

**Seventh Intergovernmental Group of Experts on
Consumer Law and Policy
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3-4 July 2023**

Opening Plenary

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Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy

3-4 July 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

Monday, 3 July 2023

10.00 – 11.30 Opening plenary:

ICPEN Presidency – speaking points

- I have the pleasure to speak to you today as the **president of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN)**, since the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection recently took over the presidency of the Network. We are pleased that Poland will give direction to ICPEN's work over the next year and inspire global action to serve consumers.
- ICPEN is a network of 70 consumer enforcement agencies and we have one goal as enforcers - to **protect consumers' rights effectively in all circumstances, facing emerging challenges.**
- This year, ICPEN has celebrated its 30th birthday and as its members, we are grateful for the highly beneficial self-sustaining cooperation platform it provides us with through practice-oriented projects and events, joint actions and resources. It is safe to call it an international cooperation success story.
- During our presidency, we want to continue to ensure that the Network serve its mission which is to strengthen us, enforcers, in helping consumers make **informed and responsible decisions through international cooperation.**
- “**Empowering responsible consumer choices**” will be the theme of Poland's ICPEN Presidency which will guide us to facilitate various projects and activities, and reinforce conscious, **smart and responsible consumer decision-making.**
- As enforcers we attend to both businesses in enforcing lawful conduct, but also educating consumers to make **conscious and sustainable choices**



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- As consumer decisions are driving economies, consumer protection is important and highly worthwhile cooperating on.
- At the same time, it is important to remember that consumer decisions also have an impact in terms of consumers' lives holistically – including from the perspective of their financial situation and the environment.
- In the current reality, we face emerging issues - therefore we **want to** ensure that businesses do not take advantage of their economic and technological position in ways that harm consumers.
- I am very grateful for being able to speak at the Opening Plenary of the 7th IGE on Consumer Protection Law and Policy because one of our priorities in making ICPEN an effective network is to explore synergies and intersection of work done elsewhere, such as UNCTAD's Competition and Consumer Policies Branch.
- Both UNCTAD's and ICPEN's work is of global scope – ICPEN's members are global enforcers, while the forum here fosters exchange around global challenges in both consumer policies and enforcement.
- The work and advocacy on consumer protection which is done at the forum of UNCTAD is extremely valuable globally and is an excellent source of support to countries in facing difficult and emerging challenges.
- We can use the insights, problems and solutions tackled here as an inspiration to work out enforcement answers on the forum of ICPEN. The partnership and collaboration that recognizes the value and complementarity in each other's work and achievements can greatly strengthen our missions, and, as a result, strengthen also collectively the impact of international cooperation on consumer protection.
- And by stepping up this cooperation, we are strengthening the enforcement capacities of individual consumer agencies globally.
- Speaking here at the IGE, we are delighted to observe that there are more and more newer and emerging consumer protection bodies who are taking on the



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role of consumer protection enforcers in their country, frequently as additions to their competition-related competences.

- We are equally delighted to see that these bodies have the energy and are keen on gaining insights, inspiration and support at platforms such as UNCTAD or ICPEN where they are aspiring members.
- At the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection we have a first-hand experience in working with many of these partners in the framework of capacity building projects and we hope to continue supporting them also in benefiting from cooperation at multilateral cooperation forums like ICPEN or UNCTAD
- In the coming year, we hope to see ICPEN members, older and newer, engaging in next year's work in projects and working groups as well as attending our conferences
- The **first ICPEN conference under Polish Presidency** will be held in **Warsaw on 4-6 October, 2023**. The second one is planned in May 2024 in Gdańsk.
- Sessions at the ICPEN conference in Warsaw will focus on an array of consumer challenges related **to influencer marketing, the cost of living crisis, how AI can be leveraged for the benefit of consumer agencies, how to empower consumers for sustainable consumption** as well as **discussing different systems of consumer protection**.
- The conference will be the launch of a year of ICPEN's work in which we hope to see a furthering of enforcement issues in projects, exploring of synergies and engagement of all members and observers, hearing your feedback in order to make most of the work of the network
- We look forward to cooperating with colleagues at UNCTAD both during our conferences as well as in other ICPEN activities.
- We hope to welcome ICPEN members in Poland and look forward to working together on empowering responsible consumer choices.