

Delivering Collective Forms of Redress for Consumers

Professor Chris Hodges

Professor Chris Hodges is Professor of Justice Systems, Supernumerary Fellow of Wolfson College, and Head of the Swiss Re/CMS Research Programme on Civil Justice Systems at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. His work concerns regulation and redress systems.



There has been considerable interest in collective redress for some decades, particularly in the context of consumer protection at the European Union (EU) and at the individual Member State levels. To a large extent, current research explores the advantages and disadvantages of private enforcement mechanisms, which are otherwise referred to as class actions, collective actions, representative actions or, in England and Wales, the Group Litigation Order. However, Professor Hodges' work with many regulatory authorities and consumer Ombudsmen has demonstrated that other mechanisms exist for delivering redress to consumers.

Professor Hodges recently completed a major review of all main types of delivering collective redress across Europe, together with Professor Stefaan Voet of Leuven University and coordinating a large number of academics and lawyers from many member States. This review demonstrated that 'regulatory redress' and Ombudsmen deliver redress far more effectively, quickly and cheaply than litigation-based mechanisms.

These findings have been referred to in prominent political discussions, debates, and fora across Brussels, London, Switzerland and Brazil. Most notably, Professor Hodges' work has been cited in Australia where there is a lively class action industry. Professor Hodges provided information to the President of the Australian Law Reform Commission, Justice Sarah Derrington, who incorporated his research in her Report cited Interim and Final Report on Class Actions and Litigation Funding of the Australian Law Reform Commission. Professor Hodges continues to lead important discussions on delivering collective redress to consumers, tenants, small businesses and others.