurance, food industry, relations with the regions and local authorities, international relations with the EU and the Italian six-month Presidency, prices and tariffs, environment and health).</p>	<p>The CNCU was set up in 1998 and its membership renewed in 2003.</p>

	<p>Among the steps taken by the CNCU to encourage dialogue between consumers' associations and businesses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the protocols of agreement in connection with the introduction of the euro concluded with traders' and manufacturers' organisations, and especially with the Italian post office, to make the new currency better known;</li> <li>– the protocol of agreement with the Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas, promoting information and education projects on market liberalisation;</li> <li>– the many meetings and agreements mainly aimed at devising arrangements for settlement and prevention of disputes between businesses and consumers.</li> </ul>	
<p>3.2 Support and strengthening of consumers' organisations</p> <p>3.2.1 CNCU initiatives</p>	<p>The CNCU has an annual budget of about EUR 800 000 for promotional initiatives, appropriated by law.</p>	
<p>3.2.2 Use of fines imposed by the Antitrust Authority for initiatives to benefit consumers (Article 148 of Act No 388/2000)</p>	<p>Article 148 of Act No 388/2000 provides that funds from administrative fines imposed by the Antitrust Authority can be assigned to a heading in the budget of the Ministry of Production Activities for use on pro-consumer initiatives selected from time to time by decree of the Minister for Production Activities.</p> <p>Among these initiatives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the invitation to submit pro-consumer projects extended to the national and local associations and to the regions;</li> <li>- the increase in the budget for direct CNCU initiatives;</li> <li>- creation of a first part of a databank on prices and tariffs.</li> </ul> <p>These initiatives form part of the strategy of motivating associations to promote the interests of consumers. This is to be pursued throughout the country and seeks to stimulate both associations and local authorities.</p> <p>The CNCU's information activities are particularly important. It not only has a press office but also a website (<a href="http://tuttoconsumatori.it">tuttoconsumatori.it</a>), which is intended to act as a reference source on consumer affairs. It brings together information on the CNCU's activities and information structured by thematic area on consumer protection in the broadest sense, such as Community decisions and directives, national laws, and associations' activities. The CNCU distributes information continuously by means of large-circulation magazines specialised in this area.</p>	<p>This year, the Ministerial Decree of 26 May 2003 has assigned about EUR 29 million to initiatives for consumers' benefit.</p>

3.3 Standardisation	Italian consumers' participation in the organisations pursuing standardisation at European level (ANEC) is ensured by representatives designated by the CNCU. The CNCU has also supported various initiatives by the national standardisation bodies (UNI), including participation in the forthcoming World Standardisation Day.	October 2003
3.4 Consumer information and education  3.4.1 Information and guidance programmes for insurance customers promoted by consumer and user associations  – Article 2 of Act No 57/2001          – Decree No 274/2001	To provide customers with proper information and establish a permanent premium monitoring system for compulsory third-party motor vehicle insurance, Article 2 of Act No 57/2001 authorises the National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU) established by Act No 281 of 30 July 1998 to cofund information and guidance programmes for insurance customers in accordance with arrangements and criteria laid down by decree by the competent Ministry, especially as regards third-party vehicle insurance. Decree No 274/2001 laid down the criteria for subsidies and the arrangements and deadlines for submitting projects. The "programme assessment committee" then selected the projects for cofunding by the CNCU and drew up a list of CNCU-approved programmes. All the programmes were carried out on schedule and the balance was paid out on approval of the report by the CNCU; the amount for 2001 was 300 000 000 lire (Order of 1 August 2001). In the course of 2002, the CNCU allocated a further cofunding appropriation under a new Order (of 28 August 2002), providing a total of EUR 200 000 for 2002, 40% of which has already been advanced by the CNCU. The projects are under way.	October – November 2001

<p>3.4.2 Projects promoted by the consumers' and users' associations listed in the register mentioned in Article 5 of Act No 281 of 30 July 1998</p> <p>– Article 16 of Act No 57/2001</p> <p>– Decree No 273/2001</p>	<p>Article 16 of Act No 57/2001 provided for up to 70% funding of projects promoted by consumers' and users' associations listed in the register mentioned in Article 5 of Act No 281 of 30 July 1998. These projects were to relate to assistance, information and education of consumers and users, including those of government services. Decree No 273/2001 laid down the criteria for subsidies and the arrangements and deadlines for submitting the projects, to a total value of 3 billion lire (EUR 1 550 000). Thirteen projects were submitted by nationally representative consumers' associations. These pursued the goals specified in Article 1 of Act No 281/1998 and related to information (information brochures, distribution in schools, call centres, organisation of websites etc.), assistance (opening of information and advice centres throughout Italy) and consumer education (organisation of master's degrees and university seminars). The projects were scrutinised and received cofunding up to 70% of the total costs as provided for by Article 5 of the Act. All the projects were carried out on schedule.</p>	<p>Completion expected in July 2003</p>
<p>3.4.3 Among the initiatives is that relating to fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new motor cars, whether sold or leased. Compare Objective 2 – Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules – section 2.3.2 on Circular No 1298441 of 14 May 2003 and Presidential Decree No 84 of 17 February 2003.</p>		
<p><b>3.4.4 Consumer information project on "product labelling", using the website of the Ministry of Production Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Given the importance of product labelling, which has become an essential tool in providing consumers with open and clear information on product identification and characteristics and thus steering them towards increasingly well-informed purchasing decisions, the Directorate-General for Market Harmonisation and Consumer Protection this year launched a project on its own website, posting information on the labelling of widely-used products.</b></p> <p><b>The information provided on the site has both a practical and a legal content. Each issue or product is therefore dealt with in the form of questions and answers (f.a.q.), indicating and providing a link to the pertinent legislation for each question. The first posting concerned textile products; others will follow on food industry products and other common goods.</b></p>	

<p><b>3.5 Information campaigns</b></p>	<p><b>Preventive action through information and education campaigns on the various types of product is aimed not only at consumers, but also at other players, such as producers, distributors, customs, etc. The aim is to bring home to the different parties both their own particular rights and also their duty of cooperation. This involves publishing guides and handbooks, disseminating information through the mass media, conferences, etc.</b></p>	<p><b>Since 1999, the Ministry of Production Activities has conducted various information campaigns in cooperation with consumers' associations, compliance testing bodies and producers and distributors. Three special campaigns are planned for the second half of 2003: on safety of playgrounds, safety of electrical products and CE marking.</b></p>
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