

[PL] Multimedia Polska changes illegal contract practice following competition authority's criticism

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The Polish Urząd Ochrony Konkurencji i Konsumentów (Competition and Consumer Protection Office - UOKiK) has issued a fine against telecommunications operator Multimedia Polska, which provides various services, including Internet access and television subscriptions.

In 2015 and 2016, the consumer protection office had expressed doubt over the legality of the way in which Multimedia Polska concluded and renewed contracts with its customers. It therefore analysed the company's telephone sales calls before instigating proceedings at the end of 2016. One of the reasons for this was that Multimedia Polska had told its subscribers that the cooling-off period for telecommunications service contracts was ten days, shorter than the 14-day period stipulated by Polish consumer rights legislation.

The same piece of legislation also entitles customers to withdraw from their contract if they are already using the telecommunications services, however, Multimedia Polska did not allow its customers to do this. Finally, customers did not receive the company's terms and conditions after placing orders over the telephone and were therefore unable to verify the actual conditions of the contract.

After being threatened with a fine by the UOKiK, Multimedia Polska agreed to change the criticised practices to benefit customers and to remove the effects of these practices. For example, it will inform consumers of their right to compensation. Customers who were unlawfully prevented from withdrawing from their contract will receive a refund of two months' subscription fees. Some customers will receive benefits in the form of additional services, such as free access to Multimedia Polska's film catalogue, 50 minutes of mobile calls or 5 GB of Internet data. These benefits are also available to customers who ceased using the company's services as a result of its unlawful practices.

In the end, the UOKiK decided not to enforce the fine because Multimedia Polska had agreed to correct all the infringements mentioned by the consumer protection office and had given customers fair compensation.

Press release

https://www.uokik.gov.pl/news.php?news_id=14151

