

Resolving conflicts

Dutch experiences in transport and other sectors

Stichting Geschillencommissies voor Consumentenzaken (SGC)
Consumer Complaints Boards
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Particular of the body

- The Foundation for Consumer Complaints Boards (SGC) in 1970
- 33 Complaints Boards
- Office: 47 employees
- Complaints Boards
 - 226 arbitrators
 - 69 technical experts
- Object
 - resolution of disputes resulting from consumer complaints
 - quality instrument

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Overview of the 33 complaints boards

1. Banking matters
2. Housing brokerage (January 2006)
3. Building materials
4. Community aerial systems
5. Child care centres
6. Dating agencies
7. Do it yourself-companies
8. Dry-cleaning and laundry services
9. Electrical goods
10. Energy and water
11. Funeral services
12. Gardening
13. Glass, porcelain and earthenware
14. Handy men and floor companies
15. Home furnishing
16. Hospitals
17. Installation technicians
18. Jewellers
19. Leisure
20. Mail order business
21. Mortgage financing
22. Opticians
23. Paintwork, glazing and plasterwork
24. Parquet floorings
25. Post
26. Public transport
27. Removal companies
28. Taxi transport
29. Telecommunications
30. Textiles and shoes
31. Travel
32. Vehicles
33. Water sports

Conditions for establishment

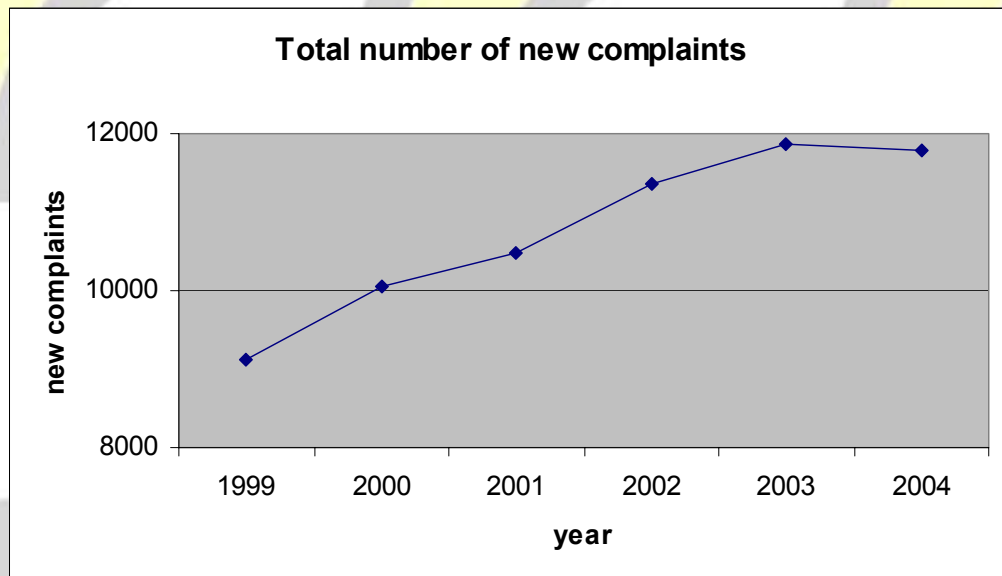
- Representative trade association
- Registered suppliers:
 - prepared to contribute
 - compliance guarantee
 - balanced terms & conditions; compulsory
- Recognition by:
 - Dutch Government: Recognition regulation 1997
 - European Commission: Recommendation of 30 March 1998

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SGC statistics



Structure complaints boards for Public Transport and Taxi Transport

- Three independent members
- Appointed by the SGC board
- Maximum of four years
- Eligible for re-appointment

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Procedure; set of regulations (1)

1. First complain to transport operator
2. Complaints board
 - website or letter
 - terms: three months
 - contribution: € 25,-
 - deposit
 - compliance guarantee
3. Questionnaire
 - no formal requirements
 - signing the questionnaire
4. Transport operator defence
5. Verbal hearing
 - all over the country
 - no respite
 - ask questions
 - psychological function
 - informal character
 - legal assistance is not necessary but allowed

Procedure; set of regulations (2)

6. Decision

- reasonableness and fairness
- relevant Dutch law
- both points of view
- parties informed of facts
- proper investigation
- sufficiently motivated
- majority of votes
- binding on both parties
- in writing
- no appeal

7. Award of costs

- consumer's contribution
- cost of dealing

8. Challenge and exemption

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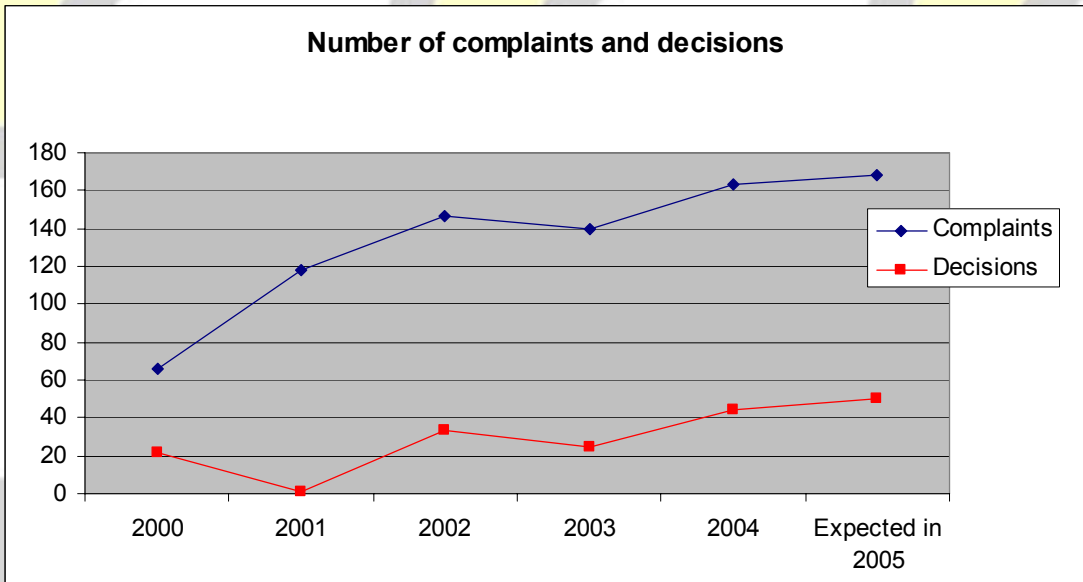
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Enforcement

- Compliance guarantee
 - trade association
 - registered public transporters
- Transporters always comply with the binding decisions
- If not:
 - trade association can pass the cost on to the reluctant supplier
⇒ collecting procedure
 - registered public transporter: we use his deposit or his bank guarantee

Statistics bus, train, tram and underground (1)

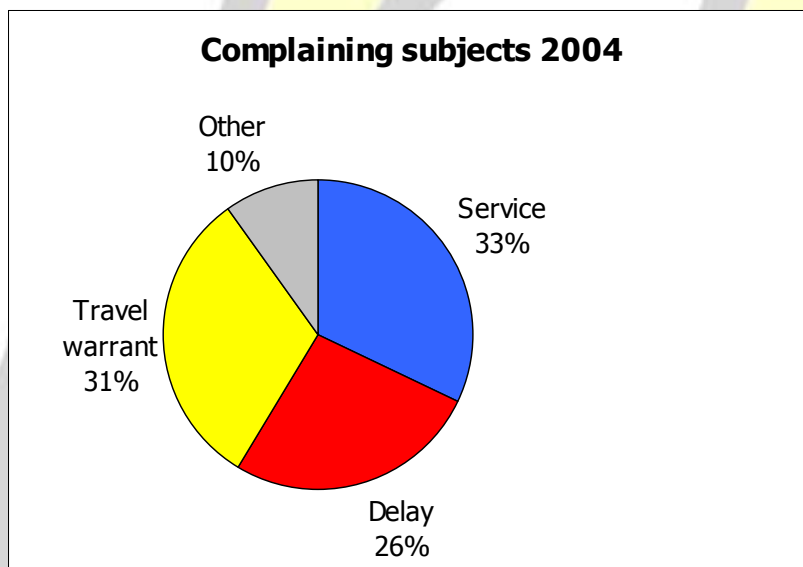


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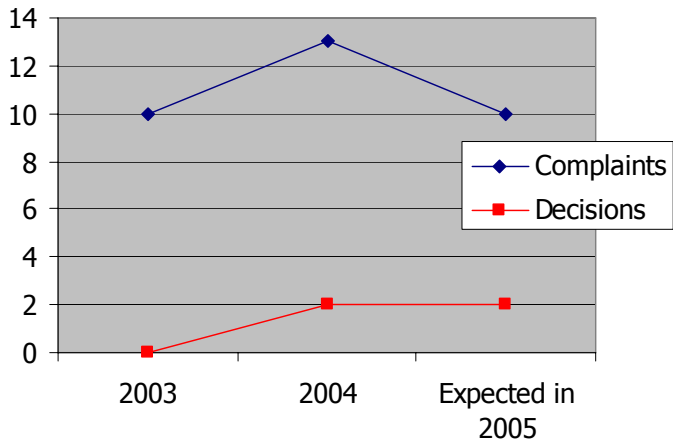
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Statistics bus, train, tram and underground (2)



Number of complaints and decisions



Complaining subjects 2004:

- Service 100%

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