

Brussels, 20 June 2008

Gap between domestic and cross-border e-commerce grows wider, says EU report

EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva today announced the results of a new EU wide survey on e-commerce and cross border trade. The figures show that even though e-commerce is taking off at national level, cross-border e-commerce is failing to keep pace. From 2006 to 2008, the share of all EU consumers that have bought at least one item over the internet has increased significantly (from 27% to 33%) whilst cross border e-commerce is stable (6% to 7%). The pattern is similar for those with internet access at home - 56% of consumers with internet at home have made a purchase (in any country including their own) by e-commerce compared to 50% in 2006, while only 13% (of those with internet access at home) made a cross-border e-commerce purchase compared to 12% in 2006.

"These figures underline how much work we still have to do to boost confidence in the online internal market" said European Consumer Affairs Commissioner Meglena Kuneva. "Consumers and retailers are beginning to embrace e-commerce at national level but internal market barriers still persist online. The potential of the online internal market to deliver greater choice and lower price to consumers and new markets for retailers is considerable. We need to redouble our efforts to tackle the remaining borders."

Amongst retailers, the cross-border potential of e-commerce seems not to have been fulfilled: 51% of EU27 retailers sell via the internet, but only 17 % of e-commerce revenue of those who sell cross-border stems from cross-border sales – as compared to 16% in 2006. There appears to be a lack of confidence in cross-border shopping on both sides of the market, although consumer confidence appears to be growing: while 37% of consumers said they would be more confident making online purchases from sellers/providers located in their own country, 57% said they are equally or even more confident making purchases online from sellers in another EU country. This figure is up by 8% compared to the 2006 survey.

The report published today was compiled from two Eurobarometer surveys on Businesses and Consumer attitudes to cross border trade. Data gathering was carried out in February – March 2008 amongst more than 26.000 consumers and 7.200 businesses in the 27 EU-countries and Norway.

Key Figures:

- In 2006 27% of European consumers had made a purchase over the internet - 33% had done so in 2008.
- In 2006 6% had made a cross border purchase over the internet – this figure is stable as 7% had done so in 2007.
- 13% of consumers with internet access had traded cross border via the internet compared to only 7 % in the general population. The corresponding figure for 2006 was 12% of those with internet access as opposed to 6% of those in the general population.
- 37% of respondents that said they would be more confident making online purchases from sellers/providers located in their own country. This figure is down 8 % since the 2006 survey.
- 57% said they are equally or even more confident making purchases online from sellers in another EU country. This figure is up by 8% compared to the 2006 survey.
- 51% of EU27 retailers sell via the internet – this figure is however down from 2006 where 57% of retailers reported to use e-commerce.
- Retailers estimate that 17 % of their e-commerce revenue stems from cross border sales – the corresponding figure for 2006 was 16%.

For further information please log on to:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/e-shopping_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/facts_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/facts_eurobar_en.htm