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## Consumer groups outline recommendations for Brexit talks

With the Brexit talks about to start, EU consumer groups have outlined how the interests of EU and UK consumers should be protected during the negotiations. The European Consumer Organisation and its members want any decisions related to the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, and its subsequent relationship, to be assessed against the impact on consumers.

EU consumer policy has greatly benefitted EU citizens. This is true in the case of enabling redress mechanisms for delayed or cancelled flights, introducing tough laws for putting chemical products on the market, applying uniform rules to withdraw from online sales and setting high food safety standards. These and many other rights could be in scope when the UK and EU negotiate exit terms. BEUC asks for these negotiations to be conducted as transparently as possible – so as to allow timely feedback on how Brexit could influence respective consumer rights and protections.

The impacts of Brexit could be felt by all consumers, both in the UK, but also across the EU. UK air passengers departing from the UK with a UK airline may no longer be entitled to compensation in case of cancellation or delay or they may face surcharges when paying with their debit card abroad. EU consumers might likewise be exposed to high roaming charges when travelling to the UK.

Monique Goyens, Director-General of The European Consumer Organisation, commented:

“Brexit will impact consumers both in the EU and in the UK. That is why consumer issues must be central to the negotiations. These talks should be held openly so that consumer representatives can provide input on how consumers might be affected by Brexit and ensure consumers get a good deal.

“European consumers have benefitted a lot from over 40 years of EU-led consumer policy and we take many of our rights and protections for granted. We are asking EU negotiators and the UK government to bear these achievements in mind as the Brexit talks start.”

ENDS

Note: BEUC highlights the following requests for immediate action:

- To include a specific consumer analysis in any impact assessment, especially related to retail prices, exchange rates, safety and quality standards. This analysis should detail the distributional impact on different consumer groups, particularly more vulnerable consumers, both in the UK and in the EU.
- To involve consumer representatives in any advisory groups that are established around the negotiations, ensuring a balanced view.
- To implement strong transparency principles related to availability of negotiation positions.

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