



**Joint Statement of
Consumers International and the GBDe
On Alternative Dispute Resolution Guidelines
November 6, 2003**

We are pleased to announce an agreement between our two organizations on the Alternative Dispute Resolution guidelines (or 'rules of the road' regarding Alternative Dispute Resolution) that should be followed by merchants who want to sell in the global electronic marketplace. Global electronic commerce will only grow and flourish if consumers feel confident that their interests are sufficiently protected in the case of disputes.

The "Guidelines" make a number of specific recommendations to merchants, encouraging them to set up in-house customer satisfaction systems, to utilize Trustmark programs, and to offer their customers the right (not the obligation) to utilize ADR.

The "ADR Guidelines" also offer recommendations to ADR providers, on the need for speed, accessibility, impartiality and transparency of the ADR process. ADR providers, when they discover potential cases of fraud, deceit or patterns of abuse, should also have the obligation of reporting such cases to legal authorities.

We recommend that governments play an important and constructive role to promote and facilitate the development of high quality ADR services that are independent, transparent, cost-effective, flexible and accountable to the public.

While we believe that this global agreement between representatives of consumers and businesses is an historic milestone in the growth of the global electronic marketplace, these are still just words on paper unless actual ADR programs are developed that resolve real disputes for consumers seeking resolution. Consumers must feel confident that they will have rights of redress if a cross-border dispute should arise. As well, governments must feel confident that their citizens will not suffer a falling-off of consumer protections when they transact business online.

Therefore, CI and GBDe will continue to work together to ensure the creation of ADR programs that will meet the obligations described in these "Guidelines". We welcome the constructive support of global policymakers, businesses and consumers in realizing this goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Y. K. Lee".

Dr. Yong-Kyung Lee
President & CEO
KT Corporation
GBDe Overall Chair 2003

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Fielder".

Anna Fielder
Director, Office for Developed &
Transition Economies
Consumers International