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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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Acts whose titles are printed in light type are those relating to day-to-day management of agricultural matters, and are generally valid for a limited period.

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I

(Legislative acts)

DIRECTIVES

DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/770 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 20 May 2019

on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content and digital services

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 114 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽²⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) The growth potential of e-commerce in the Union has not yet been fully exploited. The Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe tackles in a holistic manner the major obstacles to the development of cross-border e-commerce in the Union in order to unleash this potential. Ensuring better access for consumers to digital content and digital services, and making it easier for businesses to supply digital content and digital services, can contribute to boosting the Union's digital economy and stimulating overall growth.
- (2) Article 26(1) and (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provide that the Union is to adopt measures with the aim of establishing or ensuring the functioning of the internal market, which is to comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods and services is ensured. Article 169(1), and point (a) of Article 169(2), TFEU provide that the Union is to contribute to the attainment of a high level of consumer protection through measures adopted pursuant to Article 114 TFEU in the context of the completion of the internal market. This Directive aims to strike the right balance between achieving a high level of consumer protection and promoting the competitiveness of enterprises, while ensuring respect for the principle of subsidiarity.
- (3) Certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services should be harmonised, taking as a base a high level of consumer protection, in order to achieve a genuine digital single market, increase legal certainty and reduce transaction costs, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises ("SMEs").
- (4) Businesses, especially SMEs, often face additional costs, stemming from differences in national mandatory consumer contract law rules, and legal uncertainty when offering cross-border digital content or digital services. Businesses also face costs when adapting their contracts to specific mandatory rules for the supply of digital content or digital services, which are already being applied in several Member States, creating differences in scope and content between specific national rules governing such contracts.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 264, 20.7.2016, p. 57.

⁽²⁾ Position of the European Parliament of 26 March 2019 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and decision of the Council of 15 April 2019.

- (5) Consumers are not always confident when buying cross border and especially when it is done online. One of the major factors for consumers' lack of confidence is uncertainty about their key contractual rights and the lack of a clear contractual framework for digital content or digital services. Many consumers experience problems related to the quality of, or access to, digital content or digital services. For instance, they receive wrong or faulty digital content or digital services, or they are not able to access the digital content or digital service in question. As a result, consumers suffer financial and non-financial detriment.
- (6) In order to remedy such problems, both businesses and consumers should be able to rely on fully harmonised contractual rights in certain core areas concerning the supply of digital content or digital services across the Union. Full harmonisation of some key regulatory aspects would considerably increase legal certainty for consumers and businesses.
- (7) Harmonised consumer contract law rules in all Member States would make it easier for businesses, especially SMEs, to supply digital content or digital services across the Union. They would provide businesses with a stable contract law environment when supplying digital content or digital services in other Member States. They would also prevent legal fragmentation that otherwise would arise from new national legislation regulating specifically digital content and digital services.
- (8) Consumers should benefit from harmonised rights for the supply of digital content and digital services that provide a high level of protection. They should have clear mandatory rights when they receive or access digital content or digital services from anywhere in the Union. Having such rights should increase their confidence in acquiring digital content or digital services. It should also contribute to reducing the detriment consumers currently suffer, since there would be a set of clear rights that will enable them to address problems they face with digital content or digital services.
- (9) This Directive should fully harmonise certain key rules that have, so far, not been regulated at Union or national level.
- (10) This Directive should define its scope in a clear and unequivocal manner and provide clear substantive rules for the digital content or digital services falling within its scope. Both the scope of this Directive and its substantive rules should be technologically neutral and future-proof.
- (11) This Directive should lay down common rules on certain requirements concerning contracts between traders and consumers for the supply of digital content or a digital service. For this purpose, rules on the conformity of digital content or a digital service with the contract, remedies in the event of a lack of such conformity or a failure to supply and the modalities for the exercise of those remedies, as well as on the modification of digital content or a digital service, should be fully harmonised. Fully harmonised rules on some essential elements of consumer contract law would make it easier for businesses, especially SMEs, to offer their products in other Member States. Consumers would benefit from a high level of consumer protection and welfare gains by fully harmonising key rules. Member States are precluded within the scope of this Directive from providing for any further formal or substantive requirements. For example, Member States should not provide for rules on the reversal of the burden of proof that are different from those provided for in this Directive, or for an obligation for the consumer to notify the trader of a lack of conformity within a specific period.
- (12) This Directive should not affect national law to the extent that the matters concerned are not regulated by this Directive, such as national rules on the formation, validity, nullity or effects of contracts or the legality of the digital content or the digital service. This Directive should also not determine the legal nature of contracts for the supply of digital content or a digital service, and the question of whether such contracts constitute, for instance, a sales, service, rental or sui generis contract, should be left to national law. This Directive should also not affect national rules that do not specifically concern consumer contracts and provide for specific remedies for certain types of defects that were not apparent at the time of conclusion of the contract, namely national provisions which may lay down specific rules for the trader's liability for hidden defects. This Directive should

also not affect national laws providing for non-contractual remedies for the consumer, in the event of lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service, against persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, or other persons that fulfil the obligations of such persons.

- (13) Member States also remain free, for example, to regulate liability claims of a consumer against a third party other than a trader that supplies or undertakes to supply the digital content or digital service, such as a developer which is not at the same time the trader under this Directive.
- (14) Member States should also remain free, for example, to regulate the consequences of a failure to supply, or of a lack of conformity of, digital content or a digital service, where such failure to supply or lack of conformity is due to an impediment beyond the control of the trader and where the trader could not be expected to have avoided or overcome the impediment or its consequences, such as in the event of force majeure.
- (15) Member States should also remain free, for example, to regulate the rights of parties to withhold the performance of their obligations or part thereof until the other party performs its obligations. For example, Member States should be free to regulate whether a consumer, in cases of a lack of conformity, is to be entitled to withhold payment of the price or part thereof until the trader has brought the digital content or digital service into conformity, or whether the trader is to be entitled to retain any reimbursement due to the consumer upon termination of the contract until the consumer complies with the obligation provided for in this Directive to return the tangible medium to the trader.
- (16) Member States should also remain free to extend the application of the rules of this Directive to contracts that are excluded from the scope of this Directive, or to otherwise regulate such contracts. For instance, Member States should remain free to extend the protection afforded to consumers by this Directive also to natural or legal persons that are not consumers within the meaning of this Directive, such as non-governmental organisations, start-ups or SMEs.
- (17) The definition of a consumer should cover natural persons who are acting outside their trade, business, craft or profession. However, Member States should also remain free to determine, in the case of dual purpose contracts, where the contract is concluded for purposes that are partly within and partly outside the person's trade, and where the trade purpose is so limited as not to be predominant in the overall context of the contract, whether and under which conditions that person should also be considered a consumer.
- (18) This Directive should apply to any contract whereby the trader supplies or undertakes to supply digital content or digital service to the consumer. Platform providers could be considered to be traders under this Directive if they act for purposes relating to their own business and as the direct contractual partner of the consumer for the supply of digital content or a digital service. Member States should remain free to extend the application of this Directive to platform providers that do not fulfil the requirements for being considered a trader under this Directive.
- (19) The Directive should address problems across different categories of digital content, digital services, and their supply. In order to cater for fast technological developments and to maintain the future-proof nature of the notion of digital content or digital service, this Directive should cover, inter alia, computer programmes, applications, video files, audio files, music files, digital games, e-books or other e-publications, and also digital services which allow the creation of, processing of, accessing or storage of data in digital form, including software-as-a-service, such as video and audio sharing and other file hosting, word processing or games offered in the cloud computing environment and social media. As there are numerous ways for digital content or digital services to be supplied, such as transmission on a tangible medium, downloading by consumers on their devices, web-streaming, allowing access to storage capabilities of digital content or access to the use of social media, this Directive should apply independently of the medium used for the transmission of, or for giving access to, the digital content or digital service. However, this Directive should not apply to internet access services.

- (20) This Directive and Directive (EU) 2019/771 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽³⁾ should complement each other. While this Directive lays down rules on certain requirements concerning contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services, Directive (EU) 2019/771 lays down rules on certain requirements concerning contracts for the sale of goods. Accordingly, in order to meet the expectations of consumers and ensure a clear-cut and simple legal framework for traders of digital content, this Directive should also apply to digital content which is supplied on a tangible medium, such as DVDs, CDs, USB sticks and memory cards, as well as to the tangible medium itself, provided that the tangible medium serves exclusively as a carrier of the digital content. However, instead of the provisions of this Directive on the trader's obligation to supply and on the consumer's remedies for failure to supply, the provisions of Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁴⁾ on obligations related to the delivery of goods and remedies in the event of the failure to deliver should apply. In addition, the provisions of Directive 2011/83/EU on, for example, the right of withdrawal and the nature of the contract under which those goods are supplied, should also continue to apply to such tangible media and the digital content supplied on it. This Directive is also without prejudice to the distribution right applicable to these goods under copyright law.
- (21) Directive (EU) 2019/771 should apply to contracts for the sale of goods, including goods with digital elements. The notion of goods with digital elements should refer to goods that incorporate or are inter-connected with digital content or a digital service in such a way that the absence of that digital content or digital service would prevent the goods from performing their functions. Digital content or a digital service that is incorporated in or inter-connected with goods in that manner should fall within the scope of Directive (EU) 2019/771 if it is provided with the goods under a sales contract concerning those goods. Whether the supply of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service forms part of the sales contract with the seller should depend on the content of this contract. This should include incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital services the supply of which is explicitly required by the contract. It should also include those sales contracts which can be understood as covering the supply of specific digital content or a specific digital service because they are normal for goods of the same type and the consumer could reasonably expect them given the nature of the goods and taking into account any public statement made by or on behalf of the seller or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, including the producer. If, for example, a smart TV were advertised as including a particular video application, that video application would be considered to be part of the sales contract. This should apply regardless of whether the digital content or digital service is pre-installed in the good itself or has to be downloaded subsequently on another device and is only inter-connected to the good.

For example, a smart phone could come with a standardised pre-installed application provided under the sales contract, such as an alarm application or a camera application. Another possible example is that of a smart watch. In such a case, the watch itself would be considered to be the good with digital elements, which can perform its functions only with an application that is provided under the sales contract but has to be downloaded by the consumer onto a smart phone; the application would then be the inter-connected digital element. This should also apply if the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service is not supplied by the seller itself but is supplied, under the sales contract, by a third party. In order to avoid uncertainty for both traders and consumers, in the event of doubt as to whether the supply of the digital content or the digital service forms part of the sales contract, Directive (EU) 2019/771 should apply. Furthermore, ascertaining a bilateral contractual relationship, between the seller and the consumer, of which the supply of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service forms part should not be affected by the mere fact that the consumer has to consent to a licensing agreement with a third party in order to benefit from the digital content or the digital service.

- (22) In contrast, if the absence of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service does not prevent the goods from performing their functions, or if the consumer concludes a contract for the supply of digital content or a digital service which does not form part of a sales contract concerning goods with digital elements, that contract should be considered to be separate from the contract for the sale of the goods, even if the seller acts as an intermediary of that second contract with the third-party supplier, and could fall within the scope of this Directive. For instance, if the consumer downloads a game application from an app store onto a smart

⁽³⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/771 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 (see page 28 of this Official Journal).

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EEC and Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 64).

phone, the contract for the supply of the game application is separate from the contract for the sale of the smart phone itself. Directive (EU) 2019/771 should therefore only apply to the sales contract concerning the smart phone, while the supply of the game application could fall under this Directive, if the conditions of this Directive are met. Another example would be where it is expressly agreed that the consumer buys a smart phone without a specific operating system and the consumer subsequently concludes a contract for the supply of an operating system from a third party. In such a case, the supply of the separately bought operating system would not form part of the sales contract and therefore would not fall within the scope of Directive (EU) 2019/771, but could fall within the scope of this Directive, if the conditions of this Directive are met.

- (23) Digital representations of value such as electronic vouchers or e-coupons are used by consumers to pay for different goods or services in the digital single market. Such digital representations of value are becoming important in relation to the supply of digital content or digital services, and should therefore be considered as a method of payment within the meaning of this Directive. Digital representations of value should also be understood to include virtual currencies, to the extent that they are recognised by national law. Differentiation depending on the methods of payment could be a cause of discrimination and provide an unjustified incentive for businesses to move towards supplying digital content or a digital service against digital representations of value. However, since digital representations of value have no other purpose than to serve as a method of payment, they themselves should not be considered digital content or a digital service within the meaning of this Directive.
- (24) Digital content or digital services are often supplied also where the consumer does not pay a price but provides personal data to the trader. Such business models are used in different forms in a considerable part of the market. While fully recognising that the protection of personal data is a fundamental right and that therefore personal data cannot be considered as a commodity, this Directive should ensure that consumers are, in the context of such business models, entitled to contractual remedies. This Directive should, therefore, apply to contracts where the trader supplies, or undertakes to supply, digital content or a digital service to the consumer, and the consumer provides, or undertakes to provide, personal data. The personal data could be provided to the trader either at the time when the contract is concluded or at a later time, such as when the consumer gives consent for the trader to use any personal data that the consumer might upload or create with the use of the digital content or digital service. Union law on the protection of personal data provides for an exhaustive list of legal grounds for the lawful processing of personal data. This Directive should apply to any contract where the consumer provides or undertakes to provide personal data to the trader. For example, this Directive should apply where the consumer opens a social media account and provides a name and email address that are used for purposes other than solely supplying the digital content or digital service, or other than complying with legal requirements. It should equally apply where the consumer gives consent for any material that constitutes personal data, such as photographs or posts that the consumer uploads, to be processed by the trader for marketing purposes. Member States should however remain free to determine whether the requirements for the formation, existence and validity of a contract under national law are fulfilled.
- (25) Where digital content and digital services are not supplied in exchange for a price, this Directive should not apply to situations where the trader collects personal data exclusively to supply digital content or a digital service, or for the sole purpose of meeting legal requirements. Such situations can include, for instance, cases where the registration of the consumer is required by applicable laws for security and identification purposes. This Directive should also not apply to situations where the trader only collects metadata, such as information concerning the consumer's device or browsing history, except where this situation is considered to be a contract under national law. It should also not apply to situations where the consumer, without having concluded a contract with the trader, is exposed to advertisements exclusively in order to gain access to digital content or a digital service. However, Member States should remain free to extend the application of this Directive to such situations, or to otherwise regulate such situations, which are excluded from the scope of this Directive.
- (26) This Directive should apply to contracts for the development of digital content that is tailor-made to the specific requirements of the consumer including tailor-made software. This Directive should also apply to the supply of electronic files required in the context of 3D printing of goods, to the extent that such files fall under the definition of digital content or digital services within the meaning of this Directive. However, this Directive should not regulate any rights or obligations related to goods produced with the use of 3D printing technology.

- (27) Given that this Directive should apply to contracts which have as their object the supply of digital content or a digital service to the consumer, it should not apply where the main subject matter of the contract is the provision of professional services, such as translation services, architectural services, legal services or other professional advice services, which are often performed personally by the trader, regardless of whether digital means are used by the trader in order to produce the output of the service or to deliver or transmit it to the consumer. Similarly, this Directive should not apply to public services, such as social security services or public registers, where the digital means are only used for transmitting or communicating the service to the consumer. This Directive should also not apply to authentic instruments and other notarial acts, regardless of whether they are performed, recorded, reproduced or transmitted by digital means.
- (28) The market for number-independent interpersonal communications services, which do not connect with publicly assigned numbering resources, is rapidly evolving. In recent years, the emergence of new digital services which allow interpersonal communications over the internet, such as web-based email and online messaging services, has led more consumers to use such services. For such reasons, it is necessary to provide effective consumer protection with respect to such services. This Directive should therefore also apply to number-independent interpersonal communications services.
- (29) This Directive should not apply to healthcare as defined in Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁵⁾. The exclusion of 'healthcare' from the scope of this Directive should also apply to any digital content or digital service that constitutes a medical device, as defined in Council Directive 93/42/EEC⁽⁶⁾ or 90/385/EEC⁽⁷⁾ or Directive 98/79/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁸⁾, where such medical device is prescribed or provided by a health professional as defined in Directive 2011/24/EU. However, this Directive should apply to any digital content or digital service that constitutes a medical device, such as health applications, that can be obtained by the consumer without being prescribed or provided by a health professional.
- (30) Union law relating to financial services contains numerous rules on consumer protection. Financial services, as defined by the law applicable to that sector, in particular in Directive 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁹⁾, also cover digital content or digital services relating, or giving access, to financial services and are therefore covered by the protection of Union financial services law. Contracts relating to digital content or digital services that constitute a financial service should therefore be excluded from the scope of this Directive.
- (31) This Directive should not apply to digital content or a digital service that is provided to a public audience as part of an artistic performance or other event, such as a digital cinematographic projection or an audiovisual theatrical performance. However, this Directive should apply if digital content or a digital service is provided to a public audience by signal transmission such as digital television services.
- (32) Free and open source software, where the source code is openly shared and users can freely access, use, modify and redistribute the software or modified versions thereof, can contribute to research and innovation in the market for digital content and digital services. In order to avoid imposing obstacles to such market developments, this Directive should also not apply to free and open source software, provided that it is not supplied in exchange for a price and that the consumer's personal data are exclusively used for improving the security, compatibility or interoperability of the software.

⁽⁵⁾ Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 45).

⁽⁶⁾ Council Directive 93/42/EEC of 14 June 1993 concerning medical devices (OJ L 169, 12.7.1993, p. 1).

⁽⁷⁾ Council Directive 90/385/EEC of 20 June 1990 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to active implantable medical devices (OJ L 189, 20.7.1990, p. 17).

⁽⁸⁾ Directive 98/79/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 1998 on *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices (OJ L 331, 7.12.1998, p. 1).

⁽⁹⁾ Directive 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 concerning the distance marketing of consumer financial services and amending Council Directive 90/619/EEC and Directives 97/7/EC and 98/27/EC (OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 16).

- (33) Digital content or digital services are often combined with the provision of goods or other services and offered to the consumer within the same contract comprising a bundle of different elements, such as the provision of digital television and the purchase of electronic equipment. In such cases, the contract between the consumer and the trader includes elements of a contract for the supply of digital content or a digital service, but also elements of other contract types, such as sale of goods or services contracts. This Directive should only apply to the elements of the overall contract that consist of the supply of digital content or digital services. The other elements of the contract should be governed by the rules applicable to those contracts under national law or, as applicable, other Union law governing a specific sector or subject matter. Likewise, any effects that the termination of one element of the bundle contract could have on the other elements of that bundle contract should be governed by national law. However, in order to ensure consistency with the sector-specific provisions of Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁰⁾ regulating bundle contracts, where a trader offers, within the meaning of that Directive, digital content or a digital service in combination with a number-based interpersonal communications service or an internet access service, the provisions of this Directive on the modification of digital content should not apply to the digital content or digital service element of the bundle. The relevant provisions of Directive (EU) 2018/1972 should instead apply to all elements of the bundle, including the digital content or digital service.
- (34) The provisions of this Directive concerning bundle contracts should only apply to cases where the different elements of the bundle are offered by the same trader to the same consumer under a single contract. This Directive should not affect national laws governing the conditions under which a contract for the supply of digital content or digital services can be considered to be linked with or ancillary to another contract that the consumer has concluded with the same or another trader, the remedies to be exercised under each contract or the effect that the termination of one contract would have on the other contract.
- (35) The commercial practice of bundling offers of digital content or digital services with the provision of goods or other services is subject to Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹¹⁾ concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market. Such bundling is not in itself prohibited under Directive 2005/29/EC. However, it is prohibited where it is deemed unfair, following a case-by-case assessment pursuant to the criteria laid down in that Directive. Union law on competition also allows addressing tying and bundling practices, when they affect the competitive process and harm consumers.
- (36) This Directive should be without prejudice to other Union law governing a specific sector or subject matter, such as telecommunications, e-commerce and consumer protection. It should also be without prejudice to Union and national law on copyright and related rights, including the portability of online content services.
- (37) The pursuit of activities falling within the scope of this Directive could involve the processing of personal data. Union law provides a comprehensive framework on the protection of personal data. In particular, this Directive is without prejudice to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ⁽¹²⁾ and Directive 2002/58/EC ⁽¹³⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council. That framework applies to any personal data processed in connection with the contracts covered by this Directive. Consequently, personal data should only be collected or otherwise processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Directive 2002/58/EC. In the event of a conflict between this Directive and Union law on the protection of personal data, the latter should prevail.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 establishing the European Electronic Communications Code (OJ L 321, 17.12.2018, p. 36).

⁽¹¹⁾ Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive') (OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22).

⁽¹²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1).

⁽¹³⁾ Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications) (OJ L 201, 31.7.2002, p. 37).

- (38) This Directive should not regulate the conditions for the lawful processing of personal data, as this question is regulated, in particular, by Regulation (EU) 2016/679. As a consequence, any processing of personal data in connection with a contract falling within the scope of this Directive is lawful only if it is in conformity with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 relating to the legal grounds for the processing of personal data. Where processing of personal data is based on consent, in particular pursuant to point (a) of Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the specific provisions of that Regulation including those concerning the conditions for assessing whether consent is freely given apply. This Directive should not regulate the validity of the consent given. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 also contains comprehensive rights as to the erasure of data and data portability. This Directive should be without prejudice to those rights, which apply to any personal data provided by the consumer to the trader or collected by the trader in connection with any contract falling within the scope of this Directive, and when the consumer terminated the contract in accordance with this Directive.
- (39) The right to erasure and the consumer's right to withdraw consent for the processing of personal data should apply fully also in connection with the contracts covered by this Directive. The right of the consumer to terminate the contract in accordance with this Directive should be without prejudice to the consumer's right under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 to withdraw any consent given to the processing of the consumer's personal data.
- (40) This Directive should not regulate the consequences for the contracts covered by this Directive in the event that the consumer withdraws the consent for the processing of the consumer's personal data. Such consequences should remain a matter for national law.
- (41) There are various ways for the trader to supply digital content or digital services to consumers. It is opportune to set simple and clear rules as to the modalities and the time for performing that obligation to supply which is the main contractual obligation of the trader, by making the digital content or a digital service available or accessible to the consumer. The digital content or digital service should be considered to be made available or accessible to the consumer when the digital content or digital service, or any means suitable for accessing or downloading it, has reached the sphere of the consumer and no further action is required by the trader in order to enable the consumer to use the digital content or digital service in accordance with the contract. Considering that the trader is not in principle responsible for acts or omissions of a third party which operates a physical or virtual facility, for instance an electronic platform or a cloud storage facility, that the consumer selects for receiving or storing the digital content or digital service, it should be sufficient for the trader to supply the digital content or digital service to that third party. However, the physical or virtual facility cannot be considered to be chosen by the consumer if it is under the trader's control or is contractually linked to the trader, or where the consumer selected that physical or virtual facility for receipt of the digital content or digital service but that choice was the only one offered by the trader to receive or access the digital content or digital service.

Where the physical or virtual facility cannot be considered to have been chosen by the consumer, the obligation of the trader to supply the digital content or digital service should not be considered to have been fulfilled if the digital content or digital service is supplied to the physical or virtual facility but the consumer cannot receive or access the digital content or digital service in accordance with this Directive. In those cases, the consumer should have the same remedies as would apply if the trader had failed to supply the digital content or digital service. With regard to the time of supply, in line with market practices and technical possibilities, and in order to provide for a certain degree of flexibility, the digital content or digital service should be supplied without undue delay, unless the parties decide to agree otherwise in order to cater for other supply models.

- (42) The digital content or digital service should comply with the requirements agreed between the trader and the consumer in the contract. In particular, it should comply with the description, quantity, for example the number of music files that can be accessed, quality, for example the picture resolution, language and version agreed in the contract. It should also possess the security, functionality, compatibility, interoperability and other features, as required by the contract. The requirements of the contract should include those resulting from the pre-contractual information which, in accordance with Directive 2011/83/EU, forms an integral part of the contract. Those requirements could also be set out in a service level agreement, where, under the applicable national law, such type of agreement forms part of the contractual relationship between the consumer and the trader.

- (43) The notion of functionality should be understood to refer to the ways in which digital content or a digital service can be used. For instance, the absence or presence of any technical restrictions such as protection via Digital Rights Management or region coding could have an impact on the ability of the digital content or digital service to perform all its functions having regard to its purpose. The notion of interoperability relates to whether and to what extent digital content or a digital service is able to function with hardware or software that is different from those with which digital content or digital services of the same type are normally used. Successful functioning could include, for instance, the ability of the digital content or digital service to exchange information with such other software or hardware and to use the information exchanged.
- (44) Given that digital content and digital services are constantly developing, traders may agree with consumers to provide updates and features as they become available. The conformity of the digital content or digital service should, therefore, also be assessed in relation to whether the digital content or service is updated in the manner that has been stipulated in the contract. Failure to supply updates that had been agreed to in the contract should be considered a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service. Moreover, defective or incomplete updates should also be considered a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service, given that that would mean that such updates are not performed in the manner stipulated in the contract.
- (45) In order to be in conformity and to ensure that consumers are not deprived of their rights, for example in cases where the contract sets very low standards, the digital content or digital service should not only comply with the subjective requirements for conformity, but should in addition comply with the objective requirements for conformity set out in this Directive. Conformity should be assessed, inter alia, by considering the purpose for which digital content or digital services of the same type would normally be used. It should also possess the qualities and performance features which are normal for digital content or digital services of the same type and which consumers can reasonably expect, given the nature of the digital content or digital service, and taking into account any public statements on the specific characteristics of the digital content or digital service made by or on behalf of the trader or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions.
- (46) The standard of reasonableness with regard to any reference in this Directive to what can be reasonably expected by a person should be objectively ascertained, having regard to the nature and purpose of the digital content or digital service, the circumstances of the case and to the usages and practices of the parties involved. In particular, what is considered to be a reasonable time for bringing the digital content or digital service into conformity should be objectively ascertained, having regard to the nature of the lack of conformity.
- (47) For the period of time that the consumer would reasonably expect, the trader should provide the consumer with updates, including security updates, in order to keep the digital content or digital service in conformity and secure. For instance, as regards digital content or digital services, the purpose of which is limited in time, the obligation to provide updates should be limited to that time, while for other types of digital content or digital service the period during which updates should be provided to the consumer could be equal to the liability period for lack of conformity or could extend beyond that period, which might be the case particularly with regard to security updates. The consumer should remain free to choose whether to install the updates provided. Where the consumer decides not to install the updates, the consumer should, however, not expect the digital content or digital service to remain in conformity. The trader should inform the consumer that the consumer's decision not to install updates which are necessary for keeping the digital content or digital service in conformity, including security updates, will affect the trader's liability for conformity of those features of the digital content or digital service which the relevant updates are supposed to maintain in conformity. This Directive should not affect obligations to provide security updates laid down in Union law or in national law.
- (48) Regulation (EU) 2016/679 or any other Union law on data protection should fully apply to the processing of personal data in connection with any contract falling within the scope of this Directive. In addition, this Directive should be without prejudice to the rights, obligations and non-contractual remedies provided for by Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Facts leading to a lack of compliance with requirements provided for by Regulation (EU) 2016/679, including core principles such as the requirements for data minimisation, data protection by design and data protection by default, may, depending on the circumstances of the case, also be considered to constitute a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service with subjective or objective requirements for conformity provided for in this Directive. One example could be where a trader explicitly assumes an obligation

in the contract, or the contract can be interpreted in that way, which is also linked to the trader's obligations under Regulation (EU) 2016/679. In that case, such a contractual commitment can become part of the subjective requirements for conformity. A second example could be where non-compliance with the obligations under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 could, at the same time render the digital content or digital service unfit for its intended purpose and, therefore, constitute a lack of conformity with the objective requirement for conformity which requires the digital content or digital service to be fit for the purposes for which digital content or digital services of the same type would be normally used.

This would be the case, for example, if the trader of data encryption software fails to implement appropriate measures as required by Regulation (EU) 2016/679 to ensure that by design personal data are not disclosed to unauthorised recipients, thus rendering the encryption software unfit for its intended purpose which is the secure transferring of data by the consumer to their intended recipient. Finally, there could be cases where the trader's non-compliance with its obligations under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 can also constitute a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service with the objective requirement for conformity which requires the digital content or digital service to possess the features which are normal for digital content or digital services of the same type and which the consumer can reasonably expect. For instance, if the trader of an online shopping application fails to take the measures provided for in Regulation (EU) 2016/679 for the security of processing of the consumer's personal data and as a result the consumer's credit card information is exposed to malware or spyware, that failure could also constitute a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service within the meaning of this Directive, as the consumer would reasonably expect that an application of this type would normally possess features preventing the disclosure of payment details. Where the facts leading to non-compliance with requirements under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 also constitute a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service with subjective or objective requirements for conformity as provided for in this Directive, the consumer should be entitled to the remedies for the lack of conformity provided for by this Directive, unless the contract is already void or voidable under national law.

- (49) In order to ensure sufficient flexibility, it should be possible for the parties to deviate from the objective requirements for conformity. Such a deviation should only be possible if the consumer was specifically informed about it and if the consumer accepts it separately from other statements or agreements and by way of active and unequivocal conduct. Both conditions could, for instance, be fulfilled by ticking a box, pressing a button or activating a similar function.
- (50) When applying the rules of this Directive, traders should make use of standards, open technical specifications, good practices and codes of conduct, including in relation to the commonly used and machine-readable format for retrieving the content other than personal data, which was provided or created by the consumer when using the digital content or digital service, and including on the security of information systems and digital environments, whether established at international level, Union level or at the level of a specific industry sector. In this context, the Commission could call for the development of international and Union standards and the drawing up of a code of conduct by trade associations and other representative organisations that could support the uniform implementation of this Directive.
- (51) Many types of digital content or digital services are supplied continuously over a period of time, such as access to cloud services. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the digital content or digital service is in conformity throughout the duration of the contract. Short-term interruptions of the supply of digital content or a digital service should be treated as instances of lack of conformity where those interruptions are more than negligible or recur. Moreover, given the frequent improvement of digital content and digital services, in particular by updates, the version of digital content or of a digital service supplied to the consumer should be the most recent one available at the time of the conclusion of the contract, unless the parties have agreed otherwise.
- (52) In order to work properly, the digital content or digital service needs to be correctly integrated into the consumer's hardware and software environment. A lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service that results from an incorrect integration should be regarded as a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service itself, where it was integrated by the trader or under its control, or by the consumer following the trader's instructions for integration, and the incorrect integration was due to shortcomings in the required integration instructions, such as incompleteness or a lack of clarity making the integration instructions difficult to use for the average consumer.

- (53) Restrictions of the consumer's use of the digital content or digital service in accordance with this Directive could result from limitations imposed by the holder of intellectual property rights in accordance with intellectual property law. Such restrictions can arise from the end-user license agreement under which the digital content or digital service is supplied to the consumer. This can be the case when, for instance, an end-user licence agreement prohibits the consumer from making use of certain features related to the functionality of the digital content or digital service. Such a restriction could render the digital content or digital service in breach of the objective requirements for conformity laid down in this Directive, if it concerned features which are usually found in digital content or digital services of the same type and which the consumer can reasonably expect. In such cases, the consumer should be able to claim the remedies provided for in this Directive for the lack of conformity against the trader who supplied the digital content or digital service. The trader should only be able to avoid such liability by fulfilling the conditions for derogating from the objective requirements for conformity as laid down in this Directive, namely only if the trader specifically informs the consumer before the conclusion of the contract that a particular characteristic of the digital content or digital service deviates from the objective requirements for conformity and the consumer has expressly and separately accepted that deviation.
- (54) Legal defects are a particularly important issue in relation to digital content or digital services, which are subject to intellectual property rights. Restrictions on the consumer's use of digital content or a digital service in accordance with this Directive could be a result of a violation of third-party rights. Such violation might effectively bar the consumer from enjoying the digital content or digital service or some of its features, for instance when the consumer cannot access the digital content or digital service at all or cannot do so lawfully. That might be due to the fact that the third party rightfully compels the trader to stop infringing those rights and to discontinue offering the digital content or digital service in question or that the consumer cannot use the digital content or digital service without infringing the law. In the event of a violation of third-party rights that results in a restriction that prevents or limits the use of the digital content or digital service in accordance with the subjective and objective requirements for conformity, the consumer should be entitled to the remedies for the lack of conformity, unless national law provides for the nullity of the contract, or for its rescission, for example for breach of legal warranty against eviction.
- (55) The trader should be liable to the consumer in the event of a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service, and for any failure to supply the digital content or digital service. As digital content or digital services can be supplied to consumers through one or more individual acts of supply or continuously over a period of time, it is appropriate that the relevant time for the purpose of establishing conformity of the digital content or digital service be determined in the light of those different types of supply.
- (56) Digital content or digital services can be supplied to consumers through a single act of supply, for instance when consumers download an e-book and store it on their personal device. Similarly, the supply can consist of a series of such individual acts, for instance where consumers receive a link to download a new e-book every week. The distinctive element of this category of digital content or digital service is the fact that consumers thereafter have the possibility to access and use the digital content or digital service indefinitely. In such cases, the conformity of the digital content or digital service should be assessed at the time of supply, and therefore the trader should only be liable for any lack of conformity which exists at the time when the single act of supply or each individual act of supply takes place. In order to ensure legal certainty, traders and consumers should be able to rely on a harmonised minimum period during which the trader should be held liable for a lack of conformity. In relation to contracts which provide for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply of the digital content or digital service, Member States should ensure that traders are liable for not less than two years from the time of supply, if under their respective national law the trader is only liable for any lack of conformity that becomes apparent within a period of time after supply.
- (57) Digital content or digital services could also be supplied to consumers in a continuous manner over a period of time. Continuous supply can include cases whereby the trader makes a digital service available to consumers for a fixed or an indefinite period of time, such as a two-year cloud storage contract or an indefinite social media platform membership. The distinctive element of this category is the fact that the digital content or digital service is available or accessible to consumers only for the fixed duration of the contract or for as long as the indefinite contract is in force. Therefore, it is justified that the trader, in such cases, should only be liable for a lack of conformity which appears during that period of time. The element of continuous supply should not necessarily require a long-term supply. Cases such as web-streaming of a video clip should be considered continuous supply over a period of time, regardless of the actual duration of the audio-visual file. Cases where specific

elements of the digital content or digital service are made available periodically or on several instances during the fixed duration of the contract, or for as long as the indefinite contract is in force, should also be considered a continuous supply over a period of time, for instance where the contract stipulates that a copy of anti-virus software can be used for a year and will be automatically updated on the first day of each month of this period, or that the trader will issue updates whenever new features of a digital game become available, and the digital content or digital service is available or accessible to consumers only for the fixed duration of the contract or for as long as the indefinite contract is in force.

- (58) Member States should remain free to regulate national limitation periods. However, such limitation periods should not prevent consumers from exercising their rights throughout the period of time during which the trader is liable for a lack of conformity. While this Directive should therefore not harmonise the starting point of national limitation periods, it should nevertheless ensure that such periods still allow consumers to exercise their remedies for any lack of conformity that becomes apparent at least during the period during which the trader is liable for a lack of conformity.
- (59) Due to the specific nature and high complexity of digital content and digital services, as well as the trader's better knowledge and access to know-how, technical information and high-tech assistance, the trader is likely to be in a better position than the consumer to know why the digital content or digital service is not supplied or is not in conformity. The trader is also likely to be in a better position to assess whether the failure to supply or the lack of conformity is due to the incompatibility of the consumer's digital environment with the technical requirements for the digital content or digital service. Therefore in the event of a dispute, while it is for the consumer to provide evidence that the digital content or digital service is not in conformity, the consumer should not have to prove that the lack of conformity existed at the time of supply of the digital content or digital service or, in the event of continuous supply, during the duration of the contract.

Instead, it should be for the trader to prove that the digital content or digital service was in conformity at that time or during that period. That burden of proof should be on the trader for a lack of conformity which becomes apparent within one year from the time of supply where the contract provides for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply, and for the duration of the contract where the contract provides for continuous supply over a period of time. However, where the trader proves that the consumer's digital environment is not compatible with the technical requirements, of which the trader informed the consumer in a clear and comprehensible manner before the conclusion of the contract, the consumer should have the burden of proving that the lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service existed at the time of supply of the digital content or digital service where the contract provides for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply or, where the contract provides for continuous supply over a period of time, for the duration of the contract.

- (60) Without prejudice to the fundamental right to the protection of private life, including confidentiality of communications, and to the protection of personal data of the consumer, the consumer should cooperate with the trader in order for the trader to ascertain whether the cause of the lack of conformity lies in the consumer's digital environment using the technically available means which are least intrusive for the consumer. This can often be done for instance by providing the trader with automatically generated incident reports or with details of the consumer's internet connection. Only in exceptional and duly justified circumstances where, despite the best use of all other means, there is no other way possible, consumers may need to allow virtual access to their digital environment. However, where the consumer does not cooperate with the trader and the consumer had been informed of the consequences of non-cooperation, it should be for the consumer to prove not only that the digital content or digital service is not in conformity, but also that the digital content or digital service was not in conformity at the time of supply of the digital content or digital service where the contract provides for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply or, where the contract provides for continuous supply over a period of time, for the duration of the contract.
- (61) Where the trader has failed to supply the digital content or digital service, the consumer should call upon the trader to supply the digital content or digital service. In such cases, the trader should act without undue delay, or within an additional period of time as expressly agreed to by the parties. Considering that digital content or a digital service is supplied in digital form, the supply should not require, in the majority of situations, any

additional time to make the digital content or digital service available to the consumer. Therefore, in such cases, the obligation of the trader to supply the digital content or digital service without undue delay should mean having to supply it immediately. If the trader then fails to supply the digital content or digital service, the consumer should be entitled to terminate the contract. In specific circumstances, such as where it is clear that the trader will not supply the digital content or digital service or where a specific time for the supply is essential for the consumer, the consumer should be entitled to terminate the contract without first calling upon the trader to supply the digital content or digital service.

- (62) In the case of lack of conformity, consumers should be entitled to have the digital content or digital service brought into conformity, to have a proportionate reduction in the price, or to terminate the contract.
- (63) Depending on the technical characteristics of the digital content or digital service, the trader should be allowed to select a specific way of bringing the digital content or digital service into conformity, for example by issuing updates or making a new copy of the digital content or digital service available to the consumer.
- (64) Given the diversity of digital content and digital services, it is not appropriate to set fixed deadlines for the exercise of rights or the fulfilling of obligations related to digital content or digital services. Such deadlines would not take account of such diversity and could be either too short or too long, depending on the case. It is therefore more appropriate to require that digital content and digital services be brought into conformity within a reasonable time. Such requirement should not prevent the parties from agreeing on a specific time for bringing the digital content or digital service into conformity. The digital content or digital service should be brought into conformity free of any charge. In particular, the consumer should not incur any costs associated with the development of an update for the digital content or digital service.
- (65) Where bringing digital content or a digital service into conformity is legally or factually impossible or where the trader refuses to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity because to do so would impose disproportionate costs on the trader, or where the trader has failed to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity within a reasonable time, free of charge and without causing significant inconvenience to the consumer, the consumer should be entitled to the remedies of price reduction or termination of the contract. In certain situations, it is justified that the consumer should be entitled to have the price reduced or the contract terminated immediately, for instance where the trader previously failed to successfully bring the digital content or digital service into conformity or where the consumer cannot be expected to maintain confidence in the ability of the trader to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity due to the serious nature of the lack of conformity. For example, the consumer should be entitled to directly request a price reduction or the termination of the contract where the consumer is supplied with anti-virus software which is itself infected with viruses and would constitute an instance of lack of conformity of such a serious nature. The same should apply where it is clear that the trader will not bring the digital content or digital service into conformity within a reasonable time or without significant inconvenience for the consumer.
- (66) In a situation where the consumer is entitled to a reduction of the price paid for the digital content or digital service which is supplied over a period of time, the calculation of the price reduction should take into consideration the decrease of value of the digital content or digital service due both to the lack of conformity and to the time during which the consumer was unable to enjoy the digital content or digital service in conformity.
- (67) Where the digital content or digital service is supplied in exchange for a price, the consumer should be able to terminate the contract only if the lack of conformity is not minor. However, where the digital content or digital service is not supplied in exchange for a price but personal data are provided by the consumer, the consumer should be entitled to terminate the contract also in cases where the lack of conformity is minor, since the remedy of price reduction is not available to the consumer. In cases where the consumer pays a price and provides personal data, the consumer should be entitled to all available remedies in the event of a lack of conformity. In particular, provided all other conditions are met, the consumer should be entitled to have the digital content or digital service brought into conformity, to have the price reduced in relation to the money paid for the digital content or digital service or to have the contract terminated.

- (68) Where the consumer terminates the contract, the trader should reimburse the price paid by the consumer. However, there is a need to balance the legitimate interests of consumers and traders where the digital content or digital service is supplied over a period of time and the digital content or digital service was in conformity only for part of that period. Therefore, upon termination, the consumer should only be entitled to the part of the price paid that corresponds and is in proportion to the length of time during which the digital content or digital service was not in conformity. The consumer should also be entitled to any part of the price paid in advance for any period that would have remained after the contract was terminated.
- (69) Where personal data are provided by the consumer to the trader, the trader should comply with the obligations under Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Such obligations should also be complied with in cases where the consumer pays a price and provides personal data. Upon termination of the contract, the trader should also refrain from using any content other than personal data, which was provided or created by the consumer when using the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader. Such content could include digital images, video and audio files and content created on mobile devices. However, the trader should be entitled to continue to use the content provided or created by the consumer in cases where such content either has no utility outside the context of the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader, only relates to the consumer's activity, has been aggregated with other data by the trader and cannot be disaggregated or only with disproportionate efforts, or has been generated jointly by the consumer and others, and other consumers can continue to make use of it.
- (70) The consumer could be discouraged from exercising remedies for a lack of conformity of digital content or a digital service if the consumer is deprived of access to content other than personal data, which the consumer provided or created through the use of the digital content or digital service. In order to ensure that the consumer benefits from effective protection in relation to the right to terminate the contract, the trader should therefore, at the request of the consumer, make such content available to the consumer following the termination of the contract.
- (71) The consumer should be entitled to retrieve the content within a reasonable time, without hindrance from the trader, in a commonly used machine-readable format and free of charge, with the exception of costs generated by the consumer's own digital environment, for instance the costs of a network connection as those costs are not specifically linked to the retrieval of the content. However, the obligation of the trader to make available such content should not apply where the content only has utility within the context of using the digital content or digital service, or relates only to the consumer's activity when using the digital content or digital service or has been aggregated with other data by the trader and cannot be disaggregated or only with disproportionate efforts. In such cases, the content does not have significant practical use or interest for the consumer while taking into account also the interests of the trader. Moreover, the obligation of the trader to make available to the consumer, upon termination of the contract, any content that is not personal data and has been provided or created by the consumer should be without prejudice to the trader's right not to disclose certain content in accordance with applicable law.
- (72) Where the contract is terminated, the consumer should not be required to pay for the use of the digital content or digital service for any period during which the digital content or a digital service was not in conformity because that would deprive the consumer of effective protection. However, the consumer should also refrain from using the digital content or digital service and from making it available to third parties, for instance by deleting the digital content or any usable copy or rendering the digital content or digital service otherwise inaccessible.
- (73) The principle of the liability of the trader for damages is an essential element of contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services. Therefore, the consumer should be entitled to claim compensation for detriment caused by a lack of conformity or a failure to supply the digital content or digital service. The compensation should put the consumer as much as possible into the position in which the consumer would have been had the digital content or digital service been duly supplied and been in conformity. As such a right to damages already exists in all Member States, this Directive should be without prejudice to national rules on the compensation of consumers for harm resulting from infringement of those rules.
- (74) This Directive should also address modifications, such as updates and upgrades, which are carried out by traders on the digital content or digital service which is supplied or made accessible to the consumer over a period of time. Considering the fast-evolving character of digital content and digital services, such updates, upgrades

or similar modifications may be necessary and are often advantageous for the consumer. Some modifications, for instance those stipulated as updates in the contract, may form part of the contractual commitment. Other modifications can be required to fulfil the objective requirements for conformity of the digital content or digital service as set out in this Directive. Yet other modifications, which would deviate from the objective requirements for conformity and which are foreseeable at the time of conclusion of the contract, would have to be expressly agreed to by the consumer when concluding the contract.

- (75) In addition to modifications aimed at maintaining conformity, the trader should be allowed under certain conditions to modify features of the digital content or digital service, provided that the contract gives a valid reason for such a modification. Such valid reasons could encompass cases where the modification is necessary to adapt the digital content or digital service to a new technical environment or to an increased number of users or for other important operational reasons. Such modifications are often to the advantage of the consumer as they improve the digital content or digital service. Consequently, the parties to the contract should be able to include clauses in the contract which allow the trader to undertake modifications. In order to balance consumer and business interests, such a possibility for the trader should be coupled with a right for the consumer to terminate the contract where such modifications negatively impact the use of or access to the digital content or digital service in more than only a minor manner. The extent to which modifications negatively impact the use of or access to the digital content or digital service by the consumer should be objectively ascertained having regard to the nature and purpose of the digital content or digital service and to the quality, functionality, compatibility and other main features which are normal for digital content or digital services of the same type. The rules provided for in this Directive concerning such updates, upgrades or similar modifications should however not concern situations where the parties conclude a new contract for the supply of the digital content or digital service, for instance as a consequence of distributing a new version of the digital content or digital service.
- (76) Consumers should be informed of modifications in a clear and comprehensible manner. Where a modification negatively impacts, in more than a minor manner, the access to or use of digital content or a digital service by the consumer, the consumer should be informed in a way that allows the information to be stored on a durable medium. A durable medium should enable the consumer to store the information for as long as is necessary to protect the interests of the consumer arising from the consumer's relationship with the trader. Such media should include, in particular, paper, DVDs, CDs, USB sticks, memory cards or hard disks as well as emails.
- (77) Where a modification negatively impacts, in more than a minor manner, the access or use of the digital content or digital service by the consumer, the consumer should enjoy as a result of such a modification the right to terminate the contract free of any charge. Alternatively, the trader can decide to enable the consumer to maintain access to the digital content or digital service at no additional cost, without the modification and in conformity, in which case the consumer should not be entitled to terminate the contract. However, if the digital content or digital service that the trader enabled the consumer to maintain is no longer in conformity with the subjective and the objective requirements for conformity, the consumer should be able to rely on the remedies for a lack of conformity as provided for under this Directive. Where the requirements for such a modification as laid down in this Directive are not satisfied and the modification results in a lack of conformity, the consumer's right to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity, have the price reduced or the contract terminated, as provided for under this Directive, should remain unaffected. Similarly, where, subsequent to a modification, a lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service that has not been caused by the modification arises, the consumer should continue to be entitled to rely on remedies as provided for under this Directive for the lack of conformity in relation to this digital content or digital service.
- (78) The lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service as supplied to the consumer is often due to one of the transactions in a chain that links the original designer to the final trader. While the final trader should be liable towards the consumer in the event of a lack of conformity, it is important to ensure that the trader has appropriate rights vis-à-vis different persons in the chain of transactions in order to be able to cover the liability towards the consumer. Such rights should be limited to commercial transactions and they should therefore not cover situations where the trader is liable towards the consumer for the lack of conformity of digital content or a digital service that is composed of or built upon software which was supplied without the payment of a price under a free and open-source licence by a person in previous links of the chain of transactions. However, it should be for the Member States under their applicable national law to identify the persons in the chain of transactions against which the final trader can turn and the modalities and conditions of such actions.

- (79) Persons or organisations regarded under national law as having a legitimate interest in protecting consumer contractual and data protection rights should be afforded the right to initiate proceedings to ensure that the national provisions transposing this Directive are applied, either before a court or before an administrative authority which is competent to decide upon complaints, or to initiate appropriate legal proceedings.
- (80) Nothing in this Directive should prejudice the application of the rules of private international law, in particular Regulations (EC) No 593/2008⁽¹⁴⁾ and (EU) No 1215/2012⁽¹⁵⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- (81) The Annex to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁶⁾ should be amended to include a reference to this Directive so as to facilitate cross-border cooperation on enforcement of this Directive.
- (82) Annex I to Directive 2009/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁷⁾ should be amended to include a reference to this Directive so as to ensure that the collective interests of consumers laid down in this Directive are protected.
- (83) Consumers should be able to benefit from their rights under this Directive as soon as the corresponding national transposition measures begin to apply. Those national transposition measures should, therefore, also apply to contracts of an indefinite or fixed duration which were concluded before the application date and provide for the supply of digital content or digital services over a period of time, either continuously or through a series of individual acts of supply, but only as regards digital content or a digital service that is supplied from the date of application of the national transposition measures. However, in order to ensure a balance between the legitimate interests of consumers and traders, the national measures transposing the provisions of this Directive on the modification of the digital content or digital service and the right to redress should only apply to contracts concluded after the application date pursuant to this Directive.
- (84) In accordance with the Joint Political Declaration of 28 September 2011 of Member States and the Commission on explanatory documents⁽¹⁸⁾, Member States have undertaken to accompany, in justified cases, the notification of their transposition measures with one or more documents explaining the relationship between the components of a directive and the corresponding parts of national transposition instruments. With regard to this Directive, the legislator considers the transmission of such documents to be justified.
- (85) The European Data Protection Supervisor was consulted in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁹⁾ and delivered an opinion on 14 March 2017⁽²⁰⁾.
- (86) Since the objectives of this Directive, namely to contribute to the functioning of the internal market by tackling in a consistent manner contract law related obstacles for the supply of digital content or digital services while preventing legal fragmentation, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States but can rather, by reasons of ensuring the overall coherence of the national laws through harmonised contract law rules which would also facilitate coordinated enforcement actions, be better achieved at Union level, the Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Directive does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.
- (87) This Directive respects the fundamental rights and freedoms and observes the principles recognised, in particular, by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including those enshrined in Articles 16, 38 and 47 thereof,

⁽¹⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 593/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 on the law applicable to contractual obligations (Rome I) (OJ L 177, 4.7.2008, p. 6).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (OJ L 351, 20.12.2012, p. 1).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 1).

⁽¹⁷⁾ Directive 2009/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on injunctions for the protection of consumers' interests (OJ L 110, 1.5.2009, p. 30).

⁽¹⁸⁾ OJ C 369, 17.12.2011, p. 14.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1).

⁽²⁰⁾ OJ C 200, 23.6.2017, p. 10.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

Subject matter and purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market while providing for a high level of consumer protection, by laying down common rules on certain requirements concerning contracts between traders and consumers for the supply of digital content or digital services, in particular, rules on:

- the conformity of digital content or a digital service with the contract,
- remedies in the event of a lack of such conformity or a failure to supply, and the modalities for the exercise of those remedies, and
- the modification of digital content or a digital service.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions apply:

- (1) 'digital content' means data which are produced and supplied in digital form;
- (2) 'digital service' means:
 - (a) a service that allows the consumer to create, process, store or access data in digital form; or
 - (b) a service that allows the sharing of or any other interaction with data in digital form uploaded or created by the consumer or other users of that service;
- (3) 'goods with digital elements' means any tangible movable items that incorporate, or are inter-connected with, digital content or a digital service in such a way that the absence of that digital content or digital service would prevent the goods from performing their functions;
- (4) 'integration' means the linking and incorporation of digital content or a digital service with the components of the consumer's digital environment in order for the digital content or digital service to be used in accordance with the requirements for conformity provided for by this Directive;
- (5) 'trader' means any natural or legal person, irrespective of whether privately or publicly owned, that is acting, including through any other person acting in that natural or legal person's name or on that person's behalf, for purposes relating to that person's trade, business, craft, or profession, in relation to contracts covered by this Directive;
- (6) 'consumer' means any natural person who, in relation to contracts covered by this Directive, is acting for purposes which are outside that person's trade, business, craft, or profession;
- (7) 'price' means money or a digital representation of value that is due in exchange for the supply of digital content or a digital service;
- (8) 'personal data' means personal data as defined in point (1) of Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679;
- (9) 'digital environment' means hardware, software and any network connection used by the consumer to access or make use of digital content or a digital service;
- (10) 'compatibility' means the ability of the digital content or digital service to function with hardware or software with which digital content or digital services of the same type are normally used, without the need to convert the digital content or digital service;

- (11) 'functionality' means the ability of the digital content or digital service to perform its functions having regard to its purpose;
- (12) 'interoperability' means the ability of the digital content or digital service to function with hardware or software different from those with which digital content or digital services of the same type are normally used;
- (13) 'durable medium' means any instrument which enables the consumer or the trader to store information addressed personally to that person in a way that is accessible for future reference, for a period of time adequate for the purposes of the information and which allows the unchanged reproduction of the information stored.

Article 3

Scope

1. This Directive shall apply to any contract where the trader supplies or undertakes to supply digital content or a digital service to the consumer and the consumer pays or undertakes to pay a price.

This Directive shall also apply where the trader supplies or undertakes to supply digital content or a digital service to the consumer, and the consumer provides or undertakes to provide personal data to the trader, except where the personal data provided by the consumer are exclusively processed by the trader for the purpose of supplying the digital content or digital service in accordance with this Directive or for allowing the trader to comply with legal requirements to which the trader is subject, and the trader does not process those data for any other purpose.

2. This Directive shall also apply where the digital content or digital service is developed in accordance with the consumer's specifications.

3. With the exception of Articles 5 and 13, this Directive shall also apply to any tangible medium which serves exclusively as a carrier of digital content.

4. This Directive shall not apply to digital content or digital services which are incorporated in or inter-connected with goods within the meaning of point (3) of Article 2, and which are provided with the goods under a sales contract concerning those goods, irrespective of whether such digital content or digital service is supplied by the seller or by a third party. In the event of doubt as to whether the supply of incorporated or inter-connected digital content or an incorporated or inter-connected digital service forms part of the sales contract, the digital content or digital service shall be presumed to be covered by the sales contract.

5. This Directive shall not apply to contracts regarding:

- (a) the provision of services other than digital services, regardless of whether digital forms or means are used by the trader to produce the output of the service or to deliver or transmit it to the consumer;
- (b) electronic communications services as defined in point (4) of Article 2 of Directive (EU) 2018/1972, with the exception of number-independent interpersonal communications services as defined in point (7) of Article 2 of that Directive;
- (c) healthcare as defined in point (a) of Article 3 of Directive 2011/24/EU;
- (d) gambling services, namely, services that involve wagering a stake with pecuniary value in games of chance, including those with an element of skill, such as lotteries, casino games, poker games and betting transactions, by electronic means or any other technology for facilitating communication and at the individual request of a recipient of such services;
- (e) financial services as defined in point (b) of Article 2 of Directive 2002/65/EC;
- (f) software offered by the trader under a free and open-source licence, where the consumer does not pay a price and the personal data provided by the consumer are exclusively processed by the trader for the purpose of improving the security, compatibility or interoperability of that specific software;
- (g) the supply of digital content where the digital content is made available to the general public other than by signal transmission as a part of a performance or event, such as digital cinematographic projections;

(h) digital content provided in accordance with Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²¹⁾ by public sector bodies of the Member States.

6. Without prejudice to paragraph 4 of this Article, where a single contract between the same trader and the same consumer includes in a bundle elements of supply of digital content or a digital service and elements of the provision of other services or goods, this Directive shall only apply to the elements of the contract concerning the digital content or digital service.

Article 19 of this Directive shall not apply where a bundle within the meaning of Directive (EU) 2018/1972 includes elements of an internet access service as defined in point (2) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²²⁾ or a number-based interpersonal communications service as defined in point (6) of Article 2 of Directive (EU) 2018/1972.

Without prejudice to Article 107(2) of Directive (EU) 2018/1972, the effects that the termination of one element of a bundle contract may have on the other elements of the bundle contract shall be governed by national law.

7. If any provision of this Directive conflicts with a provision of another Union act governing a specific sector or subject matter, the provision of that other Union act shall take precedence over this Directive.

8. Union law on the protection of personal data shall apply to any personal data processed in connection with contracts referred to in paragraph 1.

In particular, this Directive shall be without prejudice to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Directive 2002/58/EC. In the event of conflict between the provisions of this Directive and Union law on the protection of personal data, the latter prevails.

9. This Directive shall be without prejudice to Union and national law on copyright and related rights, including Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²³⁾.

10. This Directive shall not affect the freedom of Member States to regulate aspects of general contract law, such as rules on the formation, validity, nullity or effects of contracts, including the consequences of the termination of a contract in so far as they are not regulated in this Directive, or the right to damages.

Article 4

Level of harmonisation

Member States shall not maintain or introduce, in their national law, provisions diverging from those laid down in this Directive, including more, or less, stringent provisions to ensure a different level of consumer protection, unless otherwise provided for in this Directive.

Article 5

Supply of the digital content or digital service

1. The trader shall supply the digital content or digital service to the consumer. Unless the parties have agreed otherwise, the trader shall supply the digital content or digital service without undue delay after the conclusion of the contract.

⁽²¹⁾ Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information (OJ L 345, 31.12.2003, p. 90).

⁽²²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 laying down measures concerning open internet access and retail charges for regulated intra-EU communications and amending Directive 2002/22/EC and Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 (OJ L 310, 26.11.2015, p. 1).

⁽²³⁾ Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society (OJ L 167, 22.6.2001, p. 10).

2. The trader shall have complied with the obligation to supply when:
 - (a) the digital content or any means suitable for accessing or downloading the digital content is made available or accessible to the consumer, or to a physical or virtual facility chosen by the consumer for that purpose;
 - (b) the digital service is made accessible to the consumer or to a physical or virtual facility chosen by the consumer for that purpose.

Article 6

Conformity of the digital content or digital service

The trader shall supply to the consumer digital content or a digital service that meets the requirements set out in Articles 7, 8 and 9, where applicable, without prejudice to Article 10.

Article 7

Subjective requirements for conformity

In order to conform with the contract, the digital content or digital service shall, in particular, where applicable:

- (a) be of the description, quantity and quality, and possess the functionality, compatibility, interoperability and other features, as required by the contract;
- (b) be fit for any particular purpose for which the consumer requires it and which the consumer made known to the trader at the latest at the time of the conclusion of the contract, and in respect of which the trader has given acceptance;
- (c) be supplied with all accessories, instructions, including on installation, and customer assistance as required by the contract; and
- (d) be updated as stipulated by the contract.

Article 8

Objective requirements for conformity

1. In addition to complying with any subjective requirement for conformity, the digital content or digital service shall:

- (a) be fit for the purposes for which digital content or digital services of the same type would normally be used, taking into account, where applicable, any existing Union and national law, technical standards or, in the absence of such technical standards, applicable sector-specific industry codes of conduct;
- (b) be of the quantity and possess the qualities and performance features, including in relation to functionality, compatibility, accessibility, continuity and security, normal for digital content or digital services of the same type and which the consumer may reasonably expect, given the nature of the digital content or digital service and taking into account any public statement made by or on behalf of the trader, or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, particularly in advertising or on labelling unless the trader shows that:
 - (i) the trader was not, and could not reasonably have been, aware of the public statement in question;
 - (ii) by the time of conclusion of the contract, the public statement had been corrected in the same way as, or in a way comparable to how, it had been made; or
 - (iii) the decision to acquire the digital content or digital service could not have been influenced by the public statement;
- (c) where applicable, be supplied along with any accessories and instructions which the consumer may reasonably expect to receive; and
- (d) comply with any trial version or preview of the digital content or digital service, made available by the trader before the conclusion of the contract.

2. The trader shall ensure that the consumer is informed of and supplied with updates, including security updates, that are necessary to keep the digital content or digital service in conformity, for the period of time:

- (a) during which the digital content or digital service is to be supplied under the contract, where the contract provides for a continuous supply over a period of time; or
- (b) that the consumer may reasonably expect, given the type and purpose of the digital content or digital service and taking into account the circumstances and nature of the contract, where the contract provides for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply.

3. Where the consumer fails to install, within a reasonable time, updates supplied by the trader in accordance with paragraph 2, the trader shall not be liable for any lack of conformity resulting solely from the lack of the relevant update, provided that:

- (a) the trader informed the consumer about the availability of the update and the consequences of the failure of the consumer to install it; and
- (b) the failure of the consumer to install or the incorrect installation by the consumer of the update was not due to shortcomings in the installation instructions provided by the trader.

4. Where the contract provides for a continuous supply of digital content or digital service over a period of time, the digital content or digital service shall be in conformity throughout the duration of that period.

5. There shall be no lack of conformity within the meaning of paragraph 1 or 2 if, at the time of the conclusion of the contract, the consumer was specifically informed that a particular characteristic of the digital content or digital service was deviating from the objective requirements for conformity laid down in paragraph 1 or 2 and the consumer expressly and separately accepted that deviation when concluding the contract.

6. Unless the parties have agreed otherwise, digital content or a digital service shall be supplied in the most recent version available at the time of the conclusion of the contract.

Article 9

Incorrect integration of the digital content or digital service

Any lack of conformity resulting from the incorrect integration of the digital content or digital service into the consumer's digital environment shall be regarded as lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service if:

- (a) the digital content or digital service was integrated by the trader or under the trader's responsibility; or
- (b) the digital content or digital service was intended to be integrated by the consumer and the incorrect integration was due to shortcomings in the integration instructions provided by the trader.

Article 10

Third-party rights

Where a restriction resulting from a violation of any right of a third party, in particular intellectual property rights, prevents or limits the use of the digital content or digital service in accordance with Articles 7 and 8, Member States shall ensure that the consumer is entitled to the remedies for lack of conformity provided for in Article 14, unless national law provides for the nullity or rescission of the contract for the supply of the digital content or digital service in such cases.

Article 11

Liability of the trader

1. The trader shall be liable for any failure to supply the digital content or digital service in accordance with Article 5.

2. Where a contract provides for a single act of supply or a series of individual acts of supply, the trader shall be liable for any lack of conformity under Articles 7, 8 and 9 which exists at the time of supply, without prejudice to point (b) of Article 8(2).

If, under national law, the trader is only liable for a lack of conformity that becomes apparent within a period of time after supply, that period shall not be less than two years from the time of supply, without prejudice to point (b) of Article 8(2).

If, under national law, the rights laid down in Article 14 are also subject or only subject to a limitation period, Member States shall ensure that such limitation period allows the consumer to exercise the remedies laid down in Article 14 for any lack of conformity that exists at the time indicated in the first subparagraph and becomes apparent within the period of time indicated in the second subparagraph.

3. Where the contract provides for continuous supply over a period of time, the trader shall be liable for a lack of conformity under Articles 7, 8 and 9, that occurs or becomes apparent within the period of time during which the digital content or digital service is to be supplied under the contract.

If, under national law, the rights laid down in Article 14 are also subject or only subject to a limitation period, Member States shall ensure that such limitation period allows the consumer to exercise the remedies laid down in Article 14 for any lack of conformity that occurs or becomes apparent during the period of time referred to in the first subparagraph.

Article 12

Burden of proof

1. The burden of proof with regard to whether the digital content or digital service was supplied in accordance with Article 5 shall be on the trader.

2. In cases referred to in Article 11(2), the burden of proof with regard to whether the supplied digital content or digital service was in conformity at the time of supply shall be on the trader for a lack of conformity which becomes apparent within a period of one year from the time when the digital content or digital service was supplied.

3. In cases referred to in Article 11(3), the burden of proof with regard to whether the digital content or digital service was in conformity within the period of time during which the digital content or digital service is to be supplied under the contract shall be on the trader for a lack of conformity which becomes apparent within that period.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 shall not apply where the trader demonstrates that the digital environment of the consumer is not compatible with the technical requirements of the digital content or digital service and where the trader informed the consumer of such requirements in a clear and comprehensible manner before the conclusion of the contract.

5. The consumer shall cooperate with the trader, to the extent reasonably possible and necessary, to ascertain whether the cause of the lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service at the time specified in Article 11(2) or (3), as applicable, lay in the consumer's digital environment. The obligation to cooperate shall be limited to the technically available means which are least intrusive for the consumer. Where the consumer fails to cooperate, and where the trader informed the consumer of such requirement in a clear and comprehensible manner before the conclusion of the contract, the burden of proof with regard to whether the lack of conformity existed at the time specified in Article 11(2) or (3), as applicable, shall be on the consumer.

Article 13

Remedy for the failure to supply

1. Where the trader has failed to supply the digital content or digital service in accordance with Article 5, the consumer shall call upon the trader to supply the digital content or digital service. If the trader then fails to supply the digital content or digital service without undue delay, or within an additional period of time, as expressly agreed to by the parties, the consumer shall be entitled to terminate the contract.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not apply, and the consumer shall be entitled to terminate the contract immediately, where:
 - (a) the trader has declared, or it is equally clear from the circumstances, that the trader will not supply the digital content or digital service;
 - (b) the consumer and the trader have agreed, or it is clear from the circumstances attending the conclusion of the contract, that a specific time for the supply is essential for the consumer and the trader fails to supply the digital content or digital service by or at that time.
3. Where the consumer terminates the contract under paragraph 1 or 2 of this Article, Articles 15 to 18 shall apply accordingly.

Article 14

Remedies for lack of conformity

1. In the case of a lack of conformity, the consumer shall be entitled to have the digital content or digital service brought into conformity, to receive a proportionate reduction in the price, or to terminate the contract, under the conditions set out in this Article.
2. The consumer shall be entitled to have the digital content or digital service brought into conformity, unless this would be impossible or would impose costs on the trader that would be disproportionate, taking into account all the circumstances of the case including:
 - (a) the value the digital content or digital service would have if there were no lack of conformity; and
 - (b) the significance of the lack of conformity.
3. The trader shall bring the digital content or digital service into conformity pursuant to paragraph 2 within a reasonable time from the time the trader has been informed by the consumer about the lack of conformity, free of charge and without any significant inconvenience to the consumer, taking account of the nature of the digital content or digital service and the purpose for which the consumer required the digital content or digital service.
4. The consumer shall be entitled to either a proportionate reduction of the price in accordance with paragraph 5 where the digital content or digital service is supplied in exchange for a payment of a price, or the termination of the contract in accordance with paragraph 6, in any of the following cases:
 - (a) the remedy to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity is impossible or disproportionate in accordance with paragraph 2;
 - (b) the trader has not brought the digital content or digital service into conformity in accordance with paragraph 3;
 - (c) a lack of conformity appears despite the trader's attempt to bring the digital content or digital service into conformity;
 - (d) the lack of conformity is of such a serious nature as to justify an immediate price reduction or termination of the contract; or
 - (e) the trader has declared, or it is clear from the circumstances, that the trader will not bring the digital content or digital service into conformity within a reasonable time, or without significant inconvenience for the consumer.
5. The reduction in price shall be proportionate to the decrease in the value of the digital content or digital service which was supplied to the consumer compared to the value that the digital content or digital service would have if it were in conformity.

Where the contract stipulates that the digital content or digital service shall be supplied over a period of time in exchange for the payment of a price, the reduction in price shall apply to the period of time during which the digital content or digital service was not in conformity.

6. Where the digital content or digital service is supplied in exchange for the payment of a price, the consumer shall be entitled to terminate the contract only if the lack of conformity is not minor. The burden of proof with regard to whether the lack of conformity is minor shall be on the trader.

Article 15

Exercise of the right of termination

The consumer shall exercise the right to terminate the contract by means of a statement to the trader expressing the decision to terminate the contract.

Article 16

Obligations of the trader in the event of termination

1. In the event of termination of the contract, the trader shall reimburse the consumer for all sums paid under the contract.

However, in cases where the contract provides for the supply of the digital content or digital service in exchange for a payment of a price and over a period of time, and the digital content or digital service had been in conformity for a period of time prior to the termination of the contract, the trader shall reimburse the consumer only for the proportionate part of the price paid corresponding to the period of time during which the digital content or digital service was not in conformity, and any part of the price paid by the consumer in advance for any period of the contract that would have remained had the contract not been terminated.

2. In respect of personal data of the consumer, the trader shall comply with the obligations applicable under Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

3. The trader shall refrain from using any content other than personal data, which was provided or created by the consumer when using the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader, except where such content:

- (a) has no utility outside the context of the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader;
- (b) only relates to the consumer's activity when using the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader;
- (c) has been aggregated with other data by the trader and cannot be disaggregated or only with disproportionate efforts;
or
- (d) has been generated jointly by the consumer and others, and other consumers are able to continue to make use of the content.

4. Except in the situations referred to in point (a), (b) or (c) of paragraph 3, the trader shall, at the request of the consumer, make available to the consumer any content other than personal data, which was provided or created by the consumer when using the digital content or digital service supplied by the trader.

The consumer shall be entitled to retrieve that digital content free of charge, without hindrance from the trader, within a reasonable time and in a commonly used and machine-readable format.

5. The trader may prevent any further use of the digital content or digital service by the consumer, in particular by making the digital content or digital service inaccessible to the consumer or disabling the user account of the consumer, without prejudice to paragraph 4.

Article 17

Obligations of the consumer in the event of termination

1. After the termination of the contract, the consumer shall refrain from using the digital content or digital service and from making it available to third parties.

2. Where the digital content was supplied on a tangible medium, the consumer shall, at the request and at the expense of the trader, return the tangible medium to the trader without undue delay. If the trader decides to request the return of the tangible medium, that request shall be made within 14 days of the day on which the trader is informed of the consumer's decision to terminate the contract.

3. The consumer shall not be liable to pay for any use made of the digital content or digital service in the period, prior to the termination of the contract, during which the digital content or the digital service was not in conformity.

Article 18

Time limits and means of reimbursement by the trader

1. Any reimbursement that is owed to the consumer by the trader, pursuant to Article 14(4) and (5) or 16(1), due to a price reduction or termination of the contract shall be carried out without undue delay and, in any event, within 14 days of the date on which the trader is informed of the consumer's decision to invoke the consumer's right for a price reduction or to terminate the contract.

2. The trader shall carry out the reimbursement using the same means of payment as the consumer used to pay for the digital content or digital service, unless the consumer expressly agrees otherwise, and provided that the consumer does not incur any fees as a result of such reimbursement.

3. The trader shall not impose any fee on the consumer in respect of the reimbursement.

Article 19

Modification of the digital content or digital service

1. Where the contract provides that the digital content or digital service is to be supplied or made accessible to the consumer over a period of time, the trader may modify the digital content or digital service beyond what is necessary to maintain the digital content or digital service in conformity in accordance with Articles 7 and 8, if the following conditions are met:

(a) the contract allows, and provides a valid reason for, such a modification;

(b) such a modification is made without additional cost to the consumer;

(c) the consumer is informed in a clear and comprehensible manner of the modification; and

(d) in the cases referred to in paragraph 2, the consumer is informed reasonably in advance on a durable medium of the features and time of the modification and of the right to terminate the contract in accordance with paragraph 2, or of the possibility to maintain the digital content or digital service without such a modification in accordance with paragraph 4.

2. The consumer shall be entitled to terminate the contract if the modification negatively impacts the consumer's access to or use of the digital content or digital service, unless such negative impact is only minor. In that case, the consumer shall be entitled to terminate the contract free of charge within 30 days of the receipt of the information or of the time when the digital content or digital service has been modified by the trader, whichever is later.

3. Where the consumer terminates the contract in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article, Articles 15 to 18 shall apply accordingly.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article shall not apply if the trader has enabled the consumer to maintain without additional cost the digital content or digital service without the modification, and the digital content or digital service remains in conformity.

*Article 20***Right of redress**

Where the trader is liable to the consumer because of any failure to supply the digital content or digital service, or because of a lack of conformity resulting from an act or omission by a person in previous links of the chain of transactions, the trader shall be entitled to pursue remedies against the person or persons liable in the chain of commercial transactions. The person against whom the trader may pursue remedies, and the relevant actions and conditions of exercise, shall be determined by national law.

*Article 21***Enforcement**

1. Member States shall ensure that adequate and effective means exist to ensure compliance with this Directive.
2. The means referred to in paragraph 1 shall include provisions whereby one or more of the following bodies, as determined by national law, may take action under national law before the courts or before the competent administrative bodies to ensure that the national provisions transposing this Directive are applied:
 - (a) public bodies or their representatives;
 - (b) consumer organisations having a legitimate interest in protecting consumers;
 - (c) professional organisations having a legitimate interest in acting;
 - (d) not-for-profit bodies, organisations or associations, active in the field of the protection of data subjects' rights and freedoms as defined in Article 80 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

*Article 22***Mandatory nature**

1. Unless otherwise provided for in this Directive, any contractual term which, to the detriment of the consumer, excludes the application of the national measures transposing this Directive, derogates from them or varies their effects before the failure to supply or the lack of conformity is brought to the trader's attention by the consumer, or before the modification of the digital content or digital service in accordance with Article 19 is brought to the consumer's attention by the trader, shall not be binding on the consumer.
2. This Directive shall not prevent the trader from offering the consumer contractual arrangements that go beyond the protection provided for in this Directive.

*Article 23***Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC**

- (1) In the Annex to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394, the following point is added:

‘28. Directive (EU) 2019/770 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content and digital services (OJ L 136, 22.5.2019, p. 1)’.
- (2) In Annex I to Directive 2009/22/EC, the following point is added:

‘17. Directive (EU) 2019/770 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content and digital services (OJ L 136, 22.5.2019, p. 1)’.

*Article 24***Transposition**

1. By 1 July 2021 Member States shall adopt and publish the measures necessary to comply with this Directive. They shall immediately inform the Commission thereof.

They shall apply those measures from 1 January 2022.

When Member States adopt those measures, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or be accompanied by such a reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by Member States.

Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of the provisions of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

2. The provisions of this Directive shall apply to the supply of digital content or digital services which occurs from 1 January 2022 with the exception of Articles 19 and 20 of this Directive which shall only apply to contracts concluded from that date.

Article 25

Review

The Commission shall, not later than 12 June 2024 review the application of this Directive and submit a report to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee. The report shall examine, inter alia, the case for harmonisation of rules applicable to contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services other than that covered by this Directive, including supplied against advertisements.

Article 26

Entry into force

This Directive shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Article 27

Addressees

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 20 May 2019.

For the European Parliament

The President

A. TAJANI

For the Council

The President

G. CIAMBA

DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/771 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 20 May 2019
on certain aspects concerning contracts for the sale of goods, amending Regulation (EU) 2017/2394
and Directive 2009/22/EC, and repealing Directive 1999/44/EC
(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 114 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽²⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to remain competitive on global markets, the Union needs to improve the functioning of the internal market and successfully meet the multiple challenges posed today by an increasingly technology-driven economy. The Digital Single Market Strategy lays down a comprehensive framework facilitating the integration of the digital dimension into the internal market. The first pillar of the Digital Single Market Strategy tackles fragmentation in intra-EU trade by looking at all major obstacles to the development of cross-border e-commerce, which constitutes the most significant part of cross-border business-to-consumer sales of goods.
- (2) Article 26(1) and (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provide that the Union is to adopt measures with the aim of establishing or ensuring the functioning of the internal market, which is to comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods and services is ensured. Article 169(1) and point (a) of Article 169(2) TFEU provide that the Union is to contribute to the attainment of a high level of consumer protection through measures adopted pursuant to Article 114 TFEU in the context of the completion of the internal market. This Directive aims to strike the right balance between achieving a high level of consumer protection and promoting the competitiveness of enterprises, while ensuring respect for the principle of subsidiarity.
- (3) Certain aspects concerning contracts for the sale of goods should be harmonised, taking as a base a high level of consumer protection, in order to achieve a genuine digital single market, increase legal certainty and reduce transaction costs, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises ('SMEs').
- (4) E-commerce is a key driver for growth within the internal market. However, its growth potential is far from being fully exploited. In order to strengthen Union competitiveness and to boost growth, the Union needs to act swiftly and encourage economic actors to unleash the full potential offered by the internal market. The full potential of the internal market can only be unleashed if all market participants enjoy smooth access to cross-border sales of goods including in e-commerce transactions. The contract law rules on the basis of which market participants conclude transactions are among the key factors shaping business decisions as to whether to offer goods cross-border. Those rules also influence consumers' willingness to embrace and trust this type of purchase.
- (5) Technological evolution has led to a growing market for goods that incorporate or are inter-connected with digital content or digital services. Due to the increasing number of such devices and their rapidly growing uptake by consumers, action at Union level is needed in order to ensure that there is a high level of consumer protection and to increase legal certainty as regards the rules applicable to contracts for the sale of such products. Increasing legal certainty would help to reinforce the trust of consumers and sellers.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 264, 20.7.2016, p. 57.

⁽²⁾ Position of the European Parliament of 26 March 2019 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and decision of the Council of 15 April 2019.

- (6) Union rules applicable to the sales of goods are still fragmented, although rules on delivery conditions and, as regards distance or off-premises contracts, pre-contractual information requirements and the right of withdrawal have already been fully harmonised by Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽³⁾. Other key contractual elements, such as the conformity criteria, the remedies for a lack of conformity with the contract and the main modalities for their exercise, are currently subject to minimum harmonisation under Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁴⁾. Member States have been allowed to go beyond the Union standards and introduce or maintain rules that ensure that an even higher level of consumer protection is achieved. In doing so, they have acted on different elements and to different extents. Thus, national provisions transposing Directive 1999/44/EC significantly diverge today on essential elements, such as the absence or existence of a hierarchy of remedies.
- (7) Existing disparities can adversely affect businesses and consumers. Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 593/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁵⁾, businesses directing their activities to consumers in other Member States are required to take account of the mandatory consumer contract law rules of the consumer's country of habitual residence. As those rules differ among Member States, businesses can be faced with additional costs. Consequently, many businesses might prefer to continue trading domestically or only export to one or two Member States. That choice of minimising exposure to costs and risks associated with cross-border trade results in lost opportunities for commercial expansion and economies of scale. SMEs in particular, are affected.
- (8) While consumers enjoy a high level of protection when they purchase from abroad as a result of the application of Regulation (EC) No 593/2008, legal fragmentation also negatively affects consumers' levels of confidence in cross-border transactions. While several factors contribute to this mistrust, uncertainty about key contractual rights ranks prominently among consumers' concerns. This uncertainty exists independently of whether or not consumers are protected by the mandatory consumer contract law rules of their own Member State in the event that sellers direct their cross-border activities to them, or of whether or not consumers conclude cross-border contracts with sellers without the respective seller pursuing commercial activities in the consumer's Member State.
- (9) While online sales of goods constitute the vast majority of cross-border sales in the Union, differences in national contract laws equally affect retailers using distance sales channels and retailers selling face-to-face and prevent them from expanding across borders. This Directive should cover all sales channels, in order to create a level playing field for all businesses selling goods to consumers. By laying down uniform rules across sales channels, this Directive should avoid any divergence that would create disproportionate burdens for the growing number of omni-channel retailers in the Union. The need for retaining consistent rules on sales and guarantees for all sales channels was confirmed in the Commission's Fitness Check on consumer and marketing law published on 29 May 2017, which also covered Directive 1999/44/EC.
- (10) This Directive should cover rules applicable to the sales of goods, including goods with digital elements, only in relation to key contract elements needed to overcome contract-law related barriers in the internal market. For this purpose, rules on requirements for conformity, remedies available to consumers for a lack of conformity of the goods with the contract and on the main modalities for their exercise should be fully harmonised, and the level of consumer protection, as compared to Directive 1999/44/EC, should be increased. Fully harmonised rules on some essential elements of consumer contract law would make it easier for businesses, especially SMEs, to offer their products in other Member States. Consumers would benefit from a high level of consumer protection and welfare gains by fully harmonising key rules.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EEC and Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 64).

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees (OJ L 171, 7.7.1999, p. 12).

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EC) No 593/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 on the law applicable to contractual obligations (Rome I) (OJ L 177, 4.7.2008, p. 6).

- (11) This Directive complements Directive 2011/83/EU. While Directive 2011/83/EU mainly lays down provisions regarding pre-contractual information requirements, the right of withdrawal from distance and off-premises contracts and rules on delivery and passing of risk, this Directive introduces rules on conformity of the goods, remedies in the event of a lack of conformity and modalities for their exercise.
- (12) This Directive should only apply to tangible movable items that constitute goods within the meaning laid down in this Directive. Member States should therefore be free to regulate contracts for the sale of immovable property, such as residential buildings, and its main components intended to constitute a major part of such immovable property.
- (13) This Directive and Directive (EU) 2019/770 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁶⁾ should complement each other. While Directive (EU) 2019/770 lays down rules on certain requirements concerning contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services, this Directive lays down rules on certain requirements concerning contracts for the sale of goods. Accordingly, in order to meet the expectations of consumers and ensure a clear-cut and simple legal framework for traders of digital content or digital services, Directive (EU) 2019/770 applies to the supply of digital content or digital services, including digital content supplied on a tangible medium, such as DVDs, CDs, USB sticks and memory cards, as well as to the tangible medium itself, provided that the tangible medium serves exclusively as a carrier of the digital content. In contrast, this Directive should apply to contracts for the sale of goods, including goods with digital elements which require digital content or a digital service in order to perform their functions.
- (14) The term 'goods' as provided for under this Directive should be understood to include 'goods with digital elements', and therefore to also refer to any digital content or digital service that is incorporated in or inter-connected with such goods, in such a way that the absence of that digital content or digital service would prevent the goods from performing their functions. Digital content that is incorporated in or inter-connected with a good can be any data which are produced and supplied in digital form, such as operating systems, applications and any other software. Digital content can be pre-installed at the moment of the conclusion of the sales contract or, where that contract so provides, can be installed subsequently. Digital services inter-connected with a good can include services which allow the creation, processing or storage of data in digital form, or access thereto, such as software-as-a-service offered in the cloud computing environment, the continuous supply of traffic data in a navigation system, or the continuous supply of individually adapted training plans in the case of a smart watch.
- (15) This Directive should apply to contracts for the sale of goods, including goods with digital elements where the absence of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service would prevent the goods from performing their functions and where that digital content or service is provided with the goods under the sales contract concerning those goods. Whether the supply of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service forms part of the sales contract with the seller should depend on the content of this contract. This should include incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital services the supply of which is explicitly required by the contract. It should also include sales contracts which can be understood as covering the supply of specific digital content or a specific digital service because they are normal for goods of the same type and the consumer could reasonably expect them given the nature of the goods and taking into account any public statement made by or on behalf of the seller or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, including the producer. If, for example, a smart TV were advertised as including a particular video application, that video application would be considered to be part of the sales contract. This should apply regardless of whether the digital content or digital service is pre-installed in the good itself or has to be downloaded subsequently on another device and is only inter-connected to the good. For example, a smart phone could come with a standardised pre-installed application provided under the sales contract, such as an alarm application or a camera application. Another possible example is that of a smart watch. In such a case, the watch itself would be considered to be the good with digital elements, which can perform its functions only with an application that is provided under the sales contract but has to be downloaded by the consumer onto a smart phone; the application would then be the inter-connected digital element. This should also apply if the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service is not supplied by the seller itself but is supplied, under the sales contract, by a third party. In order to avoid uncertainty for both sellers and consumers, in the event of doubt as to whether the supply of the digital content or the digital service forms part of the sales contract, the rules of this Directive should apply. Furthermore, ascertaining a bilateral contractual relationship, between the seller and the consumer,

⁽⁶⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/770 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content and digital services (see page 1 of this Official Journal).

of which the supply of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service forms part should not be affected by the mere fact that the consumer has to consent to a licensing agreement with a third party in order to benefit from the digital content or the digital service.

- (16) In contrast, if the absence of the incorporated or inter-connected digital content or digital service does not prevent the goods from performing their functions, or if the consumer concludes a contract for the supply of digital content or a digital service which does not form part of the contract concerning the sale of goods with digital elements, that contract should be considered to be separate from the contract for the sale of the goods, even if the seller acts as an intermediary of that second contract with the third-party supplier, and could fall within the scope of Directive (EU) 2019/770 if the conditions of that Directive are met. For instance, if the consumer downloads a game application from an app store onto a smart phone, the contract for the supply of the game application is separate from the contract for the sale of the smart phone itself. This Directive should therefore only apply to the sales contract concerning the smart phone, while the supply of the game application should fall under Directive (EU) 2019/770, if the conditions of that Directive are met. Another example would be where it is expressly agreed that the consumer buys a smart phone without a specific operating system and the consumer subsequently concludes a contract for the supply of an operating system from a third party. In such a case, the supply of the separately bought operating system would not form part of the sales contract and therefore would not fall within the scope of this Directive but could fall within the scope of Directive (EU) 2019/770, if the conditions of that Directive are met.
- (17) For the purpose of legal clarity this Directive should lay down a definition of a sales contract and also clearly define its scope. The scope of this Directive should also cover contracts for goods that are yet to be produced or manufactured, including under the consumer's specifications. Furthermore, an installation of the goods could fall within the scope of this Directive if the installation forms part of the sales contract and has to be carried out by the seller or under the seller's responsibility. Where a contract includes elements of both sales of goods and provision of services, it should be left to national law to determine whether the whole contract can be classified as a sales contract within the meaning of this Directive.
- (18) This Directive should not affect national law to the extent that the matters concerned are not regulated by this Directive, in particular with regard to the legality of the goods, damages and general contract law aspects such as the formation, validity, nullity or effects of contracts. The same should apply in relation to the consequences of the termination of the contract and to certain aspects regarding repair and replacement that are not regulated in this Directive. When regulating the rights of parties to withhold the performance of their obligations or part thereof until the other party performs its obligations, Member States should remain free to regulate the conditions and modalities regarding the withholding of payment of the price by the consumer. Member States should also remain free to regulate the consumer's entitlement to compensation for damage suffered as a consequence of an infringement by the seller of this Directive. This Directive should also not affect national rules that do not specifically concern consumer contracts and provide for specific remedies for certain types of defects that were not apparent at the time of conclusion of the sales contract, namely national provisions which may lay down specific rules for the seller's liability for hidden defects. This Directive should also not affect national laws providing for non-contractual remedies for the consumer, in the event of lack of conformity of goods, against persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, for example manufacturers, or other persons that fulfil the obligations of such persons.
- (19) This Directive should not affect the freedom of Member States to allow consumers to choose a specific remedy if the lack of conformity of the goods becomes apparent shortly after delivery, namely national provisions which provide for a right for the consumer to reject goods with a defect and to treat the contract as repudiated or ask for immediate replacement, within a specific short period of time after the delivery of the goods, which should not exceed 30 days.
- (20) Member States should remain free to regulate information obligations of the seller in connection with the conclusion of the contract or the duty of the seller to warn the consumer about, for instance, certain characteristics of the good, the suitability of materials provided by the consumer or possible disadvantages resulting from specific requests of the consumer, for example a request by the consumer to use a specific fabric for the tailoring of a ball gown.
- (21) Member States should also remain free to extend the application of the rules of this Directive to contracts that are excluded from the scope of this Directive, or to otherwise regulate such contracts. For instance, Member States should remain free to extend the protection afforded to consumers by this Directive also to natural or legal persons that are not consumers within the meaning of this Directive, such as non-governmental organisations, start-ups or SMEs.

- (22) The definition of a consumer should cover natural persons who are acting outside their trade, business, craft or profession. However, Member States should also remain free to determine in the case of dual purpose contracts, where the contract is concluded for purposes that are partly within and partly outside the person's trade, and where the trade purpose is so limited as not to be predominant in the overall context of the contract, whether, and under which conditions, that person should also be considered a consumer.
- (23) This Directive should apply to any contract whereby the seller transfers or undertakes to transfer the ownership of goods to the consumer. Platform providers could be considered to be sellers under this Directive if they act for purposes relating to their own business and as the direct contractual partner of the consumer for the sale of goods. Member States should remain free to extend the application of this Directive to platform providers that do not fulfil the requirements for being considered a seller under this Directive.
- (24) In order to balance the need for legal certainty with an appropriate flexibility of the legal rules, any reference in this Directive to what can be expected from or by a person should be understood as a reference to what can reasonably be expected. The standard of reasonableness should be objectively ascertained, having regard to the nature and purpose of the contract, the circumstances of the case and to the usages and practices of the parties involved.
- (25) In order to provide clarity as to what a consumer can expect from the goods and what the seller would be liable for in the event of failure to deliver what is expected, it is essential to fully harmonise rules for determining whether goods are in conformity. Any reference to conformity in this Directive should refer to conformity of the goods with the sales contract. In order to safeguard the legitimate interests of both parties to a sales contract, conformity should be assessed based on both subjective and objective requirements for conformity.
- (26) Therefore, the goods should comply with the requirements agreed between the seller and the consumer in the sales contract. Such requirements could cover, inter alia, the quantity, quality, type and description of the goods, their fitness for a specific purpose, as well as the delivery of the goods with the agreed accessories and any instructions. The requirements in the sales contract should include those resulting from pre-contractual information which, in accordance with Directive 2011/83/EU, forms an integral part of the sales contract.
- (27) The notion of functionality should be understood to refer to the ways in which the goods can perform their functions having regard to their purpose. The notion of interoperability relates to whether and to what extent the goods are able to function with hardware or software that is different from those with which goods of the same type are normally used. Successful functioning could include, for instance, the ability of the goods to exchange information with such other software or hardware and to use the information exchanged.
- (28) Given that the digital content or digital services incorporated in or inter-connected with goods are constantly developing, sellers may agree with consumers to provide updates for such goods. Updates, as agreed in the sales contract, can improve and enhance the digital content or digital service element of goods, extend their functionalities, adapt them to technical developments, protect them against new security threats or serve other purposes. The conformity of goods with digital content or digital services which are incorporated in or inter-connected with the goods should, therefore, also be assessed in relation to whether the digital content or digital service element of such goods is updated in accordance with the sales contract. Failure to supply updates that had been agreed in the sales contract should be considered as a lack of conformity of the goods. Moreover, defective or incomplete updates should also be considered as a lack of conformity of the goods, given that that would mean that such updates are not performed in the manner stipulated in the sales contract.
- (29) In order to be in conformity, the goods should not only comply with the subjective requirements for conformity but should in addition comply with the objective requirements for conformity set out in this Directive. Conformity should be assessed, inter alia, by considering the purpose for which goods of the same type would normally be used, whether they are supplied with the accessories and instructions that the consumer can reasonably expect to receive or whether they correspond to the sample or model that the seller made available to the consumer. The goods should also possess the qualities and features which are normal for goods of the same type and which the consumer can reasonably expect, given the nature of the goods and taking into account any public statement made by or on behalf of the seller or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions.

- (30) In addition to contractually agreed updates, the seller should also provide updates, including security updates, in order to ensure that goods with digital elements remain in conformity. The seller's obligation should be limited to updates which are necessary for such goods to maintain their conformity with the objective and subjective requirements for conformity laid down in this Directive. Unless the parties have contractually agreed otherwise, the seller should not be obliged to provide upgraded versions of the digital content or digital service of the goods or to improve or extend the functionalities of goods beyond the conformity requirements. If an update provided by the seller, or by a third party supplying the digital content or digital service under the sales contract, causes a lack of conformity of the good with digital elements, the seller should be liable for bringing the good into conformity again. The consumer should remain free to choose whether to install the updates provided. Where the consumer decides not to install the updates which are necessary for the goods with digital elements to maintain their conformity, the consumer should however not expect such goods to remain in conformity. The seller should inform the consumer that the consumer's decision not to install updates which are necessary for keeping the goods with digital elements in conformity, including security updates, will affect the seller's liability for conformity of those features of the goods with digital elements which the relevant updates are supposed to maintain in conformity. This Directive should not affect obligations to provide security updates laid down in other Union law or in national law.
- (31) In principle, in the case of goods with digital elements whereby the digital content or digital service incorporated in or inter-connected with the goods is supplied through a single act of supply, the seller should only be liable for a lack of conformity that exists at the time of delivery. However, the obligation to provide updates should reflect the fact that the digital environment of any such good constantly changes. Therefore, updates are a necessary tool in order to ensure that the goods are able to function in the same way that they did at the time of delivery. Furthermore, in contrast to traditional goods, goods with digital elements are not completely separate from the seller's sphere because the seller, or a third person supplying the digital content or digital service under the sales contract, is able to update the goods from a distance, usually over the internet. Therefore, if the digital content or digital service is supplied by a single act of supply, the seller should be liable to provide the updates necessary to keep the goods with digital elements in conformity for a period of time that the consumer can reasonably expect, even if the goods were in conformity at the time of delivery. The period of time during which the consumer can reasonably expect to receive updates should be assessed based on the type and purpose of the goods and the digital elements, and taking into account the circumstances and nature of the sales contract. A consumer would normally expect to receive updates for at least as long as the period during which the seller is liable for a lack of conformity, while in some cases the consumer's reasonable expectation could extend beyond that period, as might be the case particularly with regard to security updates. In other cases, for instance as regards goods with digital elements the purpose of which is limited in time, the seller's obligation to provide updates would normally be limited to that time.
- (32) Ensuring longer durability of goods is important for achieving more sustainable consumption patterns and a circular economy. Similarly, keeping non-compliant products out of the Union market by strengthening market surveillance and providing the right incentives to economic operators is essential in order to increase trust in the functioning of the internal market. For those purposes, product-specific Union legislation is the most appropriate means of introducing durability and other product-related requirements in relation to specific types or groups of products, using for this purpose adapted criteria. This Directive should therefore be complementary to the objectives pursued in such Union product-specific legislation, and should include durability as an objective criterion for the assessment of conformity of goods. Durability in this Directive should refer to the ability of the goods to maintain their required functions and performance through normal use. In order for goods to be in conformity, they should possess the durability which is normal for goods of the same type and which the consumer can reasonably expect given the nature of the specific goods, including the possible need for reasonable maintenance of the goods, such as the regular inspection or changing of filters in a car, and any public statement made by or on behalf of any person constituting a link in the chain of transactions. The assessment should also take into account all other relevant circumstances, such as the price of the goods and the intensity or frequency of the use that the consumer makes of the goods. In addition, insofar as specific durability information is indicated in any pre-contractual statement which forms part of the sales contract, the consumer should be able to rely on them as a part of the subjective requirements for conformity.
- (33) Under this Directive, the seller should be obliged to deliver to the consumer goods which are in conformity at the time of delivery. It is possible that sellers would make use of spare parts in order to fulfil their obligation to repair goods in the event of a lack of conformity that existed at the time of delivery. While this Directive should

not impose an obligation on sellers to ensure the availability of spare parts throughout a period of time as an objective requirement for conformity, it should not affect other provisions of national law obliging the seller, the producer or other person constituting a link in the chain of transactions, to ensure that spare parts are available or to inform consumers about such availability.

- (34) A large number of goods have to be installed before they can be used effectively by the consumer. In addition, in the case of goods with digital elements, the installation of the digital content or digital service is usually necessary for the consumer to be able to use such goods in line with their intended purpose. Therefore, any lack of conformity resulting from an incorrect installation of the goods, including from the incorrect installation of the digital content or digital service incorporated in or inter-connected with the goods, should be regarded as a lack of conformity, where the installation was performed by the seller or under the seller's control. Where the goods were intended to be installed by the consumer, a lack of conformity resulting from incorrect installation should be regarded as a lack of conformity of the goods, irrespective of whether the installation was performed by the consumer or by a third party under the consumer's responsibility, if the incorrect installation was due to shortcomings in the installation instructions, such as incompleteness or a lack of clarity making the installation instructions difficult to use for the average consumer.
- (35) Conformity should cover material defects as well as legal defects. Restrictions resulting from a violation of third-party rights, in particular intellectual property rights, could prevent or limit the use of the goods in accordance with the contract. Member States should ensure that in such cases the consumer is entitled to remedies for the lack of conformity as set out in this Directive, unless national law provides for the nullity of the contract or for its rescission in such cases.
- (36) In order to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility in the rules, for instance in relation to the sale of second-hand goods, it should be possible for the parties to deviate from the objective requirements for conformity provided for in this Directive. Such a deviation should only be possible if the consumer was specifically informed about it and if the consumer accepts it separately from other statements or agreements, and by way of active and unequivocal conduct.
- (37) Enhancing legal certainty for both consumers and sellers requires a clear indication of the time when the conformity of the goods should be assessed. The relevant time for assessing the conformity of the goods should be the time when the goods are delivered. This should also apply to goods which incorporate or are inter-connected with digital content or a digital service supplied through a single act of supply. However, where the digital content or digital service incorporated in or inter-connected with the goods is to be supplied continuously over a period of time, the relevant time for the purpose of establishing conformity of that digital content or digital service element should not be one specific moment in time but rather a period of time, starting from the time of delivery. For reasons of legal certainty, that period of time should be equal to the period during which the seller is liable for a lack of conformity.
- (38) This Directive should not regulate the meaning of 'delivery', which should be left to national law, in particular, as regards the question of what the seller has to do in order to fulfil the seller's obligation to deliver the goods. Furthermore, references to the time of delivery in this Directive should be without prejudice to the rules on the passing of risk provided for in Directive 2011/83/EU and accordingly implemented in the law of the Member States.
- (39) Goods with digital elements should be deemed to have been delivered to the consumer when both the physical component of the goods has been delivered and the single act of supply of the digital content or digital service has been performed or the continuous supply of the digital content or digital service over a period of time has begun. This means that the seller should also make the digital content or digital service available or accessible to the consumer in such a way that the digital content or digital service, or any means suitable for downloading or accessing it, has reached the sphere of the consumer and no further action is required by the seller in order to enable the consumer to use the digital content or digital service in accordance with the contract, for example by providing a link or a download option. Therefore, the relevant moment for establishing conformity should be the time when the digital content or digital service is supplied, if the physical component was delivered earlier.

As a result, it can be ensured that there is a uniform starting point for the liability period for the physical component, on the one hand, and for the digital element on the other hand. Moreover, in many cases the consumer is unable to notice a defect in the physical component before the digital content or digital service is supplied.

- (40) Where goods require installation by the seller, the consumer in certain cases is unable to use the goods or notice a defect before the installation has been completed. Accordingly, where, under the sales contract, the goods are to be installed by the seller or under the seller's responsibility, the goods should be considered to be delivered to the consumer when the installation is complete.
- (41) In order to ensure that there is legal certainty for sellers and overall consumer confidence in cross-border purchases, it is necessary to provide for a period during which the consumer is entitled to remedies for any lack of conformity that exists at the relevant time for establishing conformity. Given that when implementing Directive 1999/44/EC, a large majority of Member States have provided for a period of two years, and in practice that period is considered reasonable by market participants, that period should be maintained. The same period should apply in the case of goods with digital elements. However, where the contract provides for continuous supply for more than two years, the consumer should be entitled to remedies for any lack of conformity of the digital content or the digital service that occurs or becomes apparent within the period during which the digital content or digital service is to be supplied under the contract. In order to ensure that there is flexibility for Member States to increase the level of consumer protection in their national law, Member States should be free to provide for longer time limits for the liability of the seller than those laid down in this Directive.
- (42) For reasons of coherence with the existing national legal systems, Member States should be free to provide either that sellers are liable for a lack of conformity that becomes apparent within a specific period of time, possibly coupled with a limitation period, or that consumers' remedies are only subject to a limitation period. In the former case, Member States should ensure that the period for the seller's liability is not circumvented by the limitation period for the consumer's remedies. While this Directive should, therefore, not harmonise the starting point of national limitation periods, it should ensure that such limitation periods do not curtail the consumers' right to exercise their remedies for any lack of conformity which becomes apparent in the period during which the seller is liable for a lack of conformity. In the latter case, Member States should be able to maintain or introduce only a limitation period for the consumer's remedies, without introducing a specific period within which the lack of conformity has to become apparent in order for the seller to be liable. In order to ensure that consumers are equally protected also in such cases, Member States should ensure that where only a limitation period applies, it should still allow consumers to exercise the remedies for any lack of conformity that becomes apparent at least during the period of time provided for in this Directive as a liability period.
- (43) As regards certain aspects, different treatment of second-hand goods could be justifiable. Although a liability or limitation period of two years or more usually reconciles the interests of both the seller and the consumer, this might not be the case with regard to second-hand goods. Member States should, therefore, be allowed to enable the parties to agree on a shortened liability or limitation period for such goods. Leaving this question to a contractual agreement between the parties increases contractual freedom and ensures that the consumer has to be informed both about the nature of the good as a second-hand good, and the shortened liability or limitation period. However, such a contractually agreed period should not be shorter than one year.
- (44) This Directive should not regulate the conditions under which the liability period, as provided for in this Directive, or a limitation period can be suspended or interrupted. Member States should, therefore, be able to provide for the suspension or interruption of the liability period or limitation period, for example in the event of repair, replacement or negotiations between the seller and the consumer with a view to an amicable settlement.
- (45) For a period of one year, or for a period of two years if Member States choose to apply a two-year period, the consumer should only need to prove that the good is not in conformity, without also needing to prove that the lack of conformity actually existed at the relevant time for establishing conformity. In order to rebut the consumer's claim, the seller would need to prove that the lack of conformity did not exist at that time. In addition, in some cases the presumption that the lack of conformity existed at the relevant time for establishing conformity could be incompatible with the nature of the goods or the nature of the lack of conformity. The former could be the case with goods that by nature deteriorate, such as perishable products, for example flowers,

or goods which are only intended for a single use. An example of the latter would be a lack of conformity, which can only be a result of an action by the consumer or of an evident external cause which occurred after the goods were delivered to the consumer. In the case of goods with digital elements where the contract provides for continuous supply of the digital content or digital service, the consumer should not have to prove that the digital content or digital service was not in conformity during the respective period of time for establishing conformity. In order to rebut the consumer's claim, the seller would need to prove that the digital content or digital service was in conformity during that period.

- (46) Member States should be allowed to maintain or introduce provisions stipulating that, in order to benefit from the consumer's rights, the consumer has to inform the seller of a lack of conformity within a period not shorter than two months from the date on which the consumer detected such lack of conformity. Member States should be allowed to ensure that consumers have a higher level of protection, by not introducing such an obligation.
- (47) In order to increase legal certainty and to eliminate one of the major obstacles inhibiting the internal market, this Directive should fully harmonise the remedies available to consumers for lack of conformity of goods, and the conditions under which such remedies can be exercised. In particular, in the event of lack of conformity, consumers should be entitled to have the goods brought into conformity or to receive a proportionate reduction in the price or to terminate the contract.
- (48) As regards bringing goods into conformity, consumers should enjoy a choice between repair or replacement. Enabling consumers to require repair should encourage sustainable consumption and could contribute to greater durability of products. The consumer's choice between repair and replacement should only be limited where the option chosen would be legally or factually impossible or would impose costs on the seller that would be disproportionate, compared to the other option available. For instance, it might be disproportionate to request the replacement of goods because of a minor scratch, where such replacement would create significant costs and the scratch could easily be repaired.
- (49) The seller should be allowed to refuse to bring the goods into conformity if both repair and replacement are impossible, or they would impose disproportionate costs on the seller. The same should apply if either repair or replacement is impossible and the alternative remedy would impose disproportionate costs on the seller. For instance, if goods are located in a place that is different from where they were originally delivered, the costs of postage and carriage could become disproportionate for the seller.
- (50) When a lack of conformity becomes apparent, the consumer should inform the seller about it in order to give the seller the opportunity to bring the good into conformity. The seller should do that within a reasonable period of time. Accordingly, the consumer should not, in principle, be immediately entitled to a price reduction or termination of the contract but should give the seller reasonable time to repair or replace the non-conforming good. If the seller has not repaired or replaced the good within that time, the consumer should be entitled to claim and obtain a price reduction or termination of the contract without waiting any longer.
- (51) If repair or replacement have not provided the consumer with a proper remedy for the lack of conformity, the consumer should be entitled to a price reduction or to terminate the contract. That should be the case, in particular, where the seller has not completed repair or replacement, or where it is clear from the circumstances that the seller will not complete repair or replacement, or the seller has refused to bring the goods into conformity because repair and replacement are impossible or would impose disproportionate costs on the seller.
- (52) In certain situations, it could be justified that the consumer should be entitled to have the price reduced or the contract terminated immediately. Where the seller has taken action to bring the goods into conformity but a lack of conformity becomes apparent subsequently, it should be objectively determined whether the consumer should accept further attempts by the seller to bring the goods into conformity, taking into account all the circumstances of the case, such as the type and the value of the goods, and the nature and the significance of the lack of conformity. In particular, for expensive or complex goods it could be justified to allow the seller another attempt to remedy the lack of conformity. It should also be taken into account whether the consumer can be

expected to maintain confidence in the ability of the seller to bring the goods into conformity or not, for instance, due to the same problem appearing twice. Similarly, in certain situations, the lack of conformity could be of such a serious nature that the consumer cannot maintain confidence in the ability of the seller to bring the goods into conformity, such as where the lack of conformity severely affects the ability of the consumer to make normal use of the goods and the consumer cannot be expected to trust that repair or replacement by the seller would remedy the problem.

- (53) In order to maintain a balance between the rights and obligations of the contracting parties, the consumer should enjoy the right to terminate the contract only in cases where the lack of conformity is not minor.
- (54) Member States should be able to regulate the conditions under which the performance of the debtor can be fulfilled by another person, for example the conditions under which the seller's obligation to repair a good can be performed by the consumer or a third party at the seller's expense.
- (55) In order to protect consumers against the risk of extended delays, any repair or replacement should be successfully completed within a reasonable period of time. What is considered to be a reasonable time for completing a repair or replacement should correspond to the shortest possible time necessary for completing the repair or replacement. That time should be objectively determined by considering the nature and complexity of the goods, the nature and severity of the lack of conformity, and the effort needed to complete repair or replacement. When implementing this Directive, Member States should be able to interpret the notion of reasonable time for completing repair or replacement, by providing for fixed periods that could generally be considered reasonable for repair or replacement, in particular with regard to specific categories of products.
- (56) This Directive should not lay down provisions on where the obligations of a debtor have to be performed. This Directive should, therefore, neither specify the place of delivery, nor prescribe where the repair or replacement should take place; such questions should be left to national law.
- (57) Where the seller brings the good into conformity by replacement, the consumer should not be obliged to pay for the normal use of the goods before they were replaced. The use of the goods should be considered normal if it is in accordance with the nature and purpose of the goods.
- (58) In order to make the right to terminate effective for consumers, in situations where the consumer acquires multiple goods and the lack of conformity only affects some of the goods delivered under the contract, the consumer should have the right to terminate the contract also in relation to the other goods acquired together with the non-conforming goods, even if those other goods are in conformity, if the consumer cannot reasonably be expected to accept to keep only the conforming goods.
- (59) Where the consumer terminates the contract due to the lack of conformity, this Directive should prescribe rules only on the main effects of and modalities for the right of termination, in particular the obligation for the parties to return what they have received. Thus, the seller should be obliged to refund the price received from the consumer and the consumer should return the goods.
- (60) This Directive should not affect the freedom of Member States to regulate the consequences of termination other than those provided for in this Directive, such as the consequences of the decrease of the value of the goods or of their destruction or loss. Member States should also be allowed to regulate the modalities for reimbursement of the price to the consumer, for example the modalities concerning the means to be used for such reimbursement or concerning possible costs and fees incurred as a result of the reimbursement. Member States should, for instance, also have the freedom to provide for certain time limits for the reimbursement of the price or for the return of the goods.
- (61) The principle of the seller's liability for damages is an essential element of sales contracts. Consumers should, therefore, be entitled to claim compensation for any detriment caused by an infringement by the seller of this Directive, including for damage suffered as a consequence of a lack of conformity. Such compensation should put the consumer as much as possible into the position in which the consumer would have been had the goods been in conformity. As the existence of such a right to damages is already ensured in all Member States, this Directive should be without prejudice to national rules on the compensation of consumers for harm resulting from infringement of those rules. Member States should also remain free to regulate consumers' entitlement to compensation for situations in which the repair or replacement caused significant inconvenience or was delayed.

- (62) In order to ensure that there is transparency, certain requirements as regards commercial guarantees should be provided, alongside the pre-contractual information requirements on the existence and conditions of commercial guarantees set out in Directive 2011/83/EU. Moreover, in order to improve legal certainty and to avoid consumers being misled, this Directive should provide that, where commercial guarantee conditions contained in associated advertisements are more favourable to the consumer than those included in the guarantee statement, the more advantageous conditions should prevail. Finally, this Directive should provide rules on the content of the guarantee statement and on the way it should be made available to consumers. For instance, the guarantee statement should include the terms of the commercial guarantee and state that the legal guarantee of conformity is unaffected by the commercial guarantee, making it clear that the commercial guarantee terms constitute an undertaking that is additional to the legal guarantee of conformity. Member States should be free to lay down rules on other aspects of commercial guarantees not covered by this Directive, for example on associating debtors other than the guarantor with the commercial guarantee, provided that those rules do not deprive consumers of the protection afforded to them by the fully harmonised provisions of this Directive on commercial guarantees. While Member States should remain free to require that commercial guarantees be provided free of charge, they should ensure that any undertaking by the seller or the producer which falls under the definition of commercial guarantees as set out in this Directive complies with the harmonised rules of this Directive.
- (63) Considering that the seller is liable towards the consumer for any lack of conformity of the goods resulting from an act or omission of the seller or a third party, the seller should be able to pursue remedies against the person responsible in previous links of the chain of transactions. Such remedies should include those for a lack of conformity which results from the omission of an update, including a security update, which would have been necessary to keep the good with digital elements in conformity. However, this Directive should not affect the principle of freedom of contract between the seller and other parties in the chain of transactions. The details for exercising that right, in particular against whom and how such remedies are to be pursued and whether the remedies are of a mandatory nature, should be provided by the Member States. The question as to whether the consumer can also raise a claim directly against a person in previous links of the chain of transactions should not be regulated by this Directive, except in cases where a producer offers the consumer a commercial guarantee for the goods.
- (64) Persons or organisations regarded under national law as having a legitimate interest in protecting consumer contractual rights should be afforded the right to initiate proceedings, either before a court or before an administrative authority which is competent to decide upon complaints or to initiate appropriate legal proceedings.
- (65) Nothing in this Directive should prejudice the application of rules of private international law, in particular Regulation (EC) No 593/2008 and Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁷⁾.
- (66) Directive 1999/44/EC should be repealed. The date of repeal should be aligned with the transposition date of this Directive. In order to ensure that the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary for Member States to comply with this Directive are applied in a uniform manner to contracts concluded from the transposition date onwards, this Directive should not apply to contracts concluded before its transposition date.
- (67) The Annex to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁸⁾ should be amended to include a reference to this Directive so as to facilitate cross-border cooperation on enforcement of this Directive.
- (68) Annex I to Directive 2009/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁹⁾ should be amended to include a reference to this Directive so as to ensure that the collective interests of consumers laid down in this Directive are protected.
- (69) In accordance with the Joint Political Declaration of 28 September 2011 of Member States and the Commission on explanatory documents ⁽¹⁰⁾, Member States have undertaken to accompany, in justified cases, the notification of their transposition measures with one or more documents explaining the relationship between the components of a directive and the corresponding parts of national transposition instruments. With regard to this Directive, the legislator considers the transmission of such documents to be justified.

⁽⁷⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (OJ L 351, 20.12.2012, p. 1).

⁽⁸⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 1).

⁽⁹⁾ Directive 2009/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on injunctions for the protection of consumers' interests (OJ L 110, 1.5.2009, p. 30).

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 369, 17.12.2011, p. 14.

- (70) Since the objective of this Directive, namely to contribute to the functioning of the internal market by tackling in a consistent manner contract law-related obstacles for the cross-border sales of goods in the Union, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, due to the fact that each Member State individually is not in a position to tackle the existing fragmented legal framework by ensuring the coherence of its law with the laws of other Member States, but can rather, by removing the principal contract law-related obstacles through full harmonisation, be better achieved at Union level, the Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Directive does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve this objective.
- (71) It is appropriate for the Commission to review the application of this Directive five years after its entry into force, including in particular the provisions regarding remedies, the burden of proof – also with respect to second-hand goods as well as goods sold at public auctions – and the producer's commercial guarantee of durability. The Commission should also assess whether the application of this Directive and of Directive (EU) 2019/770 ensures a consistent and coherent legal framework with regard to the supply of digital content or digital services and goods with digital elements.
- (72) This Directive respects the fundamental rights and freedoms and observes the principles recognised in particular by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including those enshrined in Articles 16, 38 and 47 thereof,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

Subject matter and purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market while providing for a high level of consumer protection, by laying down common rules on certain requirements concerning sales contracts concluded between sellers and consumers, in particular rules on the conformity of goods with the contract, remedies in the event of a lack of such conformity, the modalities for the exercise of those remedies, and on commercial guarantees.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions apply:

- (1) 'sales contract' means any contract under which the seller transfers or undertakes to transfer ownership of goods to a consumer, and the consumer pays or undertakes to pay the price thereof;
- (2) 'consumer' means any natural person who, in relation to contracts covered by this Directive, is acting for purposes which are outside that person's trade, business, craft or profession;
- (3) 'seller' means any natural person or any legal person, irrespective of whether privately or publicly owned, that is acting, including through any other person acting in that natural or legal person's name or on that person's behalf, for purposes relating to that person's trade, business, craft or profession, in relation to contracts covered by this Directive;
- (4) 'producer' means a manufacturer of goods, an importer of goods into the Union or any person purporting to be a producer by placing its name, trade mark or other distinctive sign on the goods;
- (5) 'goods' means:
 - (a) any tangible movable items; water, gas and electricity are to be considered as goods within the meaning of this Directive where they are put up for sale in a limited volume or a set quantity;
 - (b) any tangible movable items that incorporate or are inter-connected with digital content or a digital service in such a way that the absence of that digital content or digital service would prevent the goods from performing their functions ('goods with digital elements');
- (6) 'digital content' means data which are produced and supplied in digital form;

- (7) 'digital service' means:
- (a) a service that allows the consumer to create, process, store or access data in digital form; or
 - (b) a service that allows the sharing of or any other interaction with data in digital form uploaded or created by the consumer or other users of that service;
- (8) 'compatibility' means the ability of the goods to function with hardware or software with which goods of the same type are normally used, without the need to convert the goods, hardware or software;
- (9) 'functionality' means the ability of the goods to perform their functions having regard to their purpose;
- (10) 'interoperability' means the ability of the goods to function with hardware or software different from those with which goods of the same type are normally used;
- (11) 'durable medium' means any instrument which enables the consumer or the seller to store information addressed personally to that person in a way that is accessible for future reference, for a period of time adequate for the purposes of the information, and which allows the unchanged reproduction of the information stored;
- (12) 'commercial guarantee' means any undertaking by the seller or a producer (the guarantor) to the consumer, in addition to the seller's legal obligation relating to the guarantee of conformity, to reimburse the price paid or to replace, repair or service goods in any way if they do not meet the specifications or any other requirements not related to conformity set out in the guarantee statement or in the relevant advertising available at the time of, or before the conclusion of the contract;
- (13) 'durability' means the ability of the goods to maintain their required functions and performance through normal use;
- (14) 'free of charge' means free of the necessary costs incurred in order to bring the goods into conformity, particularly the cost of postage, carriage, labour or materials;
- (15) 'public auction' means a method of sale where goods or services are offered by the seller to consumers, who attend or are given the possibility to attend the auction in person, through a transparent, competitive bidding procedure run by an auctioneer and where the successful bidder is bound to purchase the goods or services.

Article 3

Scope

1. This Directive shall apply to sales contracts between a consumer and a seller.
2. Contracts between a consumer and a seller for the supply of goods to be manufactured or produced shall also be deemed sales contracts for the purpose of this Directive.
3. This Directive shall not apply to contracts for the supply of digital content or digital services. It shall, however, apply to digital content or digital services which are incorporated in or inter-connected with goods in the meaning of point (5)(b) of Article 2, and are provided with the goods under the sales contract, irrespective of whether such digital content or digital service is supplied by the seller or by a third party. In the event of doubt as to whether the supply of incorporated or inter-connected digital content or an incorporated or inter-connected digital service forms part of the sales contract, the digital content or digital service shall be presumed to be covered by the sales contract.
4. This Directive shall not apply to:
 - (a) any tangible medium which serves exclusively as a carrier for digital content; or
 - (b) any goods sold by way of execution or otherwise by authority of law.

5. Member States may exclude from the scope of this Directive contracts for the sale of:

- (a) second-hand goods sold at public auction; and
- (b) living animals.

In the case referred to in point (a), clear and comprehensive information that the rights deriving from this Directive do not apply shall be made easily available to consumers.

6. This Directive shall not affect the freedom of Member States to regulate aspects of general contract law, such as rules on the formation, validity, nullity or effects of contracts, including the consequences of the termination of a contract, in so far as they are not regulated in this Directive, or the right to damages.

7. This Directive shall not affect the freedom of Member States to allow consumers to choose a specific remedy, if the lack of conformity of the goods becomes apparent within a period after delivery, not exceeding 30 days. In addition, this Directive shall not affect national rules not specific to consumer contracts providing for specific remedies for certain types of defects that were not apparent at the time of conclusion of the sales contract.

Article 4

Level of harmonisation

Member States shall not maintain or introduce, in their national law, provisions diverging from those laid down in this Directive, including more, or less, stringent provisions to ensure a different level of consumer protection, unless otherwise provided for in this Directive.

Article 5

Conformity of goods

The seller shall deliver goods to the consumer that meet the requirements set out in Articles 6, 7 and 8, where applicable, without prejudice to Article 9.

Article 6

Subjective requirements for conformity

In order to conform with the sales contract, the goods shall, in particular, where applicable:

- (a) be of the description, type, quantity and quality, and possess the functionality, compatibility, interoperability and other features, as required by the sales contract;
- (b) be fit for any particular purpose for which the consumer requires them and which the consumer made known to the seller at the latest at the time of the conclusion of the sales contract, and in respect of which the seller has given acceptance;
- (c) be delivered with all accessories and instructions, including on installation, as stipulated by the sales contract; and
- (d) be supplied with updates as stipulated by the sales contract.

Article 7

Objective requirements for conformity

1. In addition to complying with any subjective requirement for conformity, the goods shall:

- (a) be fit for the purposes for which goods of the same type would normally be used, taking into account, where applicable, any existing Union and national law, technical standards or, in the absence of such technical standards, applicable sector-specific industry codes of conduct;
- (b) where applicable, be of the quality and correspond to the description of a sample or model that the seller made available to the consumer before the conclusion of the contract;

- (c) where applicable, be delivered along with such accessories, including packaging, installation instructions or other instructions, as the consumer may reasonably expect to receive; and
 - (d) be of the quantity and possess the qualities and other features, including in relation to durability, functionality, compatibility and security normal for goods of the same type and which the consumer may reasonably expect given the nature of the goods and taking into account any public statement made by or on behalf of the seller, or other persons in previous links of the chain of transactions, including the producer, particularly in advertising or on labelling.
2. The seller shall not be bound by public statements, as referred to in point (d) of paragraph 1 if the seller shows that:
- (a) the seller was not, and could not reasonably have been, aware of the public statement in question;
 - (b) by the time of conclusion of the contract, the public statement had been corrected in the same way as, or in a way comparable to how, it had been made; or
 - (c) the decision to buy the goods could not have been influenced by the public statement.
3. In the case of goods with digital elements, the seller shall ensure that the consumer is informed of and supplied with updates, including security updates, that are necessary to keep those goods in conformity, for the period of time:
- (a) that the consumer may reasonably expect given the type and purpose of the goods and the digital elements, and taking into account the circumstances and nature of the contract, where the sales contract provides for a single act of supply of the digital content or digital service; or
 - (b) indicated in Article 10(2) or (5), as applicable, where the sales contract provides for a continuous supply of the digital content or digital service over a period of time.
4. Where the consumer fails to install within a reasonable time updates supplied in accordance with paragraph 3, the seller shall not be liable for any lack of conformity resulting solely from the lack of the relevant update, provided that:
- (a) the seller informed the consumer about the availability of the update and the consequences of the failure of the consumer to install it; and
 - (b) the failure of the consumer to install or the incorrect installation by the consumer of the update was not due to shortcomings in the installation instructions provided to the consumer.
5. There shall be no lack of conformity within the meaning of paragraph 1 or 3 if, at the time of the conclusion of the sales contract, the consumer was specifically informed that a particular characteristic of the goods was deviating from the objective requirements for conformity laid down in paragraph 1 or 3 and the consumer expressly and separately accepted that deviation when concluding the sales contract.

Article 8

Incorrect installation of the goods

Any lack of conformity resulting from the incorrect installation of the goods shall be regarded as lack of conformity of the goods, if:

- (a) the installation forms part of the sales contract and was carried out by the seller or under the seller's responsibility; or
- (b) the installation, intended to be carried out by the consumer, was done by the consumer and the incorrect installation was due to shortcomings in the installation instructions provided by the seller or, in the case of goods with digital elements, provided by the seller or by the supplier of the digital content or digital service.

*Article 9***Third-party rights**

Where a restriction resulting from a violation of any right of a third party, in particular intellectual property rights, prevents or limits the use of the goods in accordance with Articles 6 and 7, Member States shall ensure that the consumer is entitled to the remedies for lack of conformity provided for in Article 13, unless national law provides for the nullity or rescission of the sales contract in such cases.

*Article 10***Liability of the seller**

1. The seller shall be liable to the consumer for any lack of conformity which exists at the time when the goods were delivered and which becomes apparent within two years of that time. Without prejudice to Article 7(3), this paragraph shall also apply to goods with digital elements.
2. In the case of goods with digital elements, where the sales contract provides for a continuous supply of the digital content or digital service over a period of time, the seller shall also be liable for any lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service that occurs or becomes apparent within two years of the time when the goods with digital elements were delivered. Where the contract provides for a continuous supply for more than two years, the seller shall be liable for any lack of conformity of the digital content or digital service that occurs or becomes apparent within the period of time during which the digital content or digital service is to be supplied under the sales contract.
3. Member States may maintain or introduce longer time limits than those referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.
4. If, under national law, the remedies provided for in Article 13 are also subject to a limitation period, Member States shall ensure that such limitation period allows the consumer to exercise the remedies laid down in Article 13 for any lack of conformity for which the seller is liable pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, and which becomes apparent within the period of time referred to in those paragraphs.
5. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, Member States may maintain or introduce only a limitation period for the remedies provided for in Article 13. Member States shall ensure that such limitation period allows the consumer to exercise the remedies laid down in Article 13 for any lack of conformity for which the seller is liable pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, and which becomes apparent during the period of time referred to in those paragraphs.
6. Member States may provide that, in the case of second-hand goods, the seller and the consumer can agree to contractual terms or agreements with a shorter liability or limitation period than those referred to in paragraphs 1, 2 and 5, provided that such shorter periods shall not be less than one year.

*Article 11***Burden of proof**

1. Any lack of conformity which becomes apparent within one year of the time when the goods were delivered shall be presumed to have existed at the time when the goods were delivered, unless proved otherwise or unless this presumption is incompatible with the nature of the goods or with the nature of the lack of conformity. This paragraph shall also apply to goods with digital elements.
2. Instead of the one-year period laid down in paragraph 1, Member States may maintain or introduce a period of two years from the time when the goods were delivered.
3. In the case of goods with digital elements where the sales contract provides for the continuous supply of the digital content or digital service over a period of time, the burden of proof with regard to whether the digital content or digital service was in conformity within the period of time referred to in Article 10(2) shall be on the seller for a lack of conformity which becomes apparent within the period of time referred to in that Article.

*Article 12***Obligation to notify**

Member States may maintain or introduce provisions stipulating that, in order to benefit from the consumer's rights, the consumer has to inform the seller of a lack of conformity within a period of at least 2 months of the date on which the consumer detected such lack of conformity.

*Article 13***Remedies for lack of conformity**

1. In the event of a lack of conformity, the consumer shall be entitled to have the goods brought into conformity or to receive a proportionate reduction in the price, or to terminate the contract, under the conditions set out in this Article.
2. In order to have the goods brought into conformity, the consumer may choose between repair and replacement, unless the remedy chosen would be impossible or, compared to the other remedy, would impose costs on the seller that would be disproportionate, taking into account all circumstances, including:
 - (a) the value the goods would have if there were no lack of conformity;
 - (b) the significance of the lack of conformity; and
 - (c) whether the alternative remedy could be provided without significant inconvenience to the consumer.
3. The seller may refuse to bring the goods into conformity if repair and replacement are impossible or would impose costs on the seller that would be disproportionate, taking into account all circumstances including those mentioned in points (a) and (b) of paragraph 2.
4. The consumer shall be entitled to either a proportionate reduction of the price in accordance with Article 15 or the termination of the sales contract in accordance with Article 16 in any of the following cases:
 - (a) the seller has not completed repair or replacement or, where applicable, has not completed repair or replacement in accordance with Article 14(2) and (3), or the seller has refused to bring the goods into conformity in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article;
 - (b) a lack of conformity appears despite the seller having attempted to bring the goods into conformity;
 - (c) the lack of conformity is of such a serious nature as to justify an immediate price reduction or termination of the sales contract; or
 - (d) the seller has declared, or it is clear from the circumstances, that the seller will not bring the goods into conformity within a reasonable time, or without significant inconvenience for the consumer.
5. The consumer shall not be entitled to terminate the contract if the lack of conformity is only minor. The burden of proof with regard to whether the lack of conformity is minor shall be on the seller.
6. The consumer shall have the right to withhold payment of any outstanding part of the price or a part thereof until the seller has fulfilled the seller's obligations under this Directive. Member States may determine the conditions and modalities for the consumer to exercise the right to withhold the payment.
7. Member States may regulate whether and to what extent a contribution of the consumer to the lack of conformity affects the consumer's right to remedies.

*Article 14***Repair or replacement of the goods**

1. Repairs or replacements shall be carried out:
 - (a) free of charge;
 - (b) within a reasonable period of time from the moment the seller has been informed by the consumer about the lack of conformity; and
 - (c) without any significant inconvenience to the consumer, taking into account the nature of the goods and the purpose for which the consumer required the goods.

2. Where the lack of conformity is to be remedied by repair or replacement of the goods, the consumer shall make the goods available to the seller. The seller shall take back the replaced goods at the seller's expense.
3. Where a repair requires the removal of goods that had been installed in a manner consistent with their nature and purpose before the lack of conformity became apparent, or where such goods are to be replaced, the obligation to repair or replace the goods shall include the removal of the non-conforming goods, and the installation of replacement goods or repaired goods, or bearing the costs of that removal and installation.
4. The consumer shall not be liable to pay for normal use made of the replaced goods during the period prior to their replacement.

Article 15

Price reduction

The reduction of price shall be proportionate to the decrease in the value of the goods which were received by the consumer compared to the value the goods would have if they were in conformity.

Article 16

Termination of the sales contract

1. The consumer shall exercise the right to terminate the sales contract by means of a statement to the seller expressing the decision to terminate the sales contract.
2. Where the lack of conformity relates to only some of the goods delivered under the sales contract and there is a ground for termination of the sales contract pursuant to Article 13, the consumer may terminate the sales contract only in relation to those goods, and in relation to any other goods which the consumer acquired together with the non-conforming goods if the consumer cannot reasonably be expected to accept to keep only the conforming goods.
3. Where the consumer terminates a sales contract as a whole or, in accordance with paragraph 2, in relation to some of the goods delivered under the sales contract:
 - (a) the consumer shall return to the seller, at the seller's expense, the goods; and
 - (b) the seller shall reimburse to the consumer the price paid for the goods upon receipt of the goods or of evidence provided by the consumer of having sent back the goods.

For the purposes of this paragraph, Member States may determine the modalities for return and reimbursement.

Article 17

Commercial guarantees

1. Any commercial guarantee shall be binding on the guarantor under the conditions laid down in the commercial guarantee statement and associated advertising available at the time, or before the conclusion, of the contract. Under the conditions laid down in this Article and without prejudice to any other applicable provisions of Union or national law, where a producer offers to the consumer a commercial guarantee of durability for certain goods for a certain period of time, the producer shall be liable directly to the consumer, during the entire period of the commercial guarantee of durability for repair or replacement of the goods in accordance with Article 14. The producer may offer to the consumer more favourable conditions in the commercial guarantee of durability statement.

If the conditions laid out in the commercial guarantee statement are less advantageous to the consumer than those laid down in the associated advertising, the commercial guarantee shall be binding under the conditions laid down in the advertising relating to the commercial guarantee, unless, before the conclusion of the contract, the associated advertising was corrected in the same way or in a comparable way to that in which it was made.

2. The commercial guarantee statement shall be provided to the consumer on a durable medium at the latest at the time of the delivery of the goods. The commercial guarantee statement shall be expressed in plain, intelligible language. It shall include the following:

- (a) a clear statement that the consumer is entitled by law to remedies from the seller free of charge in the event of a lack of conformity of the goods and that those remedies are not affected by the commercial guarantee;
- (b) the name and address of the guarantor;
- (c) the procedure to be followed by the consumer to obtain the implementation of the commercial guarantee;
- (d) the designation of the goods to which the commercial guarantee applies; and
- (e) the terms of the commercial guarantee.

3. Non-compliance with paragraph 2 shall not affect the binding nature of the commercial guarantee for the guarantor.

4. Member States may lay down rules on other aspects concerning commercial guarantees which are not regulated in this Article, including rules on the language or languages in which the commercial guarantee statement is to be made available to the consumer.

Article 18

Right of redress

Where the seller is liable to the consumer because of a lack of conformity resulting from an act or omission, including omitting to provide updates to goods with digital elements in accordance with Article 7(3), by a person in previous links of the chain of transactions, the seller shall be entitled to pursue remedies against the person or persons liable in the chain of transactions. The person against whom the seller may pursue remedies and the relevant actions and conditions of exercise, shall be determined by national law.

Article 19

Enforcement

1. Member States shall ensure that adequate and effective means exist to ensure compliance with this Directive.

2. The means referred to in paragraph 1 shall include provisions whereby one or more of the following bodies, as determined by national law, may take action under national law before the courts or before the competent administrative bodies to ensure that the national provisions transposing this Directive are applied:

- (a) public bodies or their representatives;
- (b) consumer organisations having a legitimate interest in protecting consumers;
- (c) professional organisations having a legitimate interest in acting.

Article 20

Consumer information

Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that information on the rights of consumers under this Directive, and on the means to enforce those rights, are available to consumers.

Article 21

Mandatory nature

1. Unless otherwise provided for in this Directive, any contractual agreement which, to the detriment of the consumer, excludes the application of national measures transposing this Directive, derogates from them, or varies their effect, before the lack of conformity of the goods is brought to the seller's attention by the consumer, shall not be binding on the consumer.

2. This Directive shall not prevent the seller from offering to the consumer contractual arrangements that go beyond the protection provided for in this Directive.

Article 22

Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC

(1) In the Annex to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394, point 3 is replaced by the following:

‘3. Directive (EU) 2019/771 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the sale of goods, amending Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC and repealing Directive 1999/44/EC (OJ L 136, 22.5.2019, p. 28).’;

(2) In Annex I to Directive 2009/22/EC, point 7 is replaced by the following:

‘7. Directive (EU) 2019/771 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the sale of goods, amending Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC and repealing Directive 1999/44/EC (OJ L 136, 22.5.2019, p. 28).’.

Article 23

Repeal of Directive 1999/44/EC

Directive 1999/44/EC is repealed with effect from 1 January 2022.

References to the repealed Directive shall be construed as references to this Directive and shall be read in accordance with the correlation table set out in Annex.

Article 24

Transposition

1. By 1 July 2021 Member States shall adopt and publish the measures necessary to comply with this Directive. They shall immediately inform the Commission thereof.

They shall apply those measures from 1 January 2022.

When Member States adopt those measures, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or be accompanied by such a reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by Member States.

Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of the measures of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

2. The provisions of this Directive shall not apply to contracts concluded before 1 January 2022.

Article 25

Review

The Commission shall, not later than 12 June 2024, review the application of this Directive, including its provisions on remedies and burden of proof — also with respect to second-hand goods as well as goods sold at public auctions — and the producer’s commercial guarantee of durability, and submit a report to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee. The report shall assess in particular whether the application of this Directive and Directive (EU) 2019/770 ensures a consistent and coherent framework for the proper functioning of the internal market with regard to the supply of digital content, digital services and goods with digital elements in line with principles governing Union policies. The report shall be accompanied, where appropriate, by legislative proposals.

Article 26

Entry into force

This Directive shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

However, Article 22 shall apply from 1 January 2022.

*Article 27***Addressees**

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 20 May 2019.

For the European Parliament

The President

A. TAJANI

For the Council

The President

G. CIAMBA

ANNEX

CORRELATION TABLE

Directive 1999/44/EC	This Directive
Article 1(1)	Article 1
Article 1(2)(a)	Article 2, point (2)
Article 1(2)(b), first indent	Article 3(4)(b)
Article 1(2)(b), second and third indents	Article 2, point (5)(a)
Article 1(2)(c)	Article 2, point (3)
Article 1(2)(d)	Article 2, point (4)
Article 1(2)(e)	Article 2, point (12)
Article 1(3)	Article 2, point (15) and Article 3(5)(a)
Article 1(4)	Article 3(2)
Article 2(1)	Article 5
Article 2(2)(a)	Article 6, point (a) and Article 7(1)(b)
Article 2(2)(b)	Article 6, point (b)
Article 2(2)(c)	Article 7(1)(a)
Article 2(2)(d)	Article 7(1)(d)
Article 2(3)	Article 7(5)
Article 2(4)	Article 7(2)
Article 2(5)	Article 8
Article 3(1)	Article 10(1)
Article 3(2)	Article 13(1)
Article 3(3), first subparagraph	Article 13(2) and Article 14(1)(a)
Article 3(3), second subparagraph	Article 13(2)
Article 3(3), third subparagraph	Article 14(1)(b) and (c)
Article 3(4)	Article 2, point (14)
Article 3(5)	Article 13(4)
Article 3(6)	Article 13(5)
Article 4	Article 18
Article 5(1)	Article 10(1), (2), (3), (4) and (5)
Article 5(2)	Article 12
Article 5(3)	Article 11
Article 6(1)	Article 17(1)

Directive 1999/44/EC	This Directive
Article 6(2)	Article 17(2)
Article 6(3)	Article 17(2)
Article 6(4)	Article 17(4)
Article 6(5)	Article 17(3)
Article 7(1), first subparagraph	Article 21(1)
Article 7(1), second subparagraph	Article 10(6)
Article 7(2)	—
Article 8(1)	Article 3(6) and (7)
Article 8(2)	Article 4
Article 9	Articles 19 and 20
Article 10	Article 22
Article 11(1), first subparagraph	Article 24(1), first subparagraph
Article 11(1), second subparagraph	Article 24(1), third subparagraph
Article 11(2)	Article 24(1), fourth subparagraph
Article 12	Article 25
Article 13	Article 26
Article 14	Article 27

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