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Price Indication Directive (98/6)

What is the aim of the directive? (Art. 1)

The Directive aims to stipulate indication of the selling price and the price per unit of measurement of products offered by traders to consumers in order to improve consumer information and to facilitate comparison of prices.

Scope of application (Art. 1)

This Directive applies to the indication of the selling price and the price per unit of measurement of products in contracts concluded between a seller or supplier and a consumer.

Key points

1. Information (Art. 3)

The selling price and the unit price must be indicated in an unambiguous, easily identifiable and clearly legible manner for all products offered by traders to consumers ('unambiguous' meaning the final price including [value-added tax](#) and all other taxes).

The unit price need not be indicated if it is identical to the selling price.

However, European Union (EU) countries may decide not to apply this rule:

to products supplied in the course of the provision of a service;

to sales by auction and sales of works of art and antiques.

For products sold in bulk, only the unit price must be indicated.

Any advertising which mentions the selling price must also indicate the unit price.

2. Exceptions (Art. 5)

EU countries may:

waive the obligation to indicate the unit price of products for which such indication would not be useful or would be liable to create confusion. In the case of non-food products, draw up a list of the products to which the obligation to indicate the unit price will remain applicable.

If the obligation to indicate the unit price were to constitute an excessive burden for certain small retail businesses because of the number of products on sale, the sales area, the nature of the place of sale, specific conditions of sale where the product is not directly accessible for the consumer or certain forms of business, such as certain types of itinerant trade, Member States may, for a transitional period, provide that the obligation to indicate the unit price of products other than those sold in bulk, which are sold in the said businesses, shall not apply.

3. Plain, intelligible language (Art. 4)

The selling price and the unit price must be unambiguous, easily identifiable and clearly legible. Member States may provide that the maximum number of prices to be indicated be limited.

4. Penalties (Art. 8)

EU countries must lay down, and provide information on, the system of penalties for infringements of the national provisions adopted in application of this directive.

Amending Acts

It has been amended by Directive (EU) 2019/2161. It introduces a new article in Directive 98/6/EC regarding information to consumers about price reductions. Any announcement of a price reduction must clearly indicate the price previously applied by the trader (prior price). The prior price means the lowest price applied by the trader during a period of time not shorter than 30 days prior to the application of the price reduction.

The amendment provides for regulatory options for Member States as regards goods that are liable to deteriorate or expire rapidly (in particular food), goods that have been on sale for less than 30 days and goods that are subject to continuous price reductions.

The existing requirement for Member States to introduce effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties for breaches of national rules on price indications has been complemented with a list of criteria for the imposition of penalties.

From when does the directive apply? (Art. 11)

It has applied since 18 March 1998. EU countries had to incorporate it into national law by 18 March 2000.

Background

For more information, see:

['Price indication'](#) on the European Commission's website.

Main document

Directive [98/6/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers (OJ L 80, 18.3.1998, pp. 27-31)

Related acts

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Directive 1998/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 on consumer protection in the indication of prices of products offered to consumers ([COM\(2006\) 325 final](#), 21.6.2006).
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