

Resolution of consumption conflicts

A consumption conflict results from a consumption juridical relation established between two interested parties, more precisely a consumer and a professional, which means that business between singular persons as well as business between professionals are not considered as consumption relationships.

Additionally, it is important to understand that consumption conflicts are restricted to those situations where the claim is presented by the consumer.

If the consumer does not accomplish a contract, for example if he doesn't pay the price of a determined good or service, we are not in face of a conflict classified as a consumption conflict.

It is in fact the more fragile position of the consumer compared with that of the professional that defines what is or is not a real consumption conflict.

To solve a conflict with these characteristics the consumer should try a direct negotiation process with the other interested party (the professional), asking for an answer related to his problem.

If this type of approach does not solve the problem, the consumer should ask for the support of an alternative means of resolution, contacting for that purpose a recognized mediation or arbitration entity indicated in the list of the Municipalities Centers of Consumer Information (Centros de Informação Autárquicos ao Consumidor) and in the list of the Consumption Conflicts Arbitration Centers (Centros de Arbitragem de Conflitos de Consumo).

The advantages resulting from the contact with those types of entities are, among others, celerity, gratuity or less expensive investment when compared with those resulting from the use of courts, and participation and interaction of interested parties in the resolution of the conflict.

In Portugal there are in some councils or municipalities the so called *julgados de paz* that are also an alternative means to judicial courts.