

KEY FACTS

ANEC European cross-border travel and tourism research project 2013



General

5791 European consumers

completed ANEC's online survey (in field August to September 2013)

91.5%

The majority of respondents had used a cross-border travel or tourism service during the previous 12 months



8 out of 10

respondents (80.9%) booked their travel service online, 17.6% booked in person and 13.2% by telephone

58%



Just over half of tourism/travel services were booked directly with the service provider. The remaining services were booked via third party agents such as travel agents and price comparison sites.

Problems experienced

More than a quarter

ANEC's survey reveals that travelling within Europe is not always easy. 26.8% of people reported having problems when using tourism services within Europe.

Car rental was seen as the most problematic service area. People hiring a car reporting a negative experience:

22.4%



Consumers also experienced high levels of problems with:

Plane travel: 16.1%
Train travel: 15%
Package holidays: 14.2%

The type of problems experienced depended on the tourism service used – car rental, accommodation, train, plane, boat or package holiday – but common problems across all areas were

Poor levels of quality 28.7%

Poor customer service 21.6%

Unexpected additional charges 18.8%

Unclear information 16.8%

69.2%

made a complaint but the majority of people complained only to the service provider

61.1%

of people who experienced a problem made a complaint to the service provider

Complaints

Almost three-quarters, **73.8%**, of people who complained to a service provider rated the outcome of their complaint as less than satisfactory. **53.9%** were not at all satisfied.



Satisfaction

with the outcome of complaints to service providers is

low

Only a fraction of complainants took the matter further - for example to a form of **independent dispute resolution**:



Ombudsmen: **1.4 %**



European Consumer Centre: **1.6 %**



Trade association: **3.3 %**



Consumer organisation in their own country: **6.6 %**



Dissatisfied customers are more likely to 'spread the word' than complain to official sources.

37.6% told family and friends about their negative experience

19.8% left negative reviews online

Of those who gave a reason for not complaining to the service provider:

41.2% did not think their complaint would be successful

16.8% did not complain because they worried that the service provider would not respond well

16.4% said it was too difficult or complicated

Disabled travellers

The results show that, overall, disabled travellers were less likely to experience problems than respondents without disabilities.



7.4% of respondents told ANEC they had a disability.

While **travelling** in the EU, fewer people with a disability (23.2%) than people without a disability (27.1%) reported a negative experience

23.2%



vs.

27.1%



But more passengers with a disability (26.1%) experienced problems with their **car rental** than people without a disability (22%)

26.1%



vs.

22%



For more information about travellers' experiences with specific tourism services – including reason for dissatisfaction and quotes – and resulting ANEC recommendations

find the full report:

“European Cross-Border Travel and Tourism - Learning from Consumer Experiences and Complaints”, 15 January 2014

on the [ANEC website](#)



Raising Standards for Consumers

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ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment, as well as related legislation and public policies.

ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations in 33 European countries.

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