



**Action Plan for  
Strengthening the Consumer Movement  
in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (CESEE) \***

\*It is recommended to read this document in combination with the Warsaw 2011 Declaration and the Implementing Strategy

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**Ref.:** X/2011/076 - 29/06/11

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We recognise the essential role that BEUC has to play in helping to make national consumer organisations stronger, and to increase the importance of consumerism. But such goals can only be achieved with the support of EU institutions in collaboration with Member States governments.

**The EU should consider and adopt the following actions:**

- Reintroduction into the future consumer policy programme (2014-2020) of a proactive and prominent funding scheme directed at further development of the CESEE consumer movement. Such a policy would be in line with European Parliament's stated objectives to devote more financial resources to improve consumer protection in the CESEE. The funding scheme can include innovative initiatives such as:
  - Interest-free loans to help develop or extend income generating activities, such as independent consumer magazines;
  - Start up support or seed grants for the youngest organisations;
  - Exploration and comparative research of other funding sources (taxes, levies, fines) in Member States with a view to issue a Recommendation.
- Adoption of effective capacity-building schemes to ensure meaningful participation of CESEE consumer organisations in the EU decision-making process, as well as increased impact of consumer policy within society at large:
  - Adequate remuneration to enable CESEE experts' participation in stakeholder meetings;
  - Support location of European Consumer Centres within national consumer organisations;
  - Proposed Yearly Single Market Forums to take place in CESEE countries in order to draw media and public attention to the consumer aspects of the markets;
  - Continued consumer rights campaigns to re-enforce individual consumer empowerment.
- Encouragement of consumer research, and in particular of consumer research skills among consumer organisations, with emphasis on low-cost empirical research, in order to develop evidence-based policy advocacy amongst civil society.
- Encouragement to national media to include more high-profile consumer programmes, including through adoption of successful, mass-viewing formats from other countries (e.g. consumer media twinning projects).

**BEUC's own initiatives should include:**

- Reviewing its criteria of membership in order to widen stakeholder access to certain of its networking activities and related expertise.
- Continued targeted training of CESEE consumer organisations, in all relevant aspects, including lobbying and policy analysis, organisational management and fundraising. Such training would be targeted to specific needs and groups of countries, building further on the successes of the current TRACE programme. Training should also be tailor-made to meet specific needs of organisations or groups of organisations.
- Co-ordination of induction programmes for member organisations' staff, including through longer term secondments in more established organisations.

- Setting up mentoring programmes, through a system of partnerships between the more established consumer organisations and younger ones in CESEE.

In addition, with its own advocacy activities, BEUC intends to contribute more to the profile of consumerism in CESEE countries. This can be achieved through the organisation of more events, meetings with opinion formers and high-level officials, as well as increased PR and media work in these countries and related Brussels-based press. Part of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities will targeted at audiences in CESEE countries.

We estimate that the total cost of such a plan would amount to around 13,740.000 Euro over a six-year period (2014-2020).

As stated in its Warsaw Declaration, BEUC and its member organisations are keen to work with EU institutions and national governments to both develop and implement this proposed Action Plan.

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