

# I 2024 CROSS-BORDER COMPLAINTS REPORT



## EASA

EASA – the European Advertising Standards Alliance – is the single authoritative voice on advertising self-regulation in Europe. EASA promotes high ethical standards in commercial communications by means of effective self-regulation, for the benefit of consumers and business in Europe and beyond. Effective advertising self-regulation helps ensure responsible advertising, meeting consumers’ demand for honesty and transparency, regulators’ demand for responsibility and engagement, and businesses’ demand for freedom to operate responsibly. EASA and its members have developed a robust and coherent system of advertising self-regulation that can respond effectively to new challenges.

EASA acts as a co-ordination point for best practice in the implementation of self-regulation, as well as operational standards for its national Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) members. Part of EASA’s role involves coordinating the cross-border complaint mechanism. EASA also collects and analyses top-line statistical data on received and resolved complaints, as well as on copy advice requests and pre-clearance from its SRO members each year.

EASA was set up in 1992 to represent national self-regulatory organisations in Europe. In 2004, it developed into a partnership between national advertising SROs and organisations representing the advertising industry. Today, EASA is a network of 41 entities committed to making sure advertising is legal, decent, honest, and truthful. EASA’s membership is made up of 27 SROs from 25 European countries, 13 advertising industry stakeholders, including advertisers, agencies, media associations, and 1 digital pure-play company. EASA is also a member of ICAS (International Council on Ad Self-Regulation) and through its membership additionally partners with 14 SROs worldwide.

EASA is a not-for-profit organisation with a Brussels-based Secretariat. For further information, please visit [www.easa-alliance.org](http://www.easa-alliance.org).

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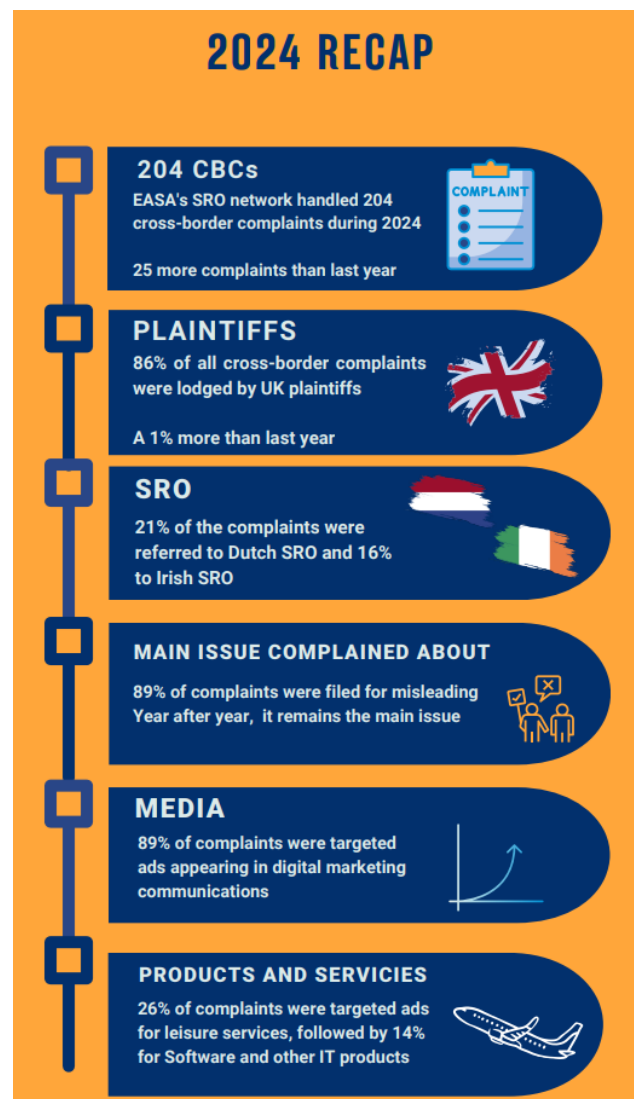
## 1 Key findings

*EASA's Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) members ensure that all Cross-Border Complaints (CBCs) are handled effectively and efficiently with a thoroughly developed mechanism based on a network of independent, impartial, and recognised SROs that exchange constant flows of information.*

Cross-Border Complaints (CBCs) are consumer or competitor complaints lodged against advertisements that appear in media or originate from advertisers based in another country than that of the plaintiff. The EASA Secretariat coordinates these types of complaints through a system that has been in operation since 1992, when it was set up in response to the creation of the European Single Market. This mechanism was built to address issues whereby advertising originating from one EU Member State is circulating in media from another. SROs handle an average of around 210 complaints annually.<sup>1</sup>

In 2024, the number of cross-border complaints was 204. As can be seen in Figure 1, from 2023 to 2024, there was a 25 CBC increase.

- EASA's CBC system covers **27 EASA SRO members** in **26 European countries** that handle complaints.<sup>2</sup> It also reaches out, on an ad hoc basis, to international SROs that are members of the International Council for Ad Self-Regulation (ICAS).
- EASA has members **both inside and outside of the European Union** who participate in the CBC mechanism. Each CBC is assessed based on the rules, laws, and regulations of the SRO in the country of origin of the medium or the advertiser, depending on the type of ad.



<sup>1</sup> Over the past 5 years.

<sup>2</sup> As of December 2024

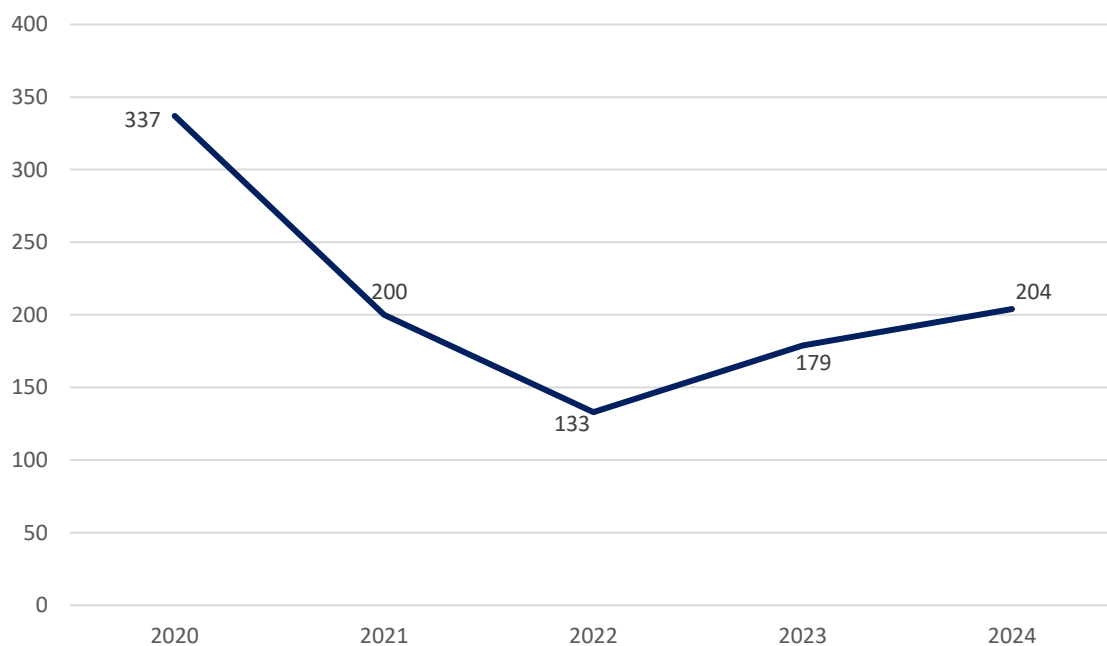
## 2 The total number of Cross-Border Complaints received

*In 2024 EASA's SROs transferred 204 complaints, 25 more than in 2023.*

Over the course of 2024, EASA was notified of a total of 204 cross-border complaints, which translates into a 14%% increase in referred complaints in comparison with the preceding year.

2011 saw the lowest level of CBCs at 73 and 2012 the highest level ever on record at 414. Over the past 5 years, since 2020 to 2024, an average of around 210 cross-border complaints were treated annually by EASA's network.

The fluctuations in complaint numbers may be influenced by external factors and market dynamics. The post-2020 recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic still evokes a level of uncertainty that has been felt across the Single Market's economy, which may partly explain the drop in 2021 and 2022. However, in 2024, the number of complaints rose again to 200, a level not seen since 2021.



**Figure 1: Cross-border complaints received between 2020 and 2024.**

*Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2021 & Online Database<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup>The "Online Database" refers to EASA's internal online cross-border complaints platform that member self-regulatory organisations use to register and send their complaints through to other SROs. EASA acts as a facilitator and caretaker of the platform, using the confidential data only for statistical purposes.

### 3 The origin of complainants

86% of cross-border complaints were lodged by UK complainants.

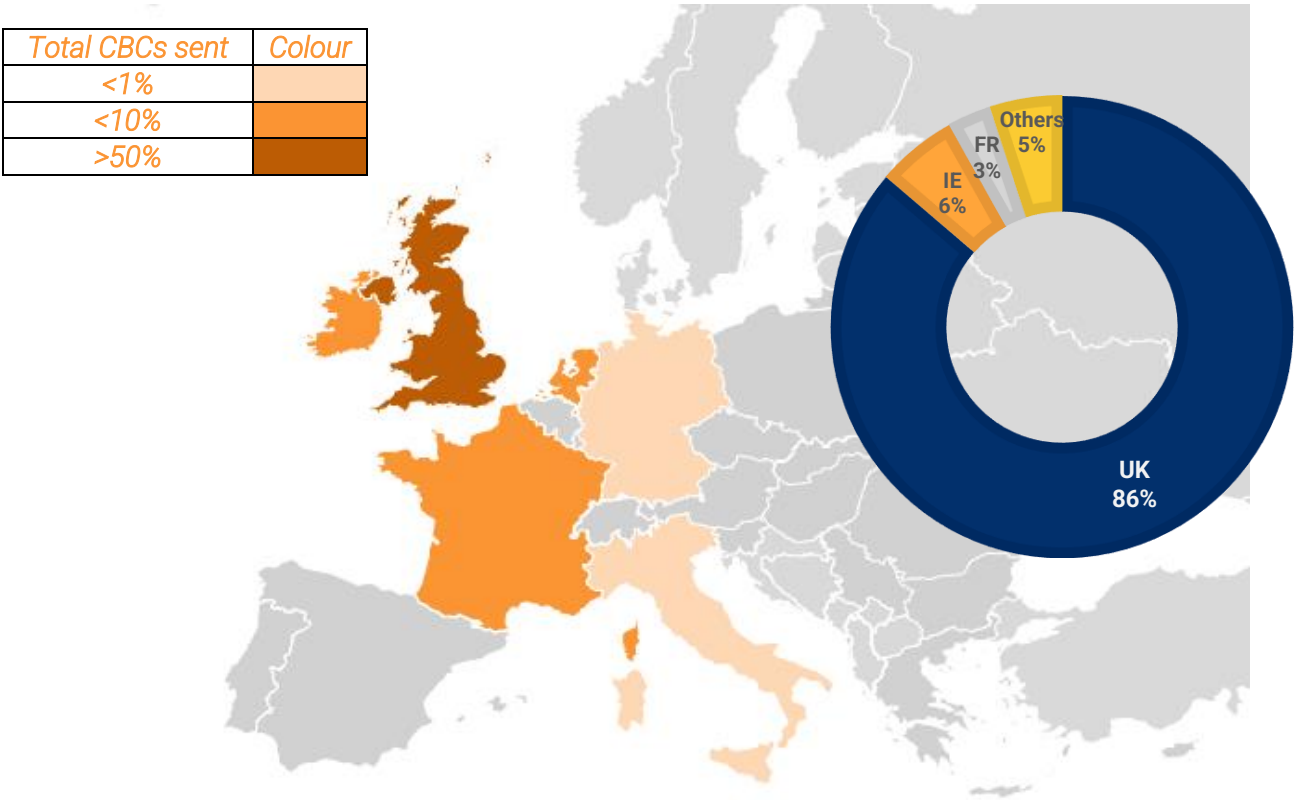


Figure 2: Advertisements complained about per country of the complainant in 2024  
Source: Online Database

UK plaintiffs remained the most active in lodging cross-border complaints in 2024, having sent 176 (86%) objections on ad content to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the UK. A small increase can be noted with respect to the previous year, where UK plaintiffs lodged a total of 153 complaints in 2023.

Although cross-border complaints in 2024 were again mostly lodged in the UK, advertisements from Ireland (6%) and France (3%) come next. However, it's evident that these percentages are significantly lower compared to the 86% projected for the UK this year.

For the second consecutive year, only Ireland and the UK recorded at least 10 complaints (13 and 176 respectively in 2024) while all other SROs recorded less.

The table below also shows that only a handful of countries are sending over complaints to other countries. Despite an increase to 176 in 2024 compared to 153 in 2023, this remains a relatively low figure, with 2022 still marking a trough in the number of referred complaints with 95.

Country	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
United Kingdom	176	153	95	161	300
Ireland	13	10	18	22	15
France	6	5	10	5	5
Netherlands	3	2	1	1	5
Italy	1	1	1	0	3
Germany	1	0	1	3	3
Bulgaria	0	1	0	0	0
Romania	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	0	2	6	1	5
Spain	0	2	1	0	2
Other	1*	0	0	0	0

**Table 1: Cross-border complaints per country of complainant between 2020 and 2024**

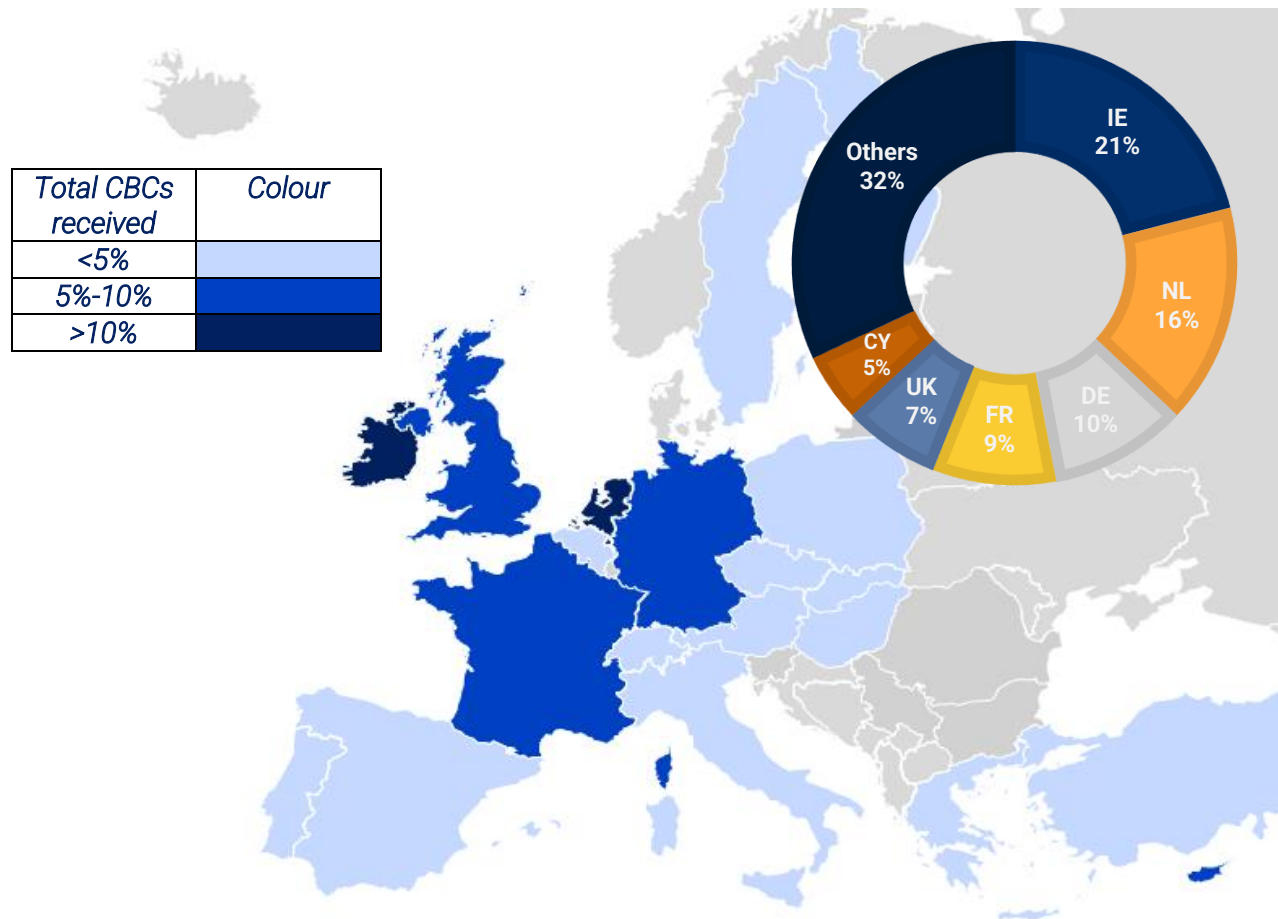
*\*Other in 2024 represents complaints lodged with SROs outside of Europe.*

*Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2024 & Online Database*



## 4 The country of origin of advertisements or media

*Ads from Ireland and the Netherlands generated the highest number of cross-border complaints in 2024.*



**Figure 3: Cross-border complaints per country of origin of the media/advertiser in 2024**

*Source: Online database*

EASA's Cross-Border Complaints System requires that all advertisements comply with the advertising laws and advertising self-regulatory codes of the country wherein the medium carrying the advertisement is based. In the case of Direct Mail and Online Advertising, the SRO that is responsible for handling the complaint is the one wherein the advertiser is based.

In the case of Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA), it is the country in which the principal decision-making authority is conducted that counts as the country of origin.<sup>4</sup> As we will see in subsequent

<sup>4</sup> Switzerland requires that advertisements addressed by Swiss-based marketers to consumers in other countries comply with the rules and laws of those countries (known as the "principle of the country of destination"). Consequently, in such cases, the Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) in the plaintiff's country assesses the complaint based on its own national rules before passing it to the Swiss SRO, which communicates the



sections of this report, the vast majority of CBCs relate to digital marketing communications. According to the EASA CBC system principles, this means that it is the SRO in the country of origin of the advertiser that is responsible for handling the complaint according to local rules and legislation.

In 2024, around 1 out of 5 complaints were aimed at advertisements originating in or circulating in media active in the Netherlands (20,59%). In second place, 15,69% of complaints are lodged against ads originating from or circulating in media active in Ireland.

These two countries, with 42 complaints for the Netherlands and 32 for Ireland, generated the highest number of adverts subject to complaints. In third place, Germany recorded 9.8% with 19 complaints. Other countries where advertisements were subject to frequent complaints originated in France 18 (8.8%) and UK 15 (7%)

Finally, to a lesser extent and each accounting for close to 5%, Spain recorded 9 complaints, followed by Belgium with 8 and Italy with 6.

The rest of the countries received less than five CBCs each. In addition, 10 complaints lodged in Europe were sent to ICAS global SROs in Canada and Singapore.

The UK ASA referred 39 complaints to the Stichting Reclame Code (SRC) in the Netherlands, 29 complaints to the Irish Advertising Standards Authority (ASA Ireland), 20 to the German Advertising Standards Council (DWR) and 10 to the Cyprus Advertising Regulation Organization (CARO).

Digital Marketing Communication remains year-on-year the medium with the most complaints.

Annual statistics (presented in Table 1) show that despite some fluctuations over the past 5 years, the most complained ads originated in the same 5 countries: the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, France, the UK.

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decision to the advertiser. Similarly, some other SROs, in EU Member States, operate under different principles. However, SROs always share information and best practices to reach a swift and definitive decision for each CBC.

Table 2: Cross-border complaints per country of origin between 2020 and 2024.

Country	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Netherlands	42	45	19	43	74
Ireland	32	40	36	57	122
Germany	19	25	9	16	29
France	18	15	11	17	24
United Kingdom	15	5	13	17	15
Cyprus	11	4	1	4	16
Spain	9	10	11	12	11
Belgium	8	5	4	0	5
Italy	6	7	7	4	5
Finland	5	3	3	0	3
Austria	5	1	1	5	2
Sweden	4	1	1	2	9
Switzerland	4	1	2	3	1
Czech Republic	3	2	3	3	2
Hungary	3	2	1	3	5
Poland	3	1	0	0	0
Portugal	2	0	2	0	1
Greece	1	2	0	0	0
Turkey	1	1	1	2	1
Slovakia	1	1	0	0	0
Bulgaria	0	1	0	0	0
Romania	0	1	0	0	0
Other <sup>5</sup>	10	0	5	5	0

<sup>5</sup> The 'Other' category in 2024 includes Canada and Singapore, and 2021 includes Canada and United Arab Emirates.

## 5 Outcome of Resolved Complaints

6% of the complaints received by the SROs were upheld. 26% were not upheld and over 5% of complaints were not investigated.

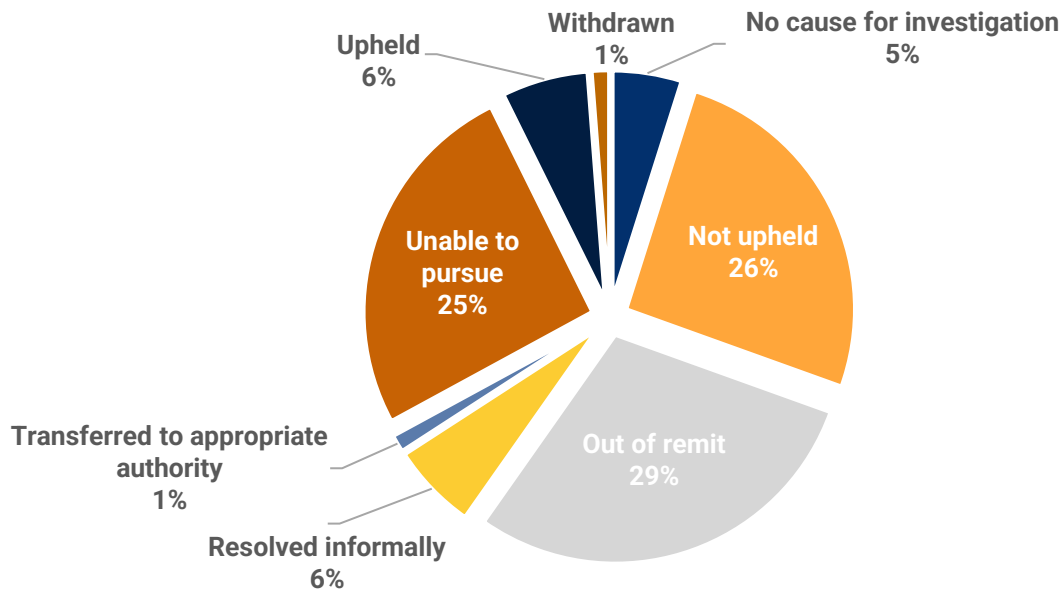


Figure 4: Cross-border complaints per outcome in 2024

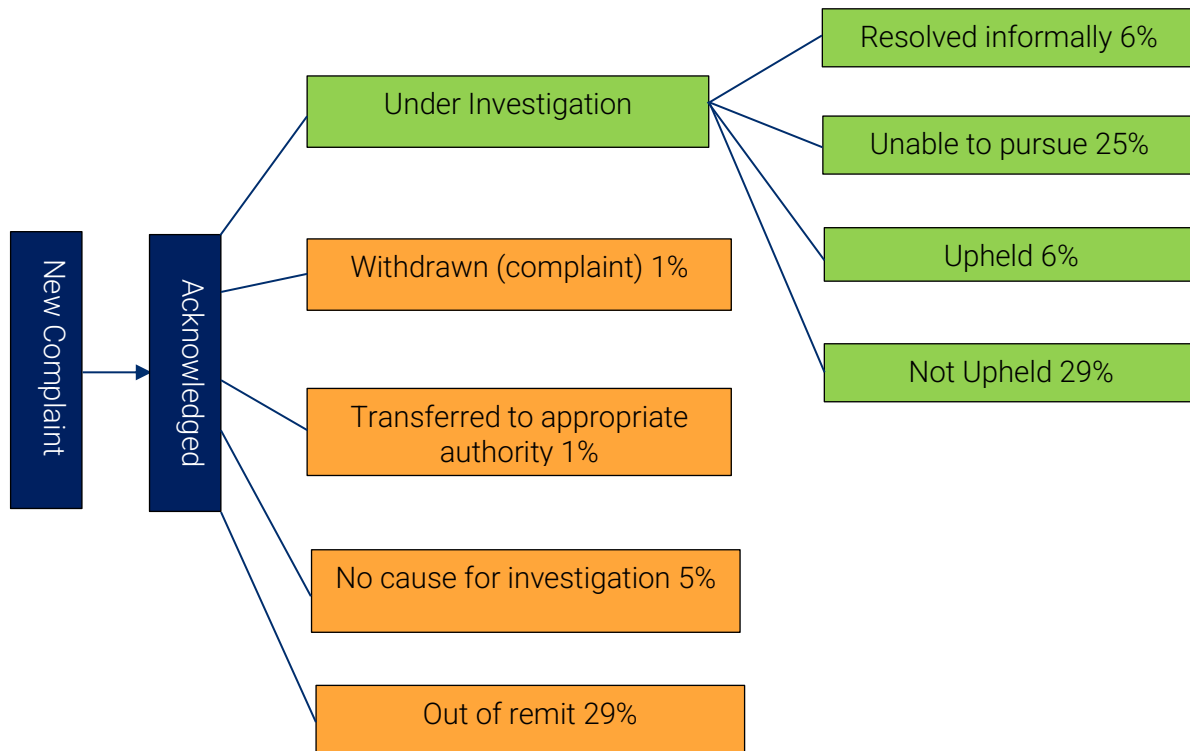
Source: Online Database

SROs' juries and committees upheld 6% of all complaints. A further 25% of complaints did not make it to the jury sessions as the SROs' secretariats were unable to collect sufficient information to bring the case to the committees, usually due to unresponsive advertisers or lack of information given in the complaint. These were thus classified as "unable to pursue".

In 2023, the percentage of complaints resolved informally by SROs was 3%, whereas in the current period, it has increased to 6%. These are complaints where SROs' secretariats were able to mediate between the advertisers and the plaintiffs about the former's grievances. SROs can take on an important mediator role in certain cases.

Only 5% of complaints received by the SROs were not investigated for various reasons based on decisions made on the national level. For these cases, SROs found that these complaints had either no grounds for a case as the advertisements at hand did not breach any rule or legislation, or that the complaint was unable to be pursued by the SRO. As depicted in the graph above, complaints that fell outside of the SROs' remit stand at 29%. The SRO in the country of the plaintiff may have accepted the complaint under their statutory rules. However, it is the SRO in the country of origin of the media or of the advertiser whose remit counts in referred cases.

Finally, one complaint was transferred to the appropriate authority—either to legal authorities or other local regulatory or self-regulatory organisations—compared to no complaints at all in 2023.

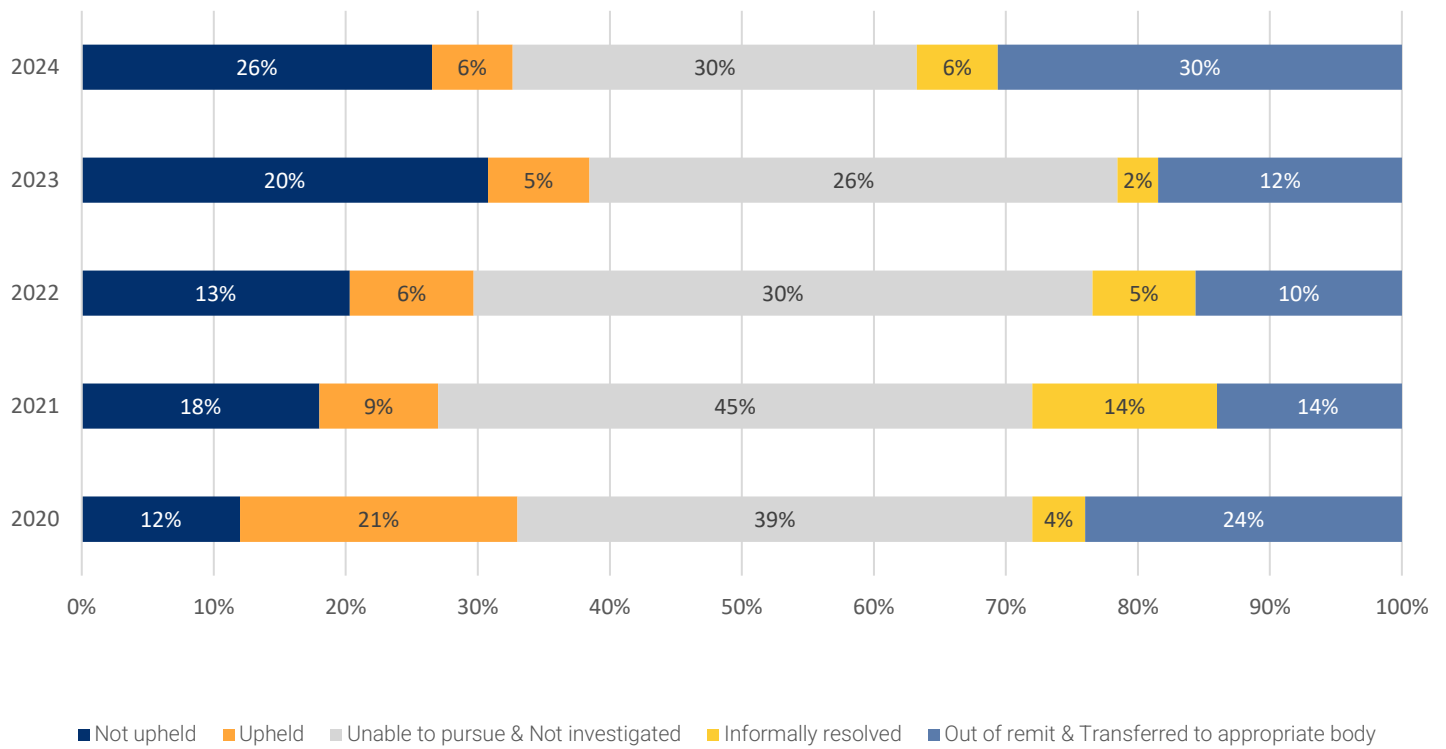


**Figure 5: Cross-Border Complaints handling process and related share in 2024**

*Source: Online Database*

Comparing the data of CBCs' outcomes across the past 5 years (see figure below) reveals a series of contractions and expansions for each complaint outcome. The CBC mechanism operates as a dynamic system, influenced by factors such as emerging advertising trends, revised self-regulatory protocols, cultural shifts, and societal challenges that shape consumer expectations.

Self-regulatory organisations strive to keep ads compliant with high standards both with respect to well-accepted rules and laws but also to new events amid changing norms that current rules may not explicitly cover. Resolving complaints informally or transferring complaints to other better-suited organisations are ways SROs can navigate the ever-changing societal landscape, all the while keeping ads in line with their Codes. In this sense, SROs are best positioned as focal points in receiving, handling, and mediating consumers' or other organisations' complaints rapidly and decisively, especially in times of crises and upending circumstances.



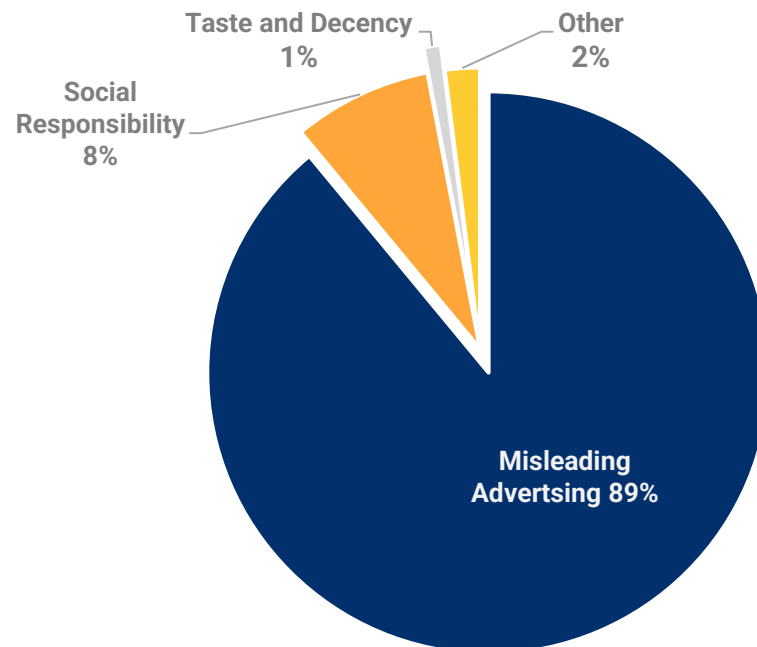
**Figure 6: Cross-border complaints per outcome between 2020 and 2024<sup>6</sup>**

Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2021 & Online Database

<sup>6</sup> The figures include “Partially upheld” complaints in the category of “Upheld” complaints to make it comparable with previous years and as the share of the former are negligible.

## 6 Issues Complained About

*Misleading advertising continues to be the main issue complained about*



**Figure 7: Cross-border complaints per issue in 2024**

*Source: Online Database*

Continuing the trend set in previous years, the largest share of cross-border complaints in 2024 concerned misleading advertisements, with 89% of complaints lodged on this issue. This focus on issues about misleading commercial advertising practices is not new. Consumers are mostly complaining about unclear advertisements that lead them to a purchase that they would have otherwise not conducted, had the advert been clearer or more honest in its promotion.

Within this category, consumers mainly objected to advertisements by companies operating in the leisure services sector (26%), such as airline companies, bus touring services, accommodation services, etc. The next biggest industry that had been complained about regarding misleading marketing practices was advertising within software and other IT products accounting for 14% of the complaints.

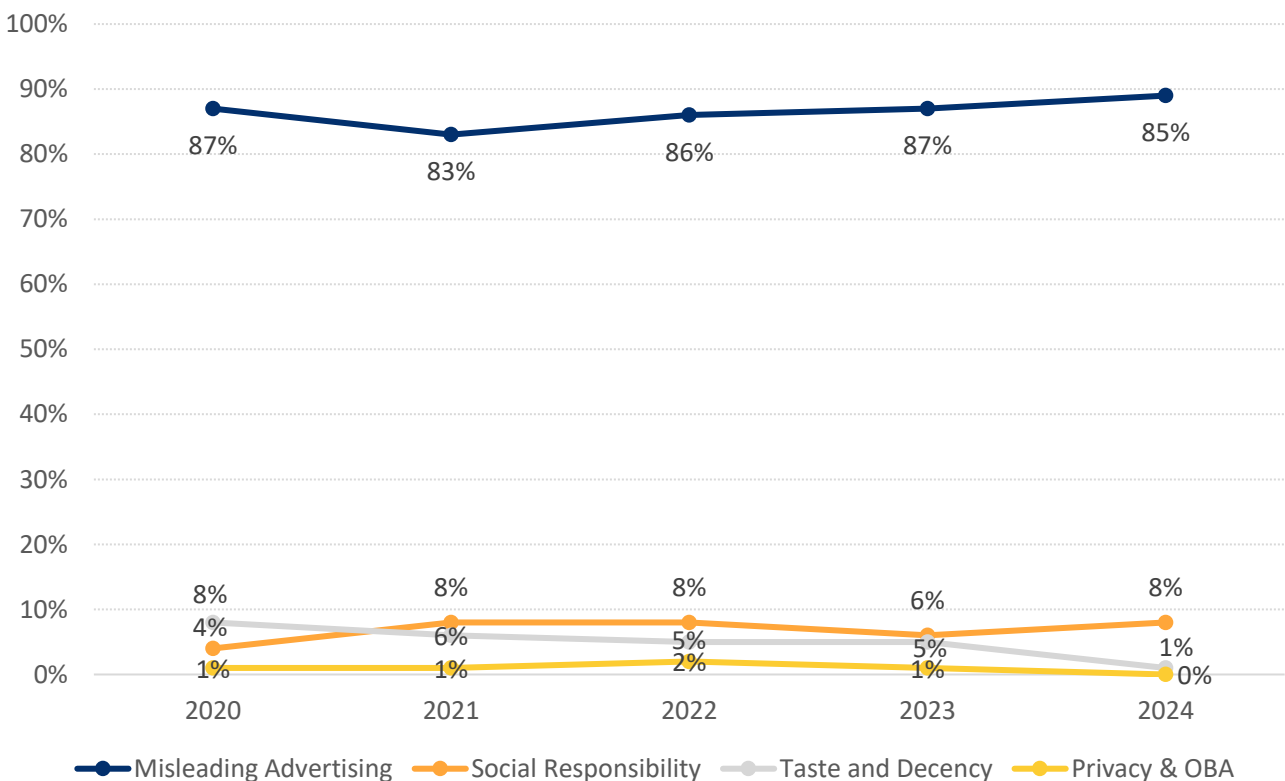
Beyond misleading advertising, consumers also complained about social responsibility, with 8% of complaints, which relates to issues such as discrimination and the responsibility of advertisers in addressing some of the topical matters discussed at the societal level. The third biggest issue related to taste and decency at 1%, this represents an important decrease of 4 points compared to

2023. Taste and decency vary largely according to local sensitivities, cultural particularities, and community events.

Around 1% of complaints fall under the "Other" category, covering issues like harm/irresponsibility, potential scams, or misleading customer service. For instance, one complaint regarding harm/irresponsibility concerns a post advertising products from a brand specialising in the design of objects and toys for babies, within content created by an influencer. The image featured shows a baby asleep in a cot, with a pillow, loose bedding, lying on its side, and surrounded by unsecured items such as toys. This contradicts safe sleep guidelines and represents highly irresponsible advertising. Furthermore, another post on the same Instagram account features a baby sleeping while wearing a wool hat.

Finally, privacy and data protection issues were not raised by plaintiffs in 2024, unlike in 2023, when it accounted for at least 1% of the complaints.

Over the past five years, concerns about breaches of social responsibility and taste and decency have consistently ranked second highest, averaging 12% per year (combining both categories). There was a significant decrease in complaints related to taste and decency in 2024, dropping by 4 percentage points to 1%, compared to 5% in 2023. At the same time, there was an increase of 2 percentage points related to social responsibility, rising from 6% in 2023 to 8% in 2024.



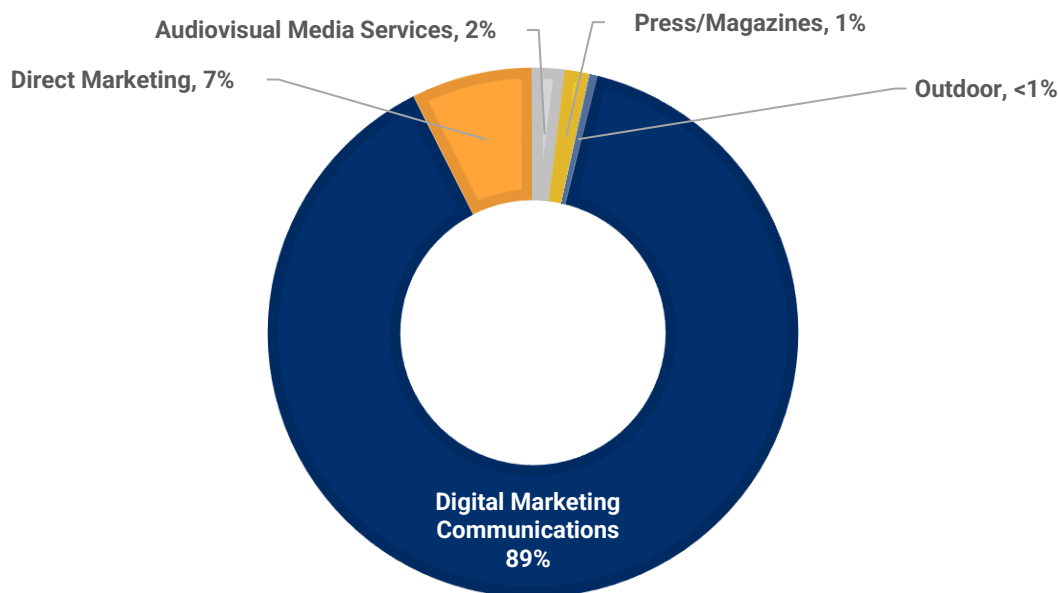
**Figure 8: Cross-border complaints per issue between 2020 and 2024**

Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2023& Online Database



## 7 Media

*Digital marketing communications saw the most complaints among all media categories at 89%.*



**Figure 9: Cross-border complaints per medium type in 2024**

*Source: Online Database*

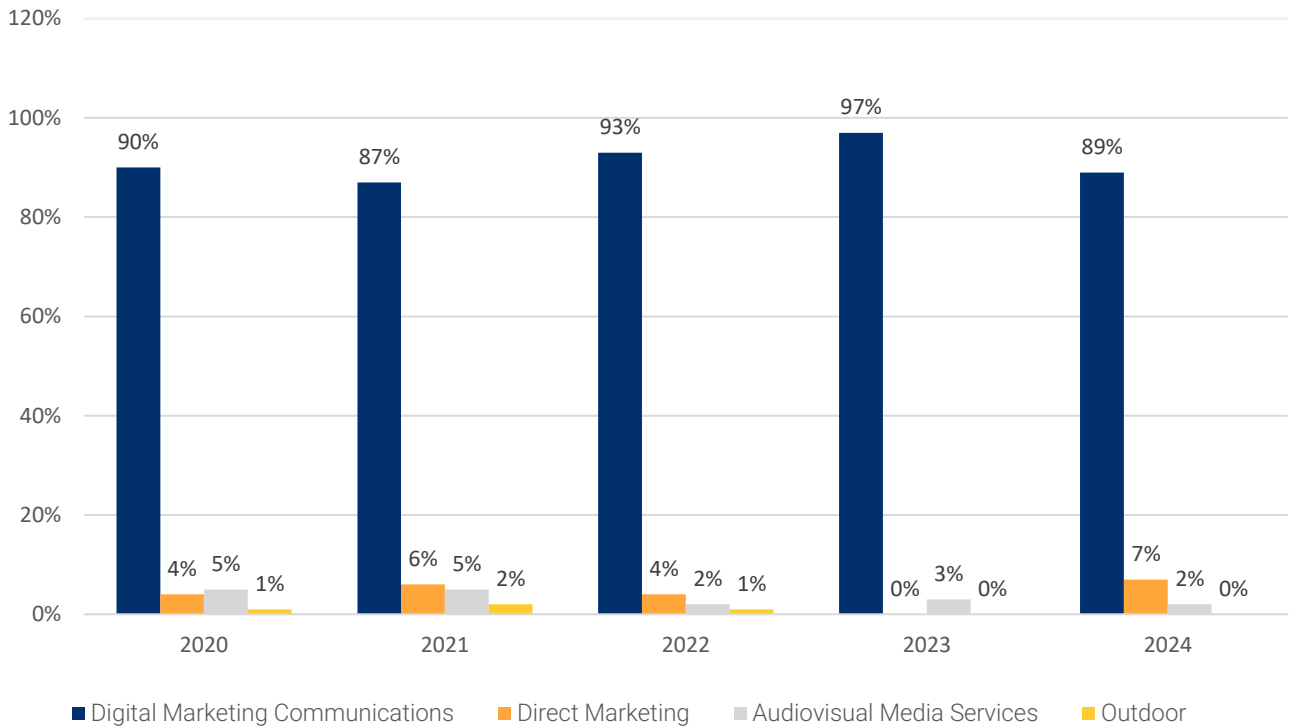
Online advertising, or digital marketing communications, accounted for 89% of cross-border complaints, indicating consumers are more susceptible to complain about ads that feature in online feeds and digital platforms than in other media. However, it should be noted that in 2024, although this category continues to lead as in 2023, there has been an 8-point decrease, dropping from 97% of the complaints in 2023 to 87% in 2024.

This is due to the emergence of complaints related to direct marketing media, which in 2024 represent 7%, contrasting with 2023, when no complaints received were related to this media. Direct marketing can consist of print or online newsletters, emails, SMS marketing, and more. For instance, one complaint as against a direct marketing ad concerns an email received promoting free access to global military records for a 7-day trial period, with no bank details required. However, when the plaintiff attempted to claim the offer, they were asked for payment details. As a result, the plaintiff challenged the email advertisement as misleading. CBCs against advertisements appearing on Audio-visual Media Services (AVMS), such as television, prompted 2% of cross-border complaints, while outdoor and press/m magazines advertising received each one 1% of the complaints during 2024.

This shows that television ads are comparatively rarely complained about. This is partly because, in countries such as the UK and France there is a national SRO – Clearcast and ARPP respectively – that clears every advertisement before airing it on TV or radio. This enables the self-regulatory

body or its counterparts to filter through a great deal of misleading or problematic ads that consumers would have otherwise flagged after publication in a complaint. Moreover, analysing the data, we see that 89% of all complaints in the Online Advertising category are against adverts that have been complained about for misleading content.

Annual statistics show that digital marketing communications have been generating by far the most cross-border complaints in recent years, with an average of 91.2% of complaints in the period from 2010 through 2023.

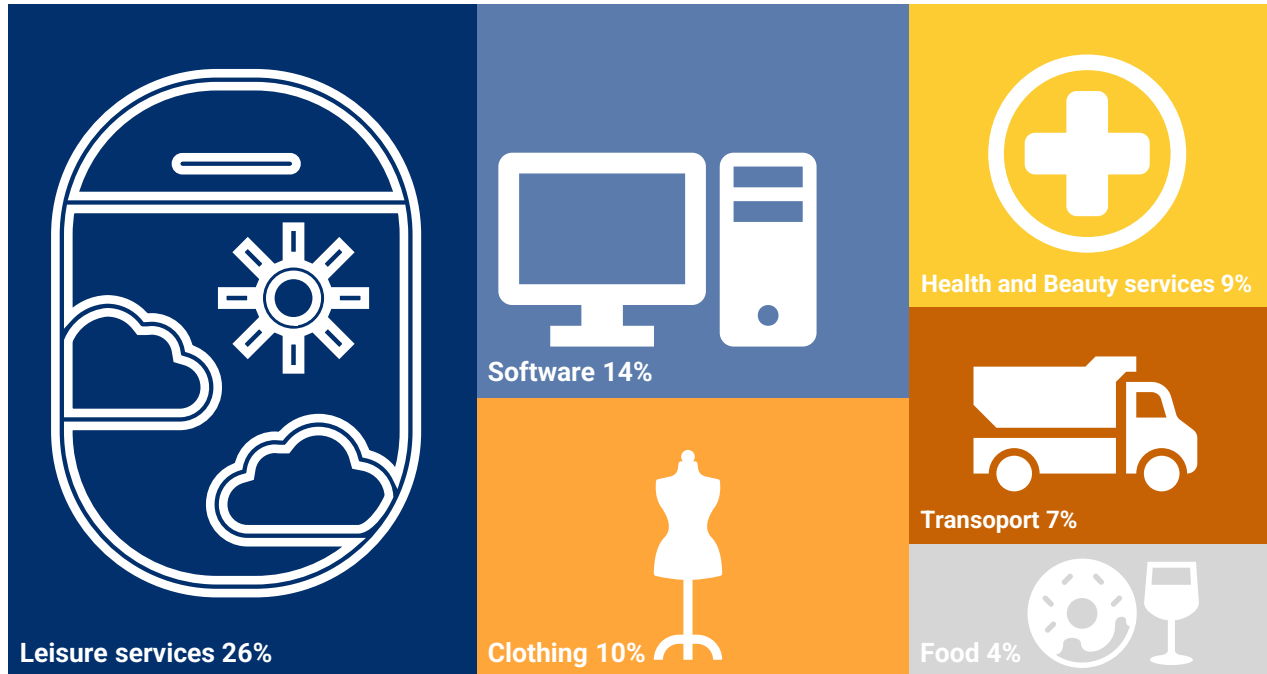


**Figure 10: Cross-border complaints per medium from 2020 to 2024**

Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2022 & Online Database

## 8 Complaints about Advertising for Products and Services

*CBCs were mostly concerning advertising of leisure services, software, and clothing items.*



**Figure 11: Cross-border complaints in terms of products and services in 2024**

*Source: Online Database*

In 2024, 26% of all complaints pertained to leisure services, including airline companies, hotels and holiday accommodations, travel and renting services, entertainment, sports, gaming activities, and dating services. Consumers around Europe also complained about alleged breaches of the SR codes regarding marketing communications for Software and other IT products (14%).

Clothing, footwear and accessories (10% of total complaints) was one of the most complained sectors as well, followed by Health and beauty services (9%) and transport services (7%) of CBCs.

Additional categories that do not exceed 5% of the complaints, including food (4%), gambling and lotteries (4%), retail (3%), cars and motorised vehicles (3%), electronic goods (2.5%), and financial services, as well as the category Furnishing and household goods, each one with the same percentage (2%).

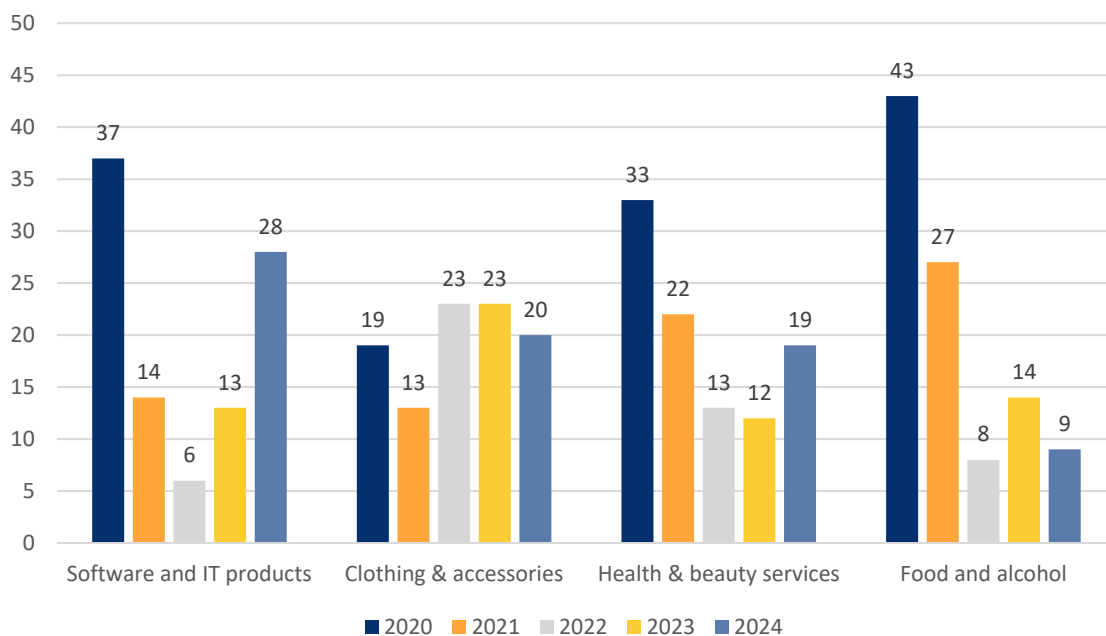
The "Other" category (4%) has been significantly reduced this year, falling to half, in 2023, it exceeded 10% of the CBCs. This category includes various categories and sub-categories of products and services advertised across the continent, such as educational services, employment services among others. House maintenance services and Real estate services each do not exceed 2% in 2024.

Some sectors have seen certain variations. In 2020, the food sector recorded more than twice as many CBCs as the previous year. In 2021, despite a decline, it remained in second place after leisure services. In 2022, claims in this sector were significantly reduced to 5%. Nevertheless, by 2023, this sector—previously in a lower position, rose to account for 8% of CBCs. However, in 2024, the food category finds itself in sixth position, with a percentage not even reaching 3% — a marked decline compared to its prominence in previous years.

Another category that has also seen a decline is clothing & accessories, which had remained in second position behind leisure services since 2021. However, after three consecutive years, in 2024 it drops to third place, having been surpassed by software and other IT products. This category, software and other IT products, recorded a total of 28 complaints in 2024. A relatively high number compared to previous years, and one not seen since 2020, the year of COVID-19, when the number of complaints in this category reached 37 CBCs. The 28 complaints concerning software and other IT products in 2024 were lodged all by UK complainants.

Health and beauty services received a significant number of complaints between 2020 and 2021, which were reduced by more than half in 2022 and 2023. In 2021, this category recorded 33 complaints, while by 2023 the number had fallen to 12. However, in 2024, it rose again to 19 complaints, representing 9.31% and placing it in fourth position.

The graph below more clearly illustrates the differences between the previously mentioned categories that experienced the most significant variations over the past 5 years – leisure services are not represented as this category is always the largest year-on-year.



**Figure 12 Cross-Border Complaint Trends: Categories with the most variation between 2020-2024, in effective numbers**

*Source: Online Database*

As a curiosity, and as shown in Table 3 below, in 2024, for the first time in the last 5 years, complaints have been received against toys' advertising. One of these complaints referred to a plaintiff who claimed that a famous brand of plastic construction toys was misleading customers about the contents of the pieces included as missing.

A more detailed breakdown of complaints per products and services can be found below. It allows for a comparison of complaints throughout the past 5 years.

Products and services	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>Leisure services</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Electronic devices and IT hardware and software products</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Clothing &amp; Accessories</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Health &amp; Beauty services</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Transport services</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Food (and Alcohol)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Other (products/services)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Gambling &amp; Lotteries</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Retail</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Cars and motorized vehicles</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Furnishing and household goods</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Energy, water, and combustibles</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Financial &amp; Business services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Toys</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Books and magazines</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Telecommunication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 3: Cross-border complaints in terms of products and services between 2020 and 2024

Source: Annual Cross-Border Complaints Report 2021 & Online Database

## 9 European data on CBCs: wrap-up for 2024

*Slight increase in total number of CBCs – online advertising remains dominant media, leisure remains the dominant sector, UK refers most complaints to the Netherlands and Ireland*

We can conclude, from the analysis of the figures for 2024, that consumers in the UK made up most complaints transferred abroad. The 204 CBCs predominantly took issue with misleading online and digital advertising material from leisure services, clothing, and accessories, software and other IT products as well as clothing, footwear and accessories of which the marketers' headquarters are in Ireland and the Netherlands.

The data for 2024 also indicates that CBCs are still principally lodged against digital and online adverts that allegedly contained misleading content. The 2024 statistics follow the same trends as in 2023, namely in terms of digital marketing communications being still overwhelmingly the most complained-about media. New online technology and online marketing trends translate into year-on-year consistent high number of complaints against online ads.

These statistics and figures are a testimony to the successes and challenges for SROs to mediate between consumers rightfully expecting correct, transparent, and high-quality ads informing them of new products and services, and brands competing to capture audience attention. All in all, SROs filtered, handled, and assessed each of the 204 cross-border complaints to ensure that all ads in Europe were accountable for their claims and that they respected the local advertising standards.

Looking ahead, the data suggests a continuing trend towards digital platforms as the focal point of consumer complaints, necessitating on-going adaptation and vigilance by SROs to maintain advertising integrity. As EASA continues to enhance cross-border cooperation among SROs, it remains committed to ensuring a fair and responsible advertising environment across Europe.

In conclusion, the 2024 report underscores SROs' pivotal role in promoting ethical advertising practices and helping protect consumers through effective self-regulation. By addressing the complexities of cross-border complaints and staying attuned to emerging advertising trends, EASA and SROs uphold their commitment to promote high standards and help foster consumer trust in the advertising industry.

## Annexe: How the Cross-Border Complaints (CBC) System Works

### EASA's Cross-Border Complaints System

EASA's Cross-Border Complaints (CBC) system has been **in operation since 1992**. With the increase of media travelling across borders, the CBC system was established to provide people who wished to make complaints against advertising featured in media or by advertisers originating from outside their home territory with the same redress available to consumers within the country of origin of the media or advertiser. Since 1992, EASA has coordinated around 3,400 cross-border complaints.

### The Basic Principles of the EASA Cross-Border Complaints System

The **first principle is the 'country of origin'**, a concept enshrined in EU law to facilitate the growth of the European Single Market. The CBC system is founded on the principle that an advertisement must abide by the rules of the country where the media is based that features the advertisement. However, in the case of Direct Marketing and Online Advertising, the advertisements will generally be expected to follow the rules of the country where the advertiser is based, whereas, in the case of Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA), the country of origin of the company will be based on the principal decision-making presence (headquarters' offices). The **second principle is 'mutual recognition'**. By this principle, EASA members agree to accept advertisements that comply with the self-regulatory rules in the country of origin of the media or advertiser, even if those rules are not identical to their own.

### The Competent Body

Once the advertisement's 'country of origin' has been established, the complaint will be assigned to the local self-regulatory organisation (SRO). It is not possible to assign a complaint to more than one SRO.

### Dealing with a Cross-Border Complaint

The complainant may not initially realise that their complaint lies outside the competence of their national SRO. Hence, the plaintiff's first point of contact will be the local, national SRO. Once the latter ascertains that a complaint is a cross-border issue, it will first inform the complainant of the Cross-Border Complaints system and the measures that will be taken to handle the complaint. The complaint, along with any other relevant details, is then passed on to the relevant self-regulatory organisation (SRO) present in the country of origin of the media or the advertiser for investigation. The EASA Secretariat is included in all correspondence related to the case and will closely monitor its progress. Furthermore, EASA may become involved in the process by, for instance, recommending the SRO to take certain actions, involving industry bodies where appropriate, and reporting on the outcome of cases once they have been closed.

### Ad-Alerts

If an ad shows evidence of deliberate unethical, dishonest, or criminal activity, the SRO will transfer the complaint to the relevant government authorities. In these circumstances, the EASA Secretariat may, after discussion with members involved, decide to issue an Ad-Alert, which notifies concerned parties of the advertisers' activities. Ad-Alerts are published on the EASA website: [www.easa-alliance.org](http://www.easa-alliance.org).



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