



## Press Release

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### **Right to a refund must not be affected by EU directive**

*West Midlands' MEP pledges to defend customer rights*

Following reports that the EU's Consumer Rights Directive could ban shop refunds in the UK, Conservative chairman of the European Parliament's consumer affairs committee, Malcolm Harbour MEP, has pledged that MEPs will amend the plans.

The directive is intended to create minimum standards of consumer protection to reduce some of the obstacles and uncertainties facing consumers when purchasing from abroad.

The European Commission recently published a mystery shopper exercise focusing on 11,000 test orders on standard consumer products like clothes and electrical goods. In all but two EU countries the odds of succeeding in an online purchase were less than 50/50, yet the report also found that consumers who are able to shop across borders face significant savings, usually of around 10%.

Mr Harbour said that the European Parliament has already produced a critical report on this directive and proposed significant changes to it, and he is confident that MEPs will amend it so that consumers can enjoy peace of mind when shopping abroad, without their domestic rights being diminished.

He said:

**"MEPs have already made it clear that we will not accept any move that undermines the rights we already enjoy as a consumer. By the time this directive has left the European Parliament, I do not believe it will pose a threat to our right to a refund.**

**"The parliament has already forced the commission to produce a clarifying document making it clear that the refund will remain under British law.**

**"This directive intends to increase the rights of consumers so that they have greater confidence when buying products from abroad, but it must not reduce our rights at home. There are still significant obstacles standing in the way of retailers and customers wanting to buy and sell goods across the EU and this directive can help alleviate those obstacles, but we do need to make adjustments.**

**"The European Union does enhance our consumer rights when shopping across borders but it should refrain from interfering to diminish our rights at home."**

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The report on obstacles to cross-border shopping can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/facts\\_en.htm#E-commerce](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/facts_en.htm#E-commerce)

Further information on the Proposed Directive can be found at

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/cons\\_acquis\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/cons_acquis_en.htm)

