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The European Green Deal: what consumers expect from it

Today, the European Commission will present its European Green Deal – the EU’s plans to take action against climate change. The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) strongly believes that policies to fight climate change must reflect the reality of consumers’ everyday lives as a starting point.

This means that if the EU is serious about combatting climate change, it needs to make it significantly easier for consumers to lead sustainable lives. BEUC has identified four priority areas where helping consumers to live more sustainably can have a positive impact on the climate:

- **Mobility:** the shift from fossil fuel vehicles to electric cars and better public transport needs to be accelerated. This means consumers must have real alternatives to carbon-heavy forms of transport at hand.
- **Housing:** buildings account for the largest share of energy consumption in the EU. It needs to become simpler and more affordable for both owners and tenants to make their houses energy efficient.
- **Food:** it must become easier, more affordable and attractive to eat food that is produced in a sustainable way. This will require action as regards how and what kind of food is being produced.
- **Finance:** it must become more affordable to take out (responsible) green loans to purchase energy-efficient heating devices and switch to less polluting cars. More and better value offers must be made available to consumers for green savings and investments.

Monique Goyens, Director General from BEUC, comments:

“All consumers can play a role in preventing our planet from collapsing. But this means that the EU needs to propose policies which support them make the switch to a sustainable lifestyle.

“Through real alternatives to fossil fuel cars, by changing food production and consumption so it is more in line with our planet’s resources, or by making it easier to retrofit our homes, the EU can make a huge difference for consumers. But it will require courage to address flaws in the way the building, finance, transport and food sectors currently work.

“The EU needs to have all households in mind when devising its measures to fight climate change, especially the less affluent ones. Policies to support low-carbon driving or better insulating homes need to be affordable for everyone.

“From health threats to extended heat waves, rising food prices due to reduced supplies and new diseases, all people will be on the receiving end of the climate crisis. Climate policies which help consumers make their homes more energy-efficient and encourage them to switch to a more sustainable diet can help people play their part in turning the tide.”

ENDS

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