



V4Consumers: educating the next generation of consumer advocates

11 – 13 March 2026
Bratislava, Slovakia

- supported by
- Visegrad Fund
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Smart Consumer Institute

The project is organised by the [Smart Consumer Institute](#), a Slovak consumer organisation and think tank. The Institute is a member of Consumers International, the largest global consumer membership organization, representing over 200 members from over 100 countries for more than 60 years.

The project is co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from the [International Visegrad Fund](#). The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

Description, aims and objectives

The primary objective of this project is to strengthen consumer advocacy at a systemic level, to help organisations shape the policies that define the consumer environment. While many consumer organisations can effectively identify issues, they often lack the tools to turn this expertise into strategic advocacy that influences lawmakers, regulators and public opinion.

To address this, the project will deliver a three-day capacity-building seminar in Bratislava for 16 participants – the next generation of consumer advocates from Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Georgia. The seminar will be held in cooperation with government officials and leading experts in public affairs, media, and community outreach. It will include seven workshops focused on practical advocacy skills:

- Monitoring policy and legislative processes
- Stakeholder mapping and navigating the policy environment
- Petitions and public consultations
- Coalition building
- Direct engagement with policymakers and key opinion leaders
- Media engagement
- Social media, YouTube, and influencer outreach

Upon completion, participants will know how to frame messages, secure media coverage, and turn public attention into policy change. This will enable them to operate with greater influence, stronger public presence, and higher effectiveness within their organisations.

Preliminary Timetable

Time/date	11/03/2026	12/03/2026	13/03/2026
9:00-10:00	Arrival	Breakfast	Breakfast
10:00 – 11:30		Social Media, YouTube, and Influencer Outreach // Tomáš Medved' (Assistant to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Financial Affairs Committee)	Advocacy and Coalition Building // Erik Szedely (Project Manager at the European Public Policy Partnership)
11:30 – 12:00		Coffee Break	Coffee Break
12:00 – 13:30		Media Engagement // Patrícia Medved' Macíková (Spokesperson of the President of the Slovak Republic)	Petitions and Public Consultations // Filip Kužma (Director of the Smart Consumer Institute)
13:30 – 15:00		Lunch (two options: meat-based and vegetarian)	Lunch (two options: meat-based and vegetarian)
15:00 – 16:30	Introduction	Direct Engagement with Policymakers and Key Opinion Leaders // Boris Kučera (Director at CEC GROUP Bratislava)	Departure
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
17:00 – 18:30	Democratic backsliding in Georgia: advocacy tools and insights (case study) // Tamuna Manvelishvili (UNOPS)	Stakeholder Mapping and Navigating the Policy Environment // Andrea Ďuricová (Public Affairs Consultant at FIPRA Slovakia)	
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner // SOHO Laurinská	Dinner // Štefánka by Pulitzer	

Participants

- **Target Group:** Young consumer advocates under the age of 35.
- **Profile:** Interested in developing knowledge and practical skills in consumer advocacy.
- **Selection:** Directly chosen by local partner organisations, prioritising individuals already engaged within their organisation or partner networks.
- **Purpose:** Strengthen internal capacities and enhance inter-partner cooperation.

The project is open to 16 people from 4 countries (4 participants per country – Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Georgia).

Accommodation

Participants will be accommodated at the [ARCADIA Boutique Hotel](#), located in the historical centre of Bratislava.

- A room will be reserved for each participant.
- Participants who wish to share a double room with another participant may do so.
- For participants arriving earlier or staying longer, the room rate is €105 per night (+ city tax), including breakfast (subject to availability).

To ensure logistical convenience, all seminars and workshops will take place in the hotel's conference rooms.

Meals

- Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and coffee breaks will be provided.
- All meals will accommodate food intolerances and special dietary requirements.
- Participants will be sent a questionnaire to indicate any food intolerances and special dietary requirements.

Travel Options & Costs

Participants may choose their preferred mode of travel, within the following maximum budgets:

- **Slovakia:** 30€ per person
- **Hungary:** 65€ per person
- **Czechia:** 65€ per person
- **Georgia:** 350€ per person

Travel by personal car is possible. Fuel costs will be reimbursed up to the applicable budget. Where multiple participants carpool, their individual budgets may be combined. Parking is available in a [garage near the hotel](#) (€4.90 per hour / €30 per 24 hours) and may be reimbursed, within the applicable budget.

For participants from Georgia:

- **Flights:** For travel to Bratislava, we suggest a direct Wizz Air flight from Kutaisi Airport (KUT) to Bratislava Airport (BTS) on 11 March 2026, departing at 6:00. For the return journey to Georgia, we do not provide a specific recommendation, as the direct flight on 13 March 2026 departs very early in the morning, before the project concludes. Participants may choose to extend their stay, in which case a direct return flight on Monday can be reimbursed, or they may return via Vienna with a connecting flight.
- **Transfer from Bratislava:** The journey from central Bratislava to Vienna Airport takes under 1 hour by coaches operated by Slovak Lines, RegioJet or FlixBus.

Note: The travel itinerary must be approved before purchasing tickets.

Event Manager

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