



NOTICE ON STAMPS FRAUD

Many of you have read on newspapers news about a possible massive fraud carried out by the companies FORUM FILATELICO and AFINSA, BIENES TANGIBLES, SA. The Spanish European Consumer Centre on behalf of its Host Institution, the National Institute for Consumption, wishes to make a public formal statement of the current situation with regards to the published information:

I. – Both companies, FORUM FILATELICO and AFINSA, SA, have been legally charged with crimes against the Public Finances, money laundering, disloyal managing, punishable bankruptcy and private document's fake. Forum Filatelico has been charged with swindling as well. An estimated of 350.000 people affected in Spain, 12.000 in Portugal and 5.000 in France are the figures reported up to present. In the Spanish Commercial System, these companies are considered to be dealers of tangible goods and thus submitted to Market control and Consumption regulation.

II. – The Consumption and Consumer Protection State Authorities, together with the Authorities of the Autonomous Communities and the Consumers and Users Council have agreed upon a number of *ad hoc* dispositions to handle the case. Among others, the following:

1. – An *on-line* information system set up to disseminate relevant information on Judges Warrants and judiciary notifications to affected consumers.



2. - An agreement with the mayor Consumer Associations represented at the Council of Consumers and Users to provide information and judiciary assistance **FREE OF CHARGE FOR CONSUMERS.**

3. - To commission the Spanish ECC to address the ECC-Net to disseminate the information produced in the prosecution as well as to collect information about consumers affected by the swindle in the EU Member States.

III. - The procedure has just begun and there will be plenty of time for everyone to present documents and evidence. The Consumer's Protection Authorities recommend to keep calm and to pay attention to the following and useful information and recommendations:

a) Both Companies have been confiscated by order of the Judges, who have appointed two tax inspectors as general managers for the prosecution.

b) The Judges in charge of the prosecution have issued warrants telling consumers to **STOP PAYING** instalments derived from contracts with the aforementioned companies.

c) In the Attorney's Suit both companies are declared bankrupted but the value of their state as well as the amount of their resources is not known yet as the confiscation has just taken place.

d) You should be aware that the accused firms are not financial firms and therefore they are not covered by any guarantee fund, nor public nor private.

e) If you are client of AFINSA or of FORUM FILATELICO, we recommend you to **contact the European Consumer Centre** in your country of residence and present a claim in the attached form. The information contained will be forwarded to the Spanish ECC who will address it to the Consumers Association you select to take care of your case.



Centro Europeo del Consumidor en ESPAÑA European Consumer Centre in SPAIN

- f) You can also contact a Consumer's Association promoting class actions. Attached to this notice you can find listed the mayor Consumer's Associations operating at national level which have agreed to promote class action free of charge for consumers.
- g) Start collecting relevant documentation like the contact with the company, receipts of instalments paid, letters and e-mail exchanged with the firms as well as any other proof of your business relation to the firms.
- h) Make two photocopies of each piece of evidence and keep the original documents with you.
- i) **DO NOT SIGN** any documents that the firm or a third person on its behalf may ask you to sign. Under no circumstances should you cancel the contract with the firms at the present time.
- j) Visit the Consumer's Association or the ECC in Spain websites at regular periods for updated information.
- k) Contact Spanish ECC for clarification if needed.

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