Confusing rating system at OLX.pl - decision of the President of UOKiK

* **Whenever it is not clear that shopping may be rated by those who have not purchased anything and those who have done their shopping are not always entitled to post a rating, we are faced with unfair practices.**
* **If we add an algorithm to this which materially distorts the preliminary nature of the rating, especially of a negative one, the recipe for violating collective consumer interests will be ready.**
* **UOKiK has issued a decision regarding the OLX Group. The fine amounts to over PLN 28 million.**

**[Warsaw, 12 June 2025]** “How did your transaction proceed?”, “Tell us about your experience with this seller”. Are you familiar with those messages? OLX.pl is one of the most popular advertising platforms which is available through a website and an app. The items traded are used ones, brand new ones and even services. Consumers using the website may read opinions about other users. [A survey commissioned by UOKIK](https://uokik.gov.pl/download.php?plik=25423) shows that for 86 percent of online shoppers, opinions about a seller are important before taking an online shopping decision.

The President of UOKiK checked who and when could post a rating at OLX.pl, what algorithm the company used to compute final user ratings and how it informed about the rules applicable at the platform. For misleading practices, the President of UOKiK fined the company with over PLN 28 million.

**Opinions of transactions which did not exist at all**

Persons authorised to post an opinion were referred to as “buyers”, which indicated that doing the shopping was a basic criterion which allowed to rate a seller at some time later. However, this was not the case while signals from users evidenced that there had been some problems with rating systems at OLX.pl. “I got a negative message from a user with whom I didn’t even contact. Neither by phone nor at OLX do I have a message from this gentleman”. “Those users have not bought anything from me, so what are they rating?”. “What’s more, the wording of the ratings is not visible, so potential shoppers may think that I’ve cheated someone, which has never taken place at all”. We received more such complaints.

 - OLX.pl users were often unaware that a rating might have been posted by a person who had not done their shopping or even the one with whom they had not contacted at all. The platform enabled you to post your opinion on the basis of the “transactional experience”. Ratings could be posted also by persons who had only inquired about the product or had displayed contact data available next to the offer. This might have misled consumers using the website and violated their interests - says Tomasz Chróstny, the President of UOKiK.

**Upon an invitation and one by one**

Your transactional experience could have been poor, good or excellent, but in order to express it, you had to wait for an invitation. Access to posting a rating was not the same with respect to all shopping. OLX website sent one invitation for an opinion per week. The invitation to post a rating always concerned your last transactional experience. If within a specific week, a consumer did their shopping more than once or contacted several website users, first they had to respond to the invitation to rate the most recent activity. If they did not do this, they had no access to the capacity to post opinions to other users. OLX.pl app users faced an additional obstacle, as they received invitations as push messages, and if they closed them with no rating, they would not be able to return to them any more. As the President of UOKiK found, consumers had not been properly informed about the applicable rating rules.

- Consumers had grounds to conclude that a criterion which allowed for posting an opinion was a transaction itself rather than the satisfaction of some additional requirements, such as receiving an invitation from the website or rating shopping at the platform in a specific order. Such a solution affected the representativeness and, as a consequence, the reliability of ratings presented at OLX.pl platform. Consumers who did their shopping within short time before suffered from worse access to the capacity to post a rating for a seller and thus their voice was not reflected in ratings presented on the website - says Tomasz Chróstny, the President of UOKiK.

**Positive counts more**

Consumers complained about the OLX rating system because of a capacity to post ratings not only by shoppers; still, they had no opportunity to discover its another defect - an unfair algorithm. The OLX Group used a few-stage method of computing user’s overall rating. Out of a three-stage scale of rating experience such as: excellent, good, poor, a four-stage scale was made: excellent, good, quite good and negative - not recommended. As the President of UOKiK found, the algorithm used by the company for publicising users’ ratings had overstated the ratings by way of two mechanisms. It assigned higher weight to positive rather than to negative ratings and additionally ratings falling below a half of the scale were qualified and presented as positive. Consumers were not able to verify whether the assigned ratings were adequate with the opinions posted by pricers. For example, OLX.pl users did not know that the rating: “Quite good. A majority of buyers is quite satisfied with this advertiser” was assigned to the sellers who had more negative than positive ratings, among other things. As a result of the mechanisms used, instead of the rating: “not recommended”, they could have seen the rating: “quite good (...)”, instead of the rating: “quite good (...)” - the rating “good”, and instead the rating: “good” - the rating “excellent”.

- Key functions of numerous platforms rely on algorithms which are not visible for consumers. Therefore, it is so important the entrepreneurs operating in the e-commerce industry apply fair practices and methods for using such tools. The OLX Group suggested that some user ratings were higher than in the reality. Consumers had no insight into what sub-ratings made up the advertiser's overall ratings nor did they have access to comments posted about them. They did not realise that other platform users might have been less satisfied with the contact with a seller than it was shown in the ratings presented on the website. As a result, the rating system suggested more favourable consumer shopping experience than it resulted from the actual transactional experience which might have encouraged subsequent users to do their shopping at OLX.pl - says Tomasz Chróstny, the President of UOKiK.

**New rating system**

The practices challenged by the President of UOKiK were applied by the company from November 2020 to 31 July 2024. For more than 3.5 years, OLX users were misled, while their interests were violated. Only after this time did the company replace the used mechanisms with a new rating system which eliminated the charges pressed by UOKiK. Currently, the overall rating of a seller is computed on the basis of an arithmetical mean of all sub-ratings which may be inspected by consumers. Those ratings rely on the number of stars assigned (from 1 to 5) and tags. What is important, they may be posted only by the persons who purchased and collected an OLX item with delivery.

The amount of the fine imposed upon the OLX Group is more than PLN 28 million (PLN 28,420,869). The decision is not final, and the company may appeal to the Court of Competition and Consumer Protection. Once the decision becomes final, the company will inform about it via its websites OLX.pl and social media profiles. Additionally, the President of UOKiK conducts the proceedings against the entrepreneur on the imposition of a fine for misleading information that the company provided in response to the requests for explanation.

This is not the first decision of the President of UOKiK towards the OLX Group. Last year, the [President of UOKiK obligated the company](https://uokik.gov.pl/en/grupa-olx-decision-by-president-of-uokik) to change the practices on shopping with a protective package, providing information on a capacity to skip the “OLX shipment” and maintenance fee as well as inclusion of additional fees in the results of sorting from the cheapest offers.

**Consumer support:**

Consumer helpline: 801 440 220 or 222 66 76 76
contact form: [poradydlakonsumentow.pl](https://poradydlakonsumentow.pl/)
[Consumer Ombudsmen](https://uokik.gov.pl/pomoc.php) – in your town or district