

Charter of NEPIM

Preamble

1/ Since 2005, 11 regions and regional consumer associations from 7 Member States joint forces within the NEPIM network, within the framework of an INTERREG III C project, financed through the structural funds of the European Union, in order to promote the quality of life of the consumer-citizens thanks to the exchange of experiences and the common search for new approaches in the field of consumption.

In fact, the rapidly developing impact of globalisation and of the Internal European market has pointed out serious shortcomings, as well for the movement of goods and services, as for product safety, common labelling, guarantee, cross-border complaints and, more recently, online shopping etc., problems the existent legislations only responds to very partially or not at all.

Moreover, public authorities and national consumer organisations were not close enough to the citizens, consumers, users to bring up an efficient answer to their legitimate preoccupations.

Based on this statement, the authorities and regional consumer organisations joined in order to share their experiences and their know-how based on regional competences, i.e. close to the citizen-consumers' needs and problems.

2/ This initiative turned out to be even more imperative due to the ever more urgent need to place consumption in a more sustainable frame, in order to respond to the necessity to preserve this planet, its natural and energy resources and to insure today an access to consumption to a larger number of people without endangering the supply of future generations. Within this context, to raise consumers' awareness, inform and accompany them about the impacts of their consumption patterns, so that they become more and more responsible and sustainable, has become an essential preoccupation. And finally, given the globalisation and its delocalisation of economic activities coming along with it, disregard for social rights, health and dignity of the populations concerned cannot be tolerated any longer, what implicates the need for "ethical" consumption.

3/ After 3 years of intensive exchange, shared research within specialized workshops and conferences on as important subjects as labelling, tourism, energy, sustainable consumption, dispute resolution... the members decided unanimously to pursue their common activity. Therefore, they decided to sign a Charter with the members of the new network and thereby emphasize its main targets. It will be open to new members and will be presented to regional, national and European authorities in order to gain recognition that will enable it to present, defend and develop their points of view and common projects by following the priorities of the work programmes of the European Commission for a consumer policy.

CHARTER OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NEPIM NETWORK

(Network for the Promotion of Sustainable Consumption in European Regions)

Object

The members of the Network and the signatories of the present "Charter" pursue the following objectives with priority:

- promote all over Europe critical and responsible consumption, that may satisfy the individual human and social needs of the contemporary and future generation, in preserving the environment, using less available resources and in a better way, reducing harmful emissions, producing less waste, respecting the social rights of the workers and thus pursuing a model of sustainable consumption and development;
- to defend consumer rights and to choose the goods and products of the internal market in a critical and autonomous way; therefore they commit themselves to inform the consumer-users about their rights and to facilitate access to justice, notably in supporting class actions ;
- to support innovation with respect of traditions, by giving special attention to the fall-outs of the economic system and the equilibrium of environment and society;
- to work at the preservation of biodiversity and especially that of regional cultures and food, to insure promotion of the latter with the consumers. To work at the defence of traditional regional food, a means of diversity in face of the globalisation of food patterns;
- to thoroughly analyse ecologically sustainable and ethically responsible forms of production in approaching the life-cycle of the products and services;
- to enable consumers to make more sustainable choices, in order to reduce energy consumption, waste production, to preserve natural resources, to encourage equitable and socially responsible modes of production.

These basic principles being adopted, the members of the Network and all the signatories of the present charter commit themselves within the limits of their competences and their own responsibilities

1/ to promote and develop information and orientation and education campaigns in order for the citizens, consumers, users to become fully-fledged actors of the global market, conscious of the impact of their choices (of products and services) and of their fall-outs in socio-environmental terms;

2/ promote and favour the formation and development within the productive system of a culture of participation and valorisation of work through an economic and socio-cultural development, which is ethically sustainable;

3/ work on the target that the principles of sustainable development will be taken into account within the chain of production and commercialisation, notably by trying to make the impacts on energy and environment more transparent;

4/ favour the formation of a single market that is ethically sustainable, governed by the principles of equity, transparency, and opposition to all forms of fraud and counterfeiting, of

commercial dumping and in favour of traceability during the whole production, transport and distribution process;

5/ promote the creation of partnerships between the different European regions, in order to institute and to reinforce the exchange of experiences and good practices, as to assert a new culture of an ethically sustainable development;

6/ develop concerted action among the members in order to implement and defend a European vision of the preoccupations of the consumers, respectful of human rights, individual civil liberties, enriched by the regional dimension and respectful of the solidarity principle;

7/ constitute a goodly number of proposals regarding legislation or orientations on consumption at the level of the regions, the Member States and the European Union.

All the members of the NEPIM network adhere to the principles expressed in this charter and commit themselves to promote behaviour in conformance with these values with regional, national and European authorities as well as with consumer-user organisations and the operators they are dealing with.

The members of the network also commit themselves to promote and disseminate the present charter on all occasions and to encourage the consumer-users to actively participate in all acts favouring sustainable development through critical, conscious and responsible consumption choices as well as through the diffusion of good practices that may bring about changes of individual and social attitudes, necessary for the advent of a more sustainable society.

The members of the network who have signed the present Charter ask the European Commission to acknowledge the above-mentioned principles.

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