Consumer policy: priorities 1996-1998

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OBJECTIVE: to present the working priorities for the next three years in order to illustrate the direction being taken by consumer policy and the uses to which the limited resources available will be put.
CONTENT: the Commission states in its new plan entitled "Priorities for consumer policy 1996-1998" that it intends to extend its range of work in order to improve consumer policy. In defining the priorities for action, it has therefore decided to: - address the areas of immediate interest to consumers, especially financial services, essential public utility services, foodstuffs and consumer education; - work for a really user-friendly information society and sustainable consumer patterns; - help the central and eastern European countries and developing countries to take advantage of the consumer policy. Top priority needs to be given to consumer information and education in order to give concrete expression to Europe in all its dimensions on a daily basis. This priority can only be implemented by closely involving consumer representatives, as they represent the cornerstone of a real awareness by the civil society of a consumer policy. The Commission will therefore step up its action to develop consumer associations at both national and European level.