

Serving consumers - the Competition Authority, the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister's Office work together

Budapest, 30 June 2023 - Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, Gergely Gulyás, Minister of the Prime Minister's Office and Csaba Balázs Rigó, President of the Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) signed a cooperation agreement in Budapest, at the GVH headquarters, to further strengthen consumer protection. The parties aim to coordinate their tasks in the field of consumer protection and to strengthen cooperation between the authorities. A particular focus is on protecting the most vulnerable children, families, the elderly and people with health problems from unfair commercial practices.

The consumer protection system in Hungary is based on several pillars. Consumer protection policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, while the government offices of the capital and counties, acting as general consumer protection authorities under the law, are managed by the Prime Minister's Office, and the Hungarian Competition Authority is responsible for protecting consumers against unfair commercial practices in cases that have a significant impact on effective competition.

For consumer protection to work efficiently and effectively, it is essential that the relevant departments and the national competition authority work closely together and coordinate their respective activities. This is the purpose of the agreement signed on 30 June 2023.

At the event, Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, recalled: *„It is just over a year since we put the consumer protection system in Hungary on a new footing. The results are encouraging, but we cannot sit back because the Hungarian people need consumer protection in action more than ever. We are working to provide a safety net for Hungarian families, and the agreement signed today will strengthen this safety net even further.”*

In the cooperation agreement, the parties agreed to pay particular attention to mitigating the adverse effects of adverse global economic developments on consumers. Gergely Gulyás pointed out that the Government has introduced a number of measures in recent months to achieve this goal.

"The Government has done its utmost to reduce inflation, and now we must also pay attention to fair trade practices, and to the observance and enforcement of the decisions we have taken in order to break the extremely high level of monetary deterioration caused by the war and the Brussels sanctions response to it everywhere in Europe, including Hungary", Gergely Gulyás underlined.

The cooperation agreement covers the protection of children, in line with Article XVI of the Fundamental Law, the protection of consumers in the online space and raising consumer awareness, in particular for children, families, the elderly and those disadvantaged by unfair commercial practices, and those with their health conditions who are most vulnerable to unfair commercial practices.

"For the national competition authority, consumer protection means protecting the Hungarian people. Everyone should expect that we will pay special attention to the sick, the elderly, children and families. They are the so-called more vulnerable consumer groups. The online price monitoring system, starting on Saturday and operated by the GVH, will also help consumers to make more informed choices when shopping and shops to compete for customers", said Csaba Balázs Rigó, President of the GVH.

The cooperation agreement signed on Friday specifically states that the parties, which are actively involved in the Consumer Protection Roundtable and the Consumer Protection Council, will pay particular attention to a predictable legal environment for consumers and businesses alike. In preparing legislation, they contribute with their proposals to an effective regulatory and institutional framework against unfair commercial practices, and also help to develop a coherent body of jurisprudence by discussing consumer protection problems and proposing concrete solutions.

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