COnsumer BEhaviouR Erasmus Network (COBEREN) is a network developed to investigate consumption culture, consumer behaviour, and the linkage of the two concepts in 30 countries in Europe. In this project, the similarities and differences in the European countries are also highlighted.

The knowledge of consumer behaviour is of great relevance from both an economic and civic point of view. COBEREN research provides an urgently required pool of knowledge on consumer behaviour that allows the firms, public organisations, and other associations to take appropriate corporate decisions in the European market. Currently, this knowledge seems to be neither fully organized nor clearly disseminated in Europe.

The absence of a general framework for consumer behaviour analysis compounds the issues encountered when dealing with the subject of cross-cultural consumer behaviour. That absence in turn prevents the comparison of local studies because of the different methodologies applied. As a result, anyone requiring data on consumer behaviour will encounter contradictions and inconsistencies, and a lack of a general pool of knowledge obscures a general reliable view of the market – something which is seen as a vital precondition for economic decisions.

Moreover, a crucially important point in this discipline is the analysis of the cultural basis of the similarities and differences in consumer behaviour in the different countries. Currently, there are no studies relating culture and consumption. The COBEREN study redresses this imbalance by working with a representative sample and encompassing as many as 30 countries, to offer a basis for regular future updates.

Consequently, the aim of COBEREN is to provide academics and the industry with the knowledge needed to better understand this scenario. The network has already provided a report describing the profile of each of the 30 participating European countries that contributes information on: demography and education, society, economy and industry, health, values, personal characteristics, satisfaction and importance, consumption patterns, value of food basket, leisure time, and media consumption. Similarities and differences among the profiles have been also developed and highlighted.
About COBEREN

As already mentioned, COBEREN’s aim is to analyse consumption culture and consumer behaviour in Europe. In the first three years of COBEREN’s existence, we have analysed the behaviour of the consumers in the drinking sector in-depth. The aim of the network is to continuously extend the field of analysis and periodically analyse consumer behaviour in a different sector. In that sense, this book is one of the outputs of this analysis, which we believe will be of use to:

• **Academia:** Diverse higher education sectors in Europe will benefit from the pool of knowledge created on consumer behaviour and the role of culture in it. The project will therefore contribute to disciplines such as marketing, international management, economics, or those involving culture.

• **Students:** Undergraduate and postgraduate students will benefit from the improved knowledge base provided by this research and the updated material that will be an output of it.

• **Firms and Public Organizations:** Given the increasing importance of globalization and segmentation, appropriate knowledge about the market is required to make strategic and tactical decisions.

From a sustainability perspective, it is the purpose of this network to develop an Institute of Consumer Behaviour Study where all this knowledge can be regularly gathered, updated and disseminated to the different interested agents: academics, students, professionals, and society.

To succeed in this project, the network is composed of experts (and their research groups) from 30 countries, with remarkable experience in the fields of consumer behaviour, market research, statistics, and international marketing.

The COBEREN website (www.coberen.eu) offers more information about the network and its work.