



CONSUMER RIGHTS AND BENEFITS



2. Consumer Rights and Benefits

In the following Chapter we present EETT's actions for the protection of consumers, as well as the establishment of a proper mechanism for safeguarding their interests and providing them with adequate information. We mention EETT's actions to ensure the legal operation of antennas and of the Radio Equipment and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (RTTE), as well as the establishment of a regulatory framework, capable to ensure a minimum level of organisation for the Courier undertakings and quality of services. The benefits that result for the consumers from the liberalisation and the smooth operation of the telecommunications and postal markets are underlined. In this framework and as a result of the competition and technological advances, some of the new services available now to consumers are presented, services, which provide them with more choices.

2.1. Consumer Protection and Information

2.1.1. Consumer Service Sector

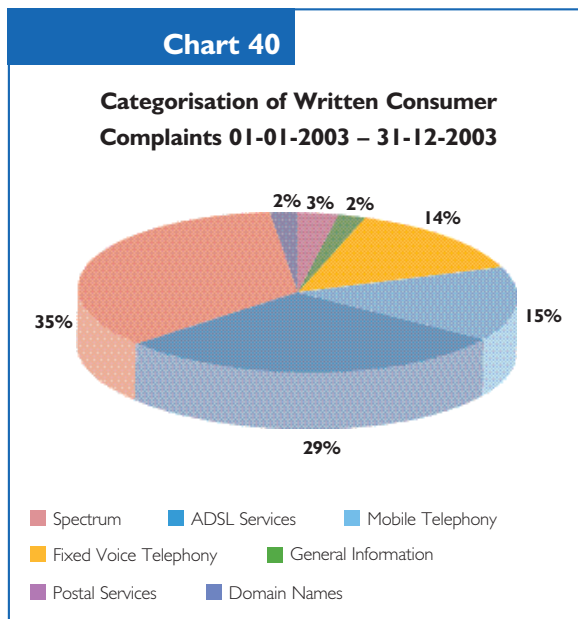
EETT, in the framework of its responsibilities, sees to the protection of consumer rights and the safeguarding of their interests. In 2003, among its main goals were the service and provision of information to consumers, as well as the immediate management of consumer requests/ complaints, through the Consumer Service Sector (CSS), for issues concerning telecommunications and postal services. The CSS was formed in November 2002 and has the following principal aims:

- Informing the consumers on ways to safeguard their interests, on developments in the telecommunications and postal markets and on their choices (see next sections).

- Managing the consumers requests/ complaints received daily. Especially in the case of complaints, EETT proceeds immediately to the examination of issues and intervenes, where this is necessary, aiming to manage the complaints in the most effective manner.
- Tracking of issues that require a regulatory intervention by EETT and the adoption of measures, aiming to defend the rights of all consumers and to improve the terms of provision of telecommunications and postal services.

In 2003, the CSS received 1,957 written requests/ complaints by consumers, a fact that proves the active participation of consumers in the new environment that is shaped by market liberalisation. The result of the recording and the most important issues that were mentioned in the complaints, are presented in Table 10.

Table 10		
Written Requests/ Complaints by Consumers – 2003		
Category	%	
➤ TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES (total)		95
Frequency Spectrum (antennas and interferences)	35	
ADSL Services (availability and tariffs)	29	
Mobile Telephony (availability of services, tariffs, quality)	15	
Fixed Voice Telephony (availability of services, tariffs, quality)	14	
Domain Names with a [.gr] suffix - Internet	2	
➤ POSTAL SERVICES		3
➤ GENERAL INFORMATION		2



Furthermore, in 2003, EETT Help Line (801 11000 80), which is dedicated to consumer service, received 2,356 calls on issues concerning the above.

EETT's goal for 2004 is for the CSS to constitute a central access point for consumers, in order to effectively resolve issues of concern and provide them with valid information. Furthermore, EETT will elaborate the data from complaints in order to improve the operation of the telecommunications and postal sector, to the benefit of consumers.

2.1.2. Information Leaflets

CSS, as mentioned above, aims at the implementation of actions in order to continuously inform and educate the consumers. The above goal is based on the fact that a properly informed consumer proceeds to the best choices, and effectively utilises the multiple possibilities provided by a liberalised market. In this framework, in 2003, the CSS proceeded to the publication of three information leaflets. The usability, the targeted topics, the simple and comprehensive presentation of topics,

the analysis of technical terms and the provision of examples, were the principal characteristics of these leaflets.

1. "Now consumers can choose"

In this information leaflet, which was published in June 2003, the new choices for consumers were presented in



detail, as a result of the full liberalisation of the telecommunications market and the successful implementation of the new National Numbering Plan (NNP). More specifically, the Carrier Selection and Carrier Pre-selection, the Number Portability and the Personal Numbers were analysed in detail.

2. "Before you talk on the phone... listen to what we have to tell you"

This leaflet, which was published in October 2003, presented in detail the calls' pricing policies of providers. The main goal was to familiarise consumers with basic issues that they must consider before they choose providers of fixed and mobile telephony. Thus, it contained information on national and international calls, on the call duration fee, the minimum time of charge, the call set-up, the



international roaming. At the same time, it also provided simple examples on the manner in which consumers can choose the most advantageous offer. Furthermore, the leaflet provided, in the form of a summary table, an indicative picture of

the price range providers charge for some of their services.



3. "Universal Postal Service... Courier Services... Let's get informed"

The topic of the leaflet, issued in November 2003, was the information provided to consumers on issues



concerning postal services in general. The leaflet, among others, included information on the following:

➤ **Universal Postal Service:** Which services does the Universal Service (US) include, how often must the distribution be made and what are the

delivery times for each category of postal items.

- **Courier Services:** Which services are provided to the consumers and what they have to know in order to make the right choices.
- The Charter of Obligations to the Consumer (COC) and compensation issues.
- EETT's role and the methods for the settlement of disputes.

The above information leaflets, which were particularly popular to the wider public, are available at EETT's website.

2.1.3. Control of Telecommunications Providers – Consumers Contracts

The telecommunications providers of fixed and mobile telephony are under the obligation to display a standardised contract text, which in a consolidated manner regulates their relations with consumers. The terms included in this text, must be presented explicitly and in a simple manner so that the consumer can fully comprehend the terms of the contract.

More specifically, the general terms are inscribed in

clear characters in the back view of the contract. The contracts for the provision of services to consumers have the form of an accession agreement –that is they are binding for both sides- and are governed by the relevant provisions of Law 2251/1994.

Each proposed contract by telecommunications providers of fixed or mobile telephony, is notified to EETT at least two months before its implementation. Then, EETT proceeds to the detailed examination of the contractual terms and within two months from the submission of the proposed standardised contract, it can request from the provider to amend specific terms or add new ones.

During 2003, new contract drafts were submitted to EETT by two fixed voice telephony providers and two mobile telephony providers. EETT examined the drafts in order to ascertain their level of compliance with the national and community legislation, and proceeded to making comments, which in general concerned the obligations to:

- State the minimum duration of the contract, according to the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court⁶.
- Explicitly define the provided service and state the terms and conditions of provision, including the relevant charge.
- State in detail the terms and conditions that concern the payment of compensation or/ and return of money to consumers, in the case of an ineffective provision of services, or in case the services are not provided at all.
- Explicitly mention the procedure for the settlement of disputes, as it is defined by the legislation in force and the Authorisation of the providers.
- Define the procedure for termination of services that constitute the object of the contract, in case of termination of agreement.

⁶ Supreme Court Decision 296/2001.



EETT's goal is to ensure that the contracts in question include all the terms provided by the legislation in force, so that consumers are protected.

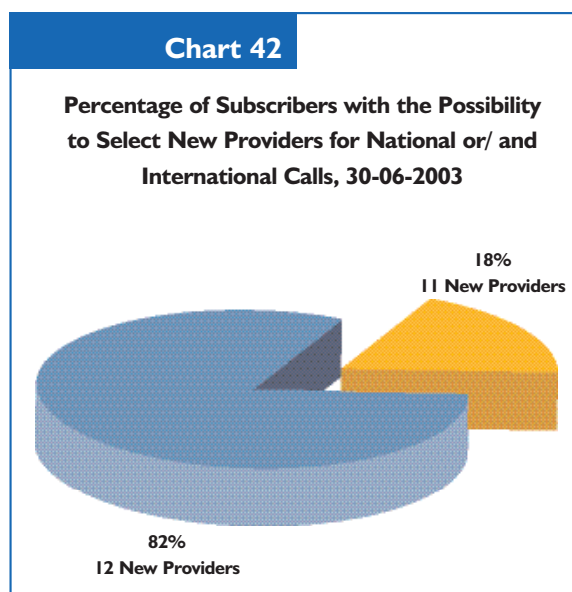
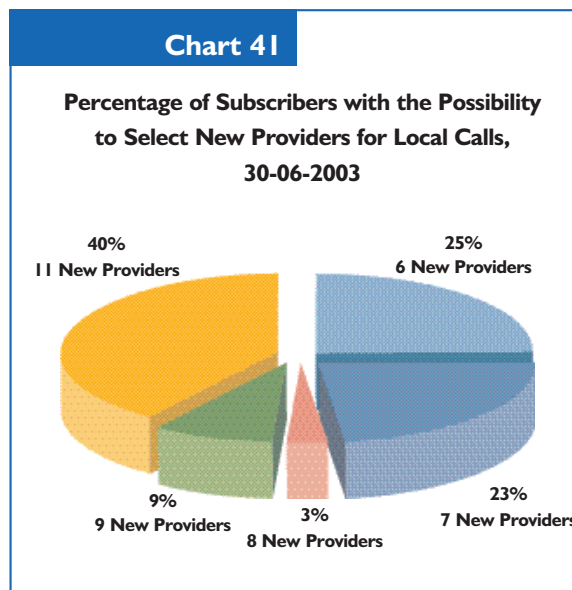
2.2. Telecommunications – Radio Communications

2.2.1. Benefits from Competition

The entry of new providers in the telecommunications market led to the establishment of competition and brought various benefits to the consumer. More specifically, the entry of new fixed voice telephony providers (see also Section 1.1.), had as a primary result the increase of consumer choices in what concerns the provider of their telephone service. As it can be seen in Charts 41 and 42, the majority of fixed voice telephony subscribers has now a choice among new providers.

The intense competition between new providers and OTE brought about, as it was expected, significant reductions in their tariffs. It is noted that the cost of a call varies and depends from, among other things, the providers' commercial packages. It is estimated that after the relevant EETT Decision⁷, by which the new pricing policy of OTE was approved under conditions, the competition will be further intensified and at the same time new reductions of voice telephony tariffs are expected by new providers, to the benefit of consumers.

Further on, we present comparative data for December 2003, concerning the cost of different kinds of calls (local, national, international and calls to mobiles), made on working days and during rush hours. In the comparison, we take into consideration the basic programmes of each provider and not



special programmes offered, which may be more affordable. Furthermore, we don't take into consideration the possible existence of a fixed charge or free of charge time.

More specifically, Chart 43 (page 54), depicts the real cost of a local call of three and ten minutes duration. All providers use as a charge unit the minute and the charge's range varies from 0.024 euros/minute to 0.026

⁷ OTE's new pricing policy was approved by EETT on December 17th, 2003 (EETT Decision 310/30/2003, GG Issue 1925/B/24-12-2003) and its commercial implementation began on December 31st, 2003.