The World Consumer Rights Day

* **Consumer ombudsmen have been helping for twenty years.**
* **UOKiK awarded thirty of them.**
* **Every eighth Pole has already taken ombudsman’s advice.**

**[Warsaw, 15 March 2019]** *Over the last ten years, consumer ombudsmen have provided 4.5 million pieces of advice. If we compare it to the number of Poles in the country, it turns out that* ***every eighth Pole has already sought advice from an ombudsman.*** *The Poles were granted the right to free legal assistance over twenty years ago*, says Marek Niechciał, President of the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection.

**Awards granted to ombudsmen**

Consumer ombudsmen have been operating in Poland since 1 January 1999, when the act amending some provisions determining the competences of public administration bodies in connection with the state’s political reform came into force. From that day, local governments must appoint municipal or district consumer ombudsmen. They provide advice free of charge in municipal offices and offices of district authorities in Poland. They face numerous problems: many of them are not full-time ombudsmen (they act as one for a few hours a day), they do not have assistants to help them and they combine this function with another they perform in local government. All this makes the quality of advisory services vary depending on a given office.

*I would like it to change. I see the need for changes in legal regulations, but also for changes in the attitude of ombudsmen themselves to consumer challenges they must face in the 21st century. The victim should get help in a complex consumer matter from various areas, not just purchases. Interestingly, it is not about advice alone. I would like ombudsmen to represent consumers more often in court*s, says Marek Niechciał. Already, every consumer may receive free legal assistance in simple cases [in additional 1,500 centres in Poland](https://darmowapomocprawna.ms.gov.pl/).

*I appreciate the work of ombudsmen, which is why this year, on the occasion of the jubilee celebration, I honoured thirty of them*. *I would like to thank them for their commitment as many of them have worked as an ombudsman from the beginning, that is for twenty years*, adds Niechciał. All the awarded are listed in the [attachment](https://www.uokik.gov.pl/download.php?plik=23093).

**Awards for companies - Amicus Consumentium**

UOKiK and the Senate Group for Consumer Protection awarded two companies with the title of **Amicus Consumentium** **2018**. These enterprises were honoured for their participation in amicable resolution of consumer disputes. The winners are **CCC from Polkowice** (for the second time) and **Mix Małgorzata Dawidowska store** from Słupsk. Congratulations! The award was established in 2017. Winners are selected from among enterprises proposed by provincial inspectors of the Trade Inspection, consumer ombudsmen, and consumer organizations.

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On 13 March, at a conference on the occasion of the World Consumer Rights Day, we talked about challenges facing consumers and institutions that protect their rights. We also discussed the issue of Polish market surveillance and changes that are ahead of it. [The debate took place on the premises of the Ministry of Enterprise and Technology](https://www.uokik.gov.pl/aktualnosci.php?news_id=15202).

We celebrate the World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March, because that day in 1962 John F. Kennedy established four basic consumer rights, namely the right to information, choice, safety and representation.