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EU makes bold pledge for resource-friendly consumer goods

Consumer products sold in Europe will become more environmentally friendly, in a bid to better use depleting natural resources. That is the path the European Commission is taking, as announced in its freshly published [Circular Economy action plan](#). The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) applauds the EU Commission's bold step, which will help deliver greener products to consumers.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"This action plan is crucial to make the green transition a reality. If we want consumers to play their part, it should be easy, convenient and affordable for them to shop sustainably, which is far from being the case today.

On sustainable production/consumption:

"When people shop for clothes, home appliances and cleaning products, it should be easy for them to make the sustainable choice. If the market offer becomes more sustainable, consumers will automatically turn to greener products. Sustainable consumption and production are the two sides of the same coin, and the EU Commission's plan has finally captured this essence."

On the 'right to repair':

"While consumers will get more convenient products that last longer, the environment will suffer less. Consumers regularly complain that their coffee machines or smartphones break too early, so it is about time to make such products easier to repair at a reasonable cost."

On chemicals:

"More than 8 in 10 European citizens are concerned about the chemicals that lurk in their everyday products. It is therefore great news that the EU wants to prevent banned chemicals from finding their way back into consumers' homes through recycled products. Now we expect the Commission to honour its commitment through ambitious law proposals that kick harmful chemicals out of the environment and our everyday textiles such as clothes, towels and bedsheets."

Here are some of the plan's highlights:

- **More products will become sustainable.** Thanks to the future 'Sustainable Product Policy Framework', many more consumer products – such as smartphones and computers – will have to be more durable, reusable, upgradeable, repairable and recyclable.
- **Highly polluting sectors – such as textiles and buildings – will have to use raw materials more efficiently.** The approach to develop rules for specific sectors draws inspiration on the much talked-about [ban on single-use plastics](#) that EU institutions pushed through last year in record time.
- **Consumers' 'right to repair' will get a boost.** More consumer products will have to become easy to fix and upgraded, not just the ones covered by Ecodesign requirements, such as fridges and washing machines. Smartphones, coffee machines and printers should be priorities as they top the list of consumer complaints across Europe.
- **Consumers will get more reliable information on durability.** Companies will have to disclose, at the point of sale, how long their products can be expected to last.
- **Consumers will be better protected against greenwashing.** The Commission aims to tackle unsubstantiated environmental claims.
- **Dangerous chemicals will be tackled** so they don't persist in recycled products.

Background:

The [Circular Economy Action Plan 2.0](#) presented today by the EU Commission is a revised version of [the current one](#) which was adopted in 2015. It is part of the EU Commission's flagship Green Deal, which aims to make Europe become ["the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050"](#).

See the EU Commission's [Q&A](#)

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