



Report on the informal working group on consumer protection in e-commerce to the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices

I. Background

The [Intergovernmental Group of Experts \(IGE\) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, on its eighth session](#) held on 1 and 2 July 2024, decided to “renew the mandate of the informal working group on consumer protection in e-commerce to continue work on new and emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, and their impact on consumers, especially vulnerable consumers, aimed at producing accessible outputs such as technical notes to assist less experienced consumer agencies, calling upon member States to continue to populate the generic email list as a key contribution to the working group, and to report to the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;”

The WGE held three online meetings and two online webinars between October 2024 and June 2025 to discuss, agree on and implement the [work plan](#). In addition, the Steering group¹ met once and decided that Poland and Sweden would each lead one area of work. The Steering group was also consulted to provide comments and feedback on one of the outcomes.

Professor Christine Riefa from the University of Reading was confirmed to continue her role as the academic coordinator of the WGE for the 2024-2025 working cycle. Details and materials of work carried out are available on the [WGE webpage](#).

II. Workplan activities

The main focus of the WGE’s work plan for this cycle was Artificial Intelligence (AI) and vulnerable consumers in e-commerce. The following activities, which included two webinars, a checklist, and a report, were undertaken as part of this work plan:

1. Webinars and report

Since the eighth session of the IGE on Consumer Protection and Policy, the WGE has hosted two webinars: “AI Deployment for Consumer Protection Enforcement Authorities” and “Protecting Children Against Pressuring Techniques in Digital Media.”

[AI Deployment for Consumer Protection Enforcement Authorities](#)

On 20 February 2025, led by El Salvador and Poland, this webinar focused on the deployment of AI by consumer protection enforcement authorities and highlighted practical experiences shared by member States. Poland shared insights on the AI checklist it is developing in collaboration with El Salvador in the framework of the WGE. [Poland](#) shared its experience with AI deployment, covering cost-benefit considerations, resource allocation, data quality, legal and ethical issues, and key challenges with the “Arbuz” AI tool in different preparation phases. [Zambia](#) discussed the major challenges faced by consumer protection agencies when initiating or in the process of deploying AI, including digital infrastructure limitations and data fragmentation. [Thailand](#) presented its experience in implementing AI for consumer complaint handling and fraud detection in advertisements, as well as its approach to selecting appropriate AI tools, addressing challenges, and ensuring cybersecurity and data protection. [The Republic of Korea](#)

¹ The steering group continued to lead the work of the working group. At the beginning of the cycle, the member States that confirmed their participation in the steering group included representatives from the consumer protection authorities of Argentina, Colombia, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



introduced its AI-based Knowledge Platform to enhance complaint management and operational efficiency, sharing the challenges faced and the measures taken to overcome them.

The discussion fed directly into the development of the AI checklist, helping to identify priority areas and common concerns. It also demonstrated how valuable it is to exchange practices and experiences to better understand the practical realities faced by consumer protection agencies. These include not only the potential risks of AI negatively impacting consumers, but also the opportunities it offers to support the effective enforcement of consumer protection regulations.

The webinar attracted over 100 participants from different jurisdictions. To extend its reach and ensure that the information shared is accessible to an even broader audience, the [recording](#) of the event has been made available on the event page within the WGE website.

[Protecting Children Against Pressuring Techniques in Digital Media](#)

On 15 May 2025, under the leadership of Sweden, the second webinar focused on how digital marketing environments influence children's experiences and decision-making, and on identifying appropriate regulatory responses. Professor Liselot Hudders from Ghent University provided an overview of current digital marketing practices targeting children and shared findings from research on children's advertising literacy and online vulnerabilities. The webinar also featured presentations on national and regional tools aimed at protecting children from targeted marketing practices. [Sweden](#) highlighted the work of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network, which brings together all consumer protection authorities within the European Union and presented its recent efforts concerning virtual in-game currencies and key principles for safeguarding consumers in this area. [Mexico](#) also shared details of its national tools and awareness raising campaigns designed to protect children from targeted marketing practices.

A [report](#) was produced based on the experiences and conclusions of this webinar emphasizing the need for regulation, education, and cross-sector collaboration to ensure safe and fair digital environments for young consumers.

This webinar gathered over 70 participants from across the globe. [Recording](#) is available on the WGE website's event page.

2. Checklist for enforcement authorities using AI

Led by El Salvador and Poland, the WGE developed a practical and flexible tool to help consumer protection agencies adopt AI responsibly and ethically. This checklist provides step-by-step guidance to align AI deployment with regulatory principles, covering from problem definition and goal setting to data quality and team expertise. It emphasizes the importance of transparency, legal compliance, data privacy, and cybersecurity, while also highlighting the need for continuous monitoring, flexible development, and, crucially, the preservation of human decisional authority. The checklist is further enriched with practical case studies from El Salvador, Poland, South Korea, Thailand, and Zambia, which illustrate real-world applications and lessons learned.

The discussions held during the February 2025 webinar directly contributed to shaping the checklist, helping to identify key challenges, common needs, and good practices across diverse national contexts. The exchange of experiences provided valuable insights into both the opportunities and risks of AI,



ensuring the checklist responds to the actual concerns of enforcement authorities on the ground.

III. Way forward

Based on the recommendations in the previous reports on the WGE from 2023 to 2024², as well as the discussions held in the meetings and webinars mentioned above, the WGE agreed to propose to the 9th UN Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection that its mandate is renewed in the following terms

Decides to renew the mandate of the informal Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-commerce to continue addressing the challenges and opportunities of emerging technologies in consumer protection, addressing the needs of vulnerable consumers; to finalize and disseminate the checklist for enforcement authorities deploying AI; organizing webinars to share knowledge and updates, with other international organizations and networks, and to report to the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.

² https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ccpb_IGECON2023_ECom_en.pdf,
https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ccpb_IGECON2024_Report_WG_Consumer_Protection_e-commerce_en.pdf.

