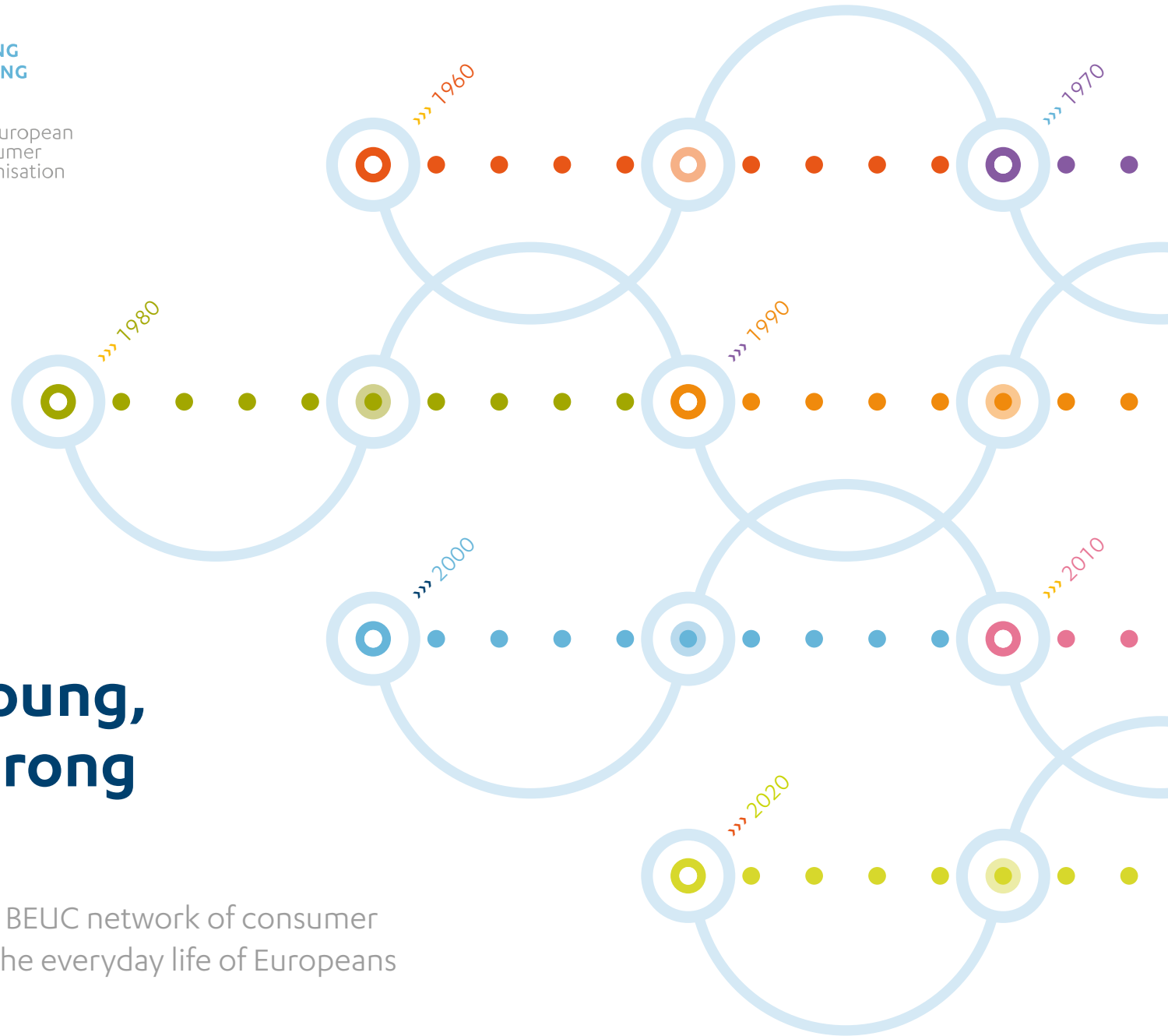


## BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong

1962-2022

A snapshot of how the BEUC network of consumer groups has improved the everyday life of Europeans









# Foreword

Dear reader,

**This booklet is the result of acrobatic thinking: how to squeeze 60 years of amazing developments into a brochure without creating an encyclopaedia!**

To keep it simple, and digestible, please find here a glimpse of BEUC's rich history, with some case studies and the most important milestones. It will never be possible, with such a compact format, to do justice to the stunning list of achievements of the European Consumer Organisation, so we just picked out a few, trying to illustrate the permanent expansion of the topics we work on, as well as their diversity.

But first things first, BEUC could only grow thanks to its members, and we are proud of our network of 46 well-respected independent national consumer organisations in 32 European countries.

This strength from within is being consolidated by strong connections with other consumer networks all over the world. We are delighted to team up with our 'sister organisations' ANEC (the European consumer voice in standardisation), CI (Consumers International – who gathers consumer groups from around the world), ICRT (the global consortium of consumer organisations that work together on research and testing of consumer products), and TACD (the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue, which gathers European and US consumer organisations to promote the consumer interest in EU and US policy-making).

History has repeatedly shown that together we are stronger.

Beyond these strong ties with our members and sister organisations, we have also built over the years strong relationships and sometimes alliances with other civil society groups, such as environmental, digital rights, and transport organisations, to name a few. We team up with corporate associations in case of aligned interests, and work with academics so that, where needed, our positioning is backed by consolidated scientific evidence.

## A focus evolving over time

In the early days, our files concentrated on food and product safety, which is of course the primary objective of consumer policy: people should not be killed or physically harmed when consuming goods or services!

While these concerns remain valid and continue to be on our priority list, over the decades, more and more topics have been adding up, responding to the new challenges related to the establishment of the Single Market, the Euro, international market developments or to scientific and technological evolutions.

In parallel, the nature of our mission has undergone substantial additions over the decades: while our initial core mission was to advocate for consumer interests towards the EU institutions, certainly as of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it's become more obvious that consumer rights decided at European level are a sterile beauty if not enforced on the ground. That is why we have over the last years become involved, on top of our advocacy work, with enforcement, either on behalf of our members or to support our members in bringing these cases to their respective authorities.



We have also developed a strong capacity-building workstream, providing high-value expertise to consumer professionals, to SMEs on multiple topics related to consumer policy, and also to the management and development of a consumer organisation.

BEUC's growth in activities and impact over the years is charted in this booklet. Our primary direct resource is, of course, our staff, now 57 strong – something which would never be achieved without adequate funding.

## Financial support makes it all possible

By the late 1980s, research carried out for the European Commission was a key source of BEUC's revenue, but reliance on this form of income decreased during the 1990s as contributions from member organisations increased significantly.

It is also important to acknowledge the support given to us in the last two decades by the European institutions, which provide us with an operating grant enabling us to be the independent voice for consumers against an overwhelming, well-resourced and well-organised corporate lobbying machine.

We are also grateful to the private foundations that support us in agenda-setting work on the future of energy markets, sustainability mobility or consumer rights in digital societies.

Finally, let's end where we began: our members not only support us with their expertise, but also with substantial financial resources to maintain and enhance the credibility and legitimacy of our contribution to EU consumer policy and enforcement. And they do so in a unique spirit of solidarity where the more affluent members also fund the services delivered to the less affluent ones.

Which is yet another reason for being so proud of being part of the BEUC journey!



Monique Goyens  
*BEUC Director General*



Arnold Koopmans  
*BEUC President*

# Timeline



**1963**

First joint test between BEUC members ('Euro-Tests'), on aspirin prices

**1962**

6 March: BEUC is born

**1968**

First consumer unit in the EEC Directorate-general for Competition

**1975**

A Council resolution officially inaugurates consumer protection policy at the European level.

**1972**

BEUC publishes a set of principles for a Charter on consumer protection.

**1978**

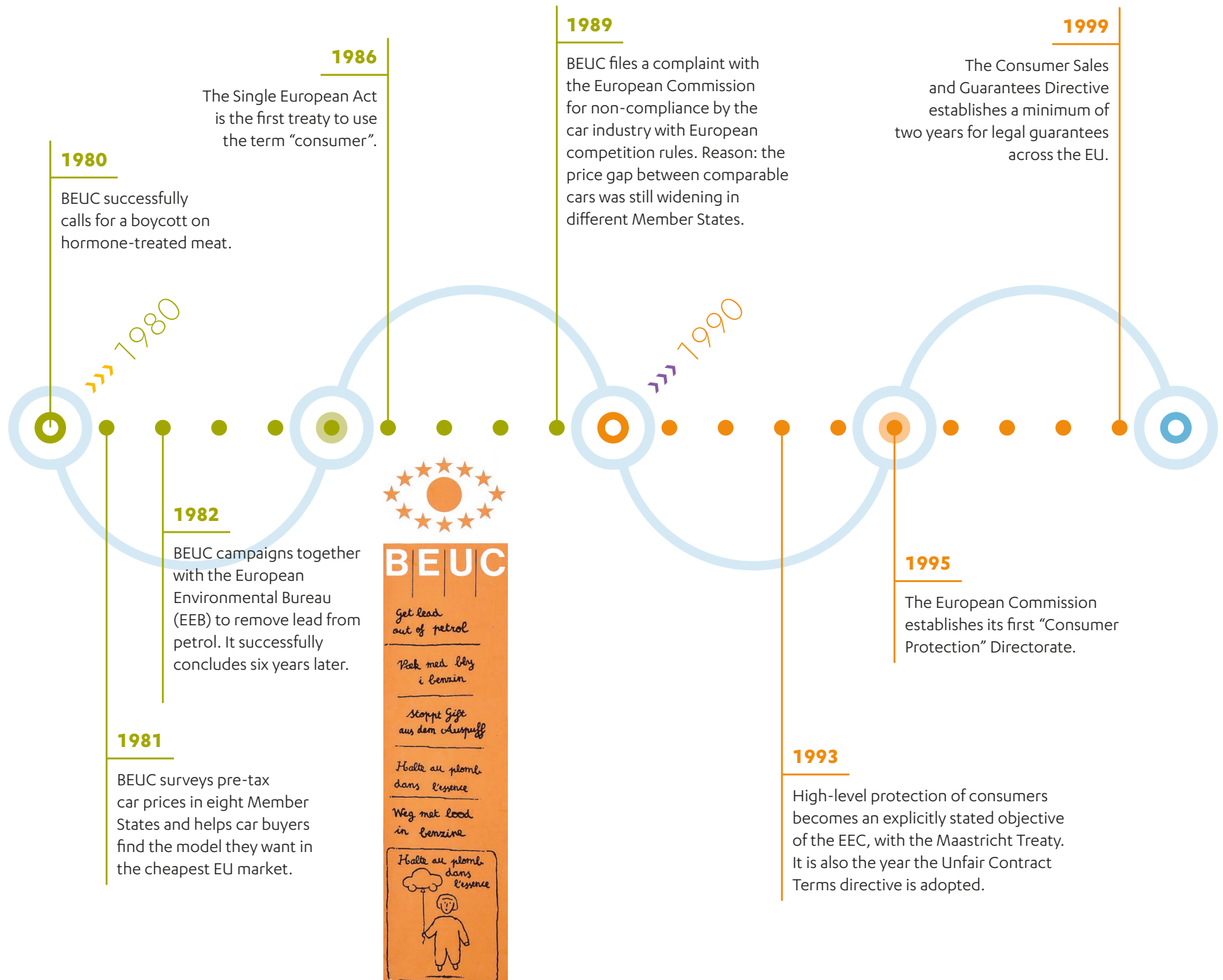
BEUC hires full-time staff and director.

**1979**

The European Commission proposes a Community-wide "rapid exchange of information on dangers arising from the use of consumer products." This follows calls from BEUC, who had started its internal alert system years before.

1960

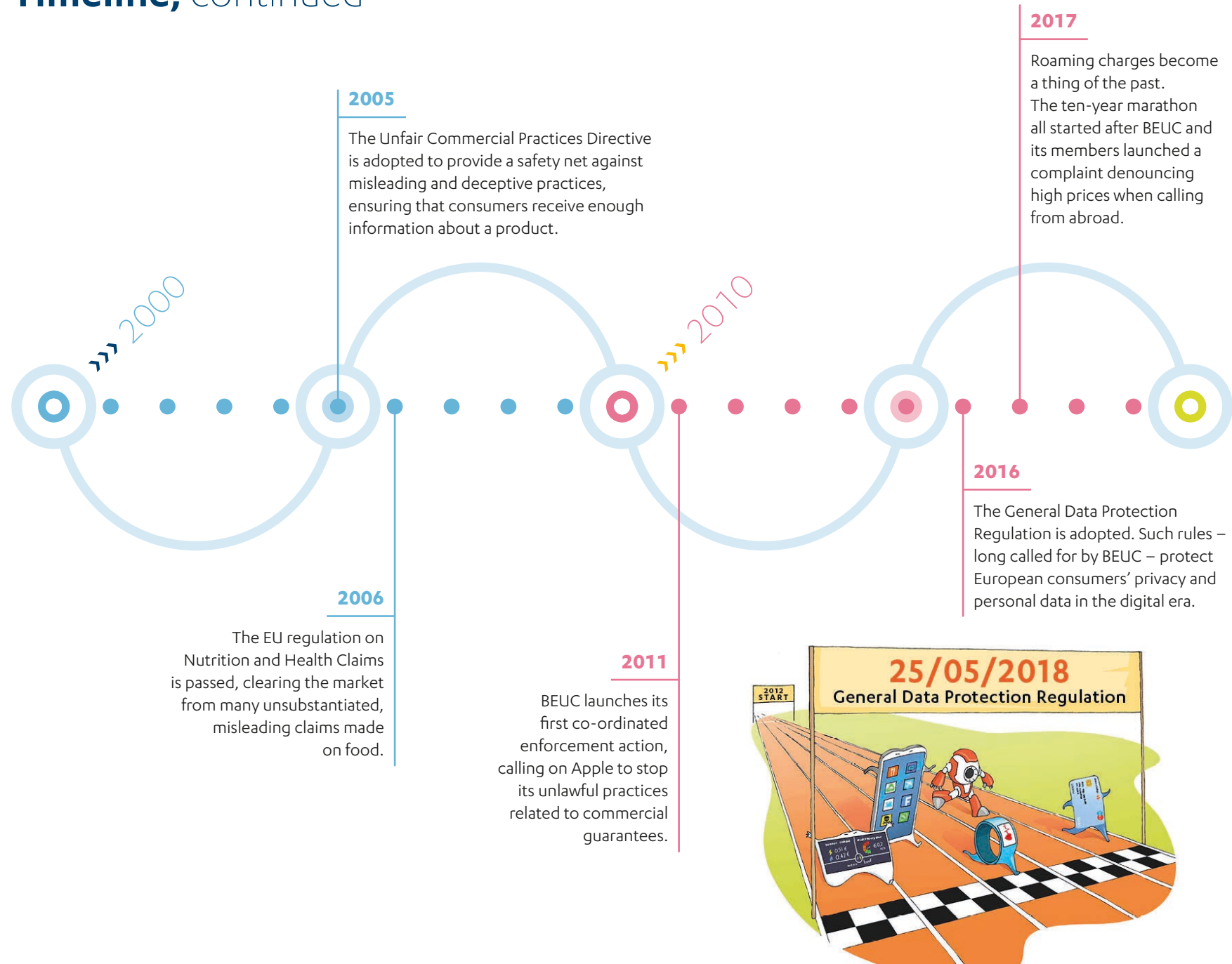
1970



# Timeline, continued

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BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong





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# Introduction

**Nine days after BEUC was born, the leader of the free world, President John F Kennedy, endorsed the move in a passionate declaration on consumer rights to the US Congress.**

“Consumers, by definition, include us all”, Kennedy declared. “They are the largest economic group, affecting and affected by almost every public and private economic decision. Yet they are the only important group whose views are often not heard.”

As this booklet shows, BEUC has defended and championed the rights of this powerhouse of consumers with incredible results since its formation in 1962.

But five years earlier, when six countries signed the European Economic Community’s (EEC) founding Treaty of Rome, pledging themselves to create an internal market, there was barely a mention of consumers in the document at all. In fact, there are just five passing references to *homo consumus* in all 80 pages of the “Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community”.

To be fair to the founders, consumers were not being ignored: the reasonable assumption was that the machinery of the internal market would automatically take care of them.

However, just to be sure, consumer organisations from the six EEC Member States gathered in Brussels, on 6 March 1962 to launch a new umbrella group to ensure that consumer interests would be kept firmly in the policy spotlight as the European Economic Community grew.

The seeds of BEUC had already been sown in June 1961 by the European Commission itself which organised study days to encourage national consumer groups to join forces: EEC Agriculture Commissioner Sicco Mansholt himself strongly urged them to unite, because, he warned, the interests of consumers in the common market were not protected as much as those of producers.

Specifically, he wanted strong consumer representation in discussions about the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and in the early BEUC days almost all EEC contact was with the European Commission’s agriculture directorate. But, as policy focus widened and BEUC pressed the European Commission for “a service devoted to consumer issues”, it became clear that the consumer voice needed to be much more widely heard.

There have been many policy milestones, from small beginnings focusing mostly on food prices, to the many triumphs – and some setbacks – on behalf of consumers on everything from misleading advertising, car prices and toy safety, to financial services and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Many of those milestones mark BEUC marathons which have spanned decades, and all the time the scope and content of BEUC’s work keeps increasing. Almost every political policy area, it seems, has the consumer at its heart.

One reason for this continuing growth is the professionalism and increasing strength of BEUC's national member organisations. Their daily contact with consumer concerns, their analysis of market conditions, their continuous testing of products and services in ever more complex markets, and their independence, are the cornerstone on which BEUC has built its legitimacy as a unique stakeholder for European policymakers.

And sixty years on, the European consumer voice is louder, stronger, and thriving in modern Europe.

And despite so much change in six decades, BEUC's basic philosophy is the same:


"Our force is that we are based on consumer complaints – from the bottom to the very top, we bring evidence that policy must adapt to the people, and not the other way around. We are proud to be the top of an EU iceberg constantly fed by our members. And you know what they say about icebergs – the most important part is below the waterline", says BEUC's Director General Monique Goyens.

But what about BEUC, the name? It's a bit late to ask now, but does anyone know the correct pronunciation of this French acronym?

Everyone says it differently, and it doesn't sound nice in any language: do you say "Buurrkk", "Buke", "Boyk", "Bayook" or "Buick"?

BEUC members have occasionally discussed changing it, but why change a successful brand name?

After all it is surely appropriate that the pronunciation of BEUC is entirely a matter of consumer choice....



The names and acronyms of our member organisations stated in this booklet are those valid today.

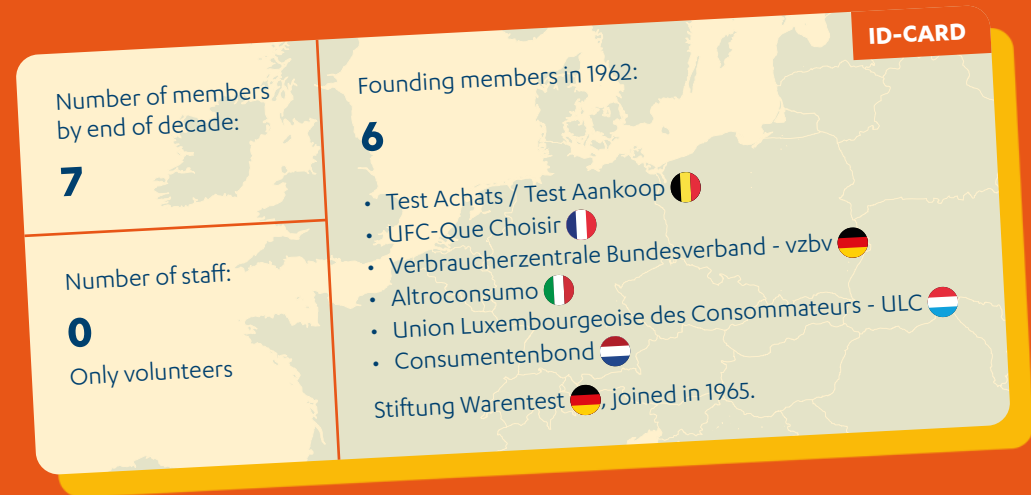
Any change in denomination and/or structure can be found on our members' respective websites.

See [beuc.eu/our-members](https://beuc.eu/our-members)

## THE KICK-OFF 60s:

# Small beginnings

12





# Highlights of the decade

## On the evening of March 6, 1962, the day BEUC was founded, the Beatles made their 57<sup>th</sup> appearance playing at the Cavern Club in Liverpool, England.

Things were beginning to swing across Europe, but even the Beatles were still second on the bill that night.

Very soon after, the Beatles were top of the bill everywhere: BEUC, with a launch mandate to represent consumer organisations in the six EEC Member States but no permanent staff and just a few volunteers, would have to wait a little longer to start producing big hits.

Nevertheless, those early BEUC days, based in the Hague, with the member organisations taking turns to host meetings and share secretarial and treasurer duties, were full of promise.

At first BEUC's activity related mainly to food prices (maintaining security of supply at reasonable cost) and competition. Contacts with the European Commission were almost entirely with DG Agriculture and led to the creation of the CCCCE (*Comité de Contact des Consommateurs de la Communauté Européenne*), known as the

"Contact Committee", on which BEUC represented European consumers.

Within this Committee, BEUC advocated low grain prices and opposed an increase of the prices of margarine and vegetable oils.

Meanwhile, collaboration between the founding BEUC organisations extended beyond policy issues to include sharing information and experience, and, crucially, the setting up of joint testing programmes known as Euro-Tests.

In 1963 it was decided that the first joint Euro-Test would be on aspirin – a choice that, incidentally,

generated plenty of early positive publicity for BEUC. The results published in 1964 showed that, while the quality of aspirins was similar in various European countries, the prices paid by consumers in different countries were very different.

The findings were widely reported, prompting BEUC to create a special fund to finance similar tests of other consumer goods – the first of which was an investigation into 35 brands of hand mixers...

BEUC was finding its feet, and its voice, and its members still run joint tests today under the International Consumer Research and Testing consortium (ICRT).

Après<sup>en</sup> avoir délibéré, le Conseil décide, à l'unanimité d'appuyer les propositions du Plan MANSHOLT sur les céréales en raison de la volonté qu'elle manifeste de hâter, dans un domaine important, la création d'un marché commun. Toutefois, il n'en approuve pas toutes les modalités; c'est ainsi que Mme LUEBBIGER considère que le prix européen prévu pour les céréales est trop élevé. M. RICHELÉY insiste sur la nécessité d'associer les consommateurs à la gestion du "Fonds d'orientation et de garantie agricole" qui va financer les reconversions de la production et du commerce des produits agricoles.

Excerpt from minutes of a BEUC meeting mentioning high cereal prices, 1963

# Milestones

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BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong

1960

1962

**BEUC began life in The Hague**, courtesy of the Dutch consumers' association: so, thanks, again, Consumentenbond for giving BEUC a home!

1962

**A fortnight later the first meeting of BEUC's council was held in Luxembourg.** The BEUC archive shows that concern about the safety of colour additives in food products was one of the first issues raised as a "topic of interest".

1963

**'Euro-Tests' were developed within BEUC** and later as a separate organisation, ICRT, the global consortium of consumer organisations which still works very closely with BEUC today.

1965

**At its General Assembly in Rome BEUC called for the creation within the European Commission of a "service devoted to consumer issues"**, a goal which was achieved in three years with the creation in 1968 of a consumer unit in the European Commission directorate-general responsible for competition policy.

1970

Annexe.-

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE DIFFUSE PAR LE BEUC  
A L'ISSUE DE SON ASSEMBLEE GENERALE.-

Rome 24 - 25 mai 1965.-

Le "Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs" décide d'intensifier son action spécifique en faveur des consommateurs de la Communauté Economique Européenne par une amélioration des liaisons établies avec les autorités de la Commission Européenne, notamment par l'intermédiaire du Comité de Contact des Consommateurs de la C.E.E., afin d'utiliser au maximum la somme des forces que représentent les organisations réunies au sein de ce Comité.

En outre, le "Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs" réclame la création, au sein de la Communauté Economique Européenne, de services spécialisés dans l'examen des problèmes intéressant la consommation, de même qu'existent actuellement des services européens spécialisés dans l'étude des problèmes de production et de commerce.

Comme corollaire, le "Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs" invite chacune des associations à demander à leurs pays respectifs l'organisation de services analogues, au cas où ils n'existeraient pas.-

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-








Eirlys Roberts



Tony Venables

## THE SETTING UP 70s:

# Starting to fill the safety gaps

<p>Number of staff by end of decade:</p> <p><b>1</b></p>	<p>Number of members by end of decade:</p> <p><b>12</b></p>
<p>Directors:</p> <p><b>Eirlys Roberts (1972 -1978);</b> <b>Tony Venables as of 1978.</b></p>	<p><b>ID-CARD</b></p> <p>Newcomers:</p> <p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which? </li> <li>• Forbrugerrådet Tænk - FBRDK </li> <li>• Consumers' Association of Ireland - CAI </li> <li>• DECO </li> <li>• Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios - OCU </li> </ul>

# Highlights of the decade

**In July 1978, the media reported that four elderly people in the UK had contracted botulism from a shared can of salmon.**

The UK Consumers' Association (known today as Which?) routinely contacted BEUC members in other Community countries to check whether their health authorities had been informed. They had not: the minority of members who had heard of the case only knew about it through newspapers and television, and not because of any official warning from the authorities.

BEUC immediately set up its own mutual alert system in which a member would alert the rest if potentially dangerous products were found which risked appearing throughout the EEC's open-border common market.

BEUC then campaigned for an EEC-level system, resulting in a December 1979 European Commission proposal to EEC governments for a Community-wide "rapid exchange of information on dangers arising from the use of consumer products." But it did not provide for the withdrawal of dangerous products, and, although a rapid alert system (RAPEX) was adopted in 1984, it was another 20 years before it came into force.

The current version, based on the General Product Safety Directive, is called 'Safety Gate' and ranks as one of the early success stories that BEUC helped shape – one which continues to protect people from thousands of faulty products, even though more needs to be done, especially on online marketplaces.

By this time BEUC had its first full-time director, Tony Venables – the organisation's only full-time employee!

BEUC had also moved to Brussels from The Hague, closer to the EEC action.

Mr. Venables agreed and gave the example of the recent case of botulism in the UK. Other governments have not been warned by the British government. There was thus a need for a simple early warning system. BEUC should suggest this initiative to the Commission.

*Minutes of a 1973 BEUC meeting mentioning the need for an early warning system of information exchange on dangerous products in the EEC.*

# Milestones

18

BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong

1970

1972

**BEUC published a set of principles for a Charter on consumer protection.** This called for laws on, among many other issues, safety of services, product safety, financial services, misleading advertising, unfair contract terms, labelling, true rates of interest, and doorstep sales.

1973

**BEUC joined the newly established Consumer Consultative Committee (CCC),** set by the European Commission to advise the institution, for the first time ever, on consumer-relevant aspects of its policies. Its current successor is the Consumer Policy Advisory Group (CPAG), of which BEUC is still a member today.

1975

**Adoption of a Council resolution for a preliminary consumer programme** which set out five basic consumer rights to health protection and safety; to protection of economic interests; to redress; to information and education; to representation (the right to be heard).

1977

**A European Commission official took the initiative to set up the European Consumer Law Group, coordinated by BEUC,** bringing together lawyers from consumer organisations, and academics working on consumer law and policy as well as some authorities. It was a unique space for sharing knowledge and intelligence, delivering opinions on many consumer policy developments that needed tackling by policy makers, from product liability to collective redress, unfair contract terms and much more. This group lasted until May 2004, when the European Commission discontinued its financial support. A follow-up initiative, the Consumer Law Enforcement Forum (CLEF) was launched by BEUC in 2006.

1980





TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN LAW GROUP

Bureau  
Européen des  
Unions de  
Consommateurs  
rue Royale 29  
1000 Bruxelles  
tél. 02.19 13 30

Brussels, 7th June 1977

Dear Members,

I would like to remind you of some points discussed at our meeting of 30th March 1977. I also send you the list of the addresses of the members of our group.

During our first meeting we decided to draft a paper on product-liability and unfair contract clauses (including services). We also were to make a little survey on most recent developments in the field of consumer law in our own legal system.

But for these papers a working group has to be set up for the next meeting of the group, which will take place by the end of September/beginning October. I did not receive any paper so far, perhaps because it was not sufficiently clear what has to be done for the next meeting. I hope that I make the situation clear in the paper enclosed herewith and I expect to receive your contributions by the end of June in order to have enough time to make the translations and the synthesis report.

In order to make the next meeting as useful as possible it is essential to have your contributions as a concrete basis for discussions. More in general, the possible success of the group depends on the contributions of its members.

Furthermore, I would like to ask your suggestions concerning the activities our group could possibly deal with now that you have a better chance to think about it.

With kind regards,  
Marinus VROMANS

*BEUC letter to the  
European Law group, 1977.*

THE ROCKING 80s:

# Advocacy marathons in the starting blocks

20



Tony Venables

Number of staff  
by end of decade:

**10**

Director:  
**Tony Venables**

Number of members  
by end of decade:

**14**

Newcomers:

**2**

- Consumers' Protection Centre - KEPKA 
- Association for the Quality of Life - EKPIZO 

ID-CARD



# Highlights of the decade

**Consumption of goods and services was booming: just about every EEC policy area, it became clear, had consumer interests for BEUC to champion.**

The organisation was also becoming bolder, launching its first complaint, alongside the European Commission, in the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The target was the motor industry and car price protectionism in different national markets in the EEC: a real marathon was looming.

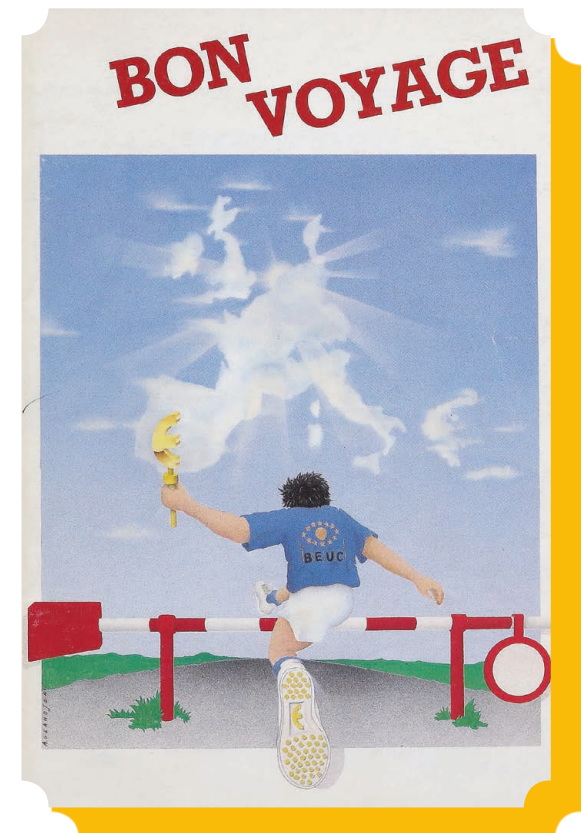
It started in 1981 when BEUC surveyed pre-tax car prices in eight Member States. Taking a benchmark Belgian price as 100, prices in other Member States for the same model ranged from 63 to a staggering 183 in one UK case. Many BEUC member organisations, determined to uphold the Common Market, published guides to help car buyers find the model they wanted in the cheapest EU market.

Easier said than done: BEUC's survey showed that manufacturers (and national authorities) were deliberately insulating national markets to protect their own dealer networks.

It was to be another car-related marathon: in 1984 BEUC intervened successfully to support the European Commission in an ECJ case brought by Ford, which had challenged an EEC decision obliging carmakers across Europe to continue selling right-hand drive cars to UK customers.

But despite many successes, it became more and more difficult to find dealers or manufacturers prepared to sell cars cross-border directly to consumers.

And when a 1989 BEUC study revealed that the gap between comparable car prices in different Member States was still widening, the organisation filed a complaint with the European Commission for non-compliance by the car industry with the conditions of the block exemption Regulation 125/83.



Cover of a 1987 BEUC publication informing travellers in the Single Market about their rights and how to use their money – just a few years before free movement in Europe took effect.

# Milestones

1980

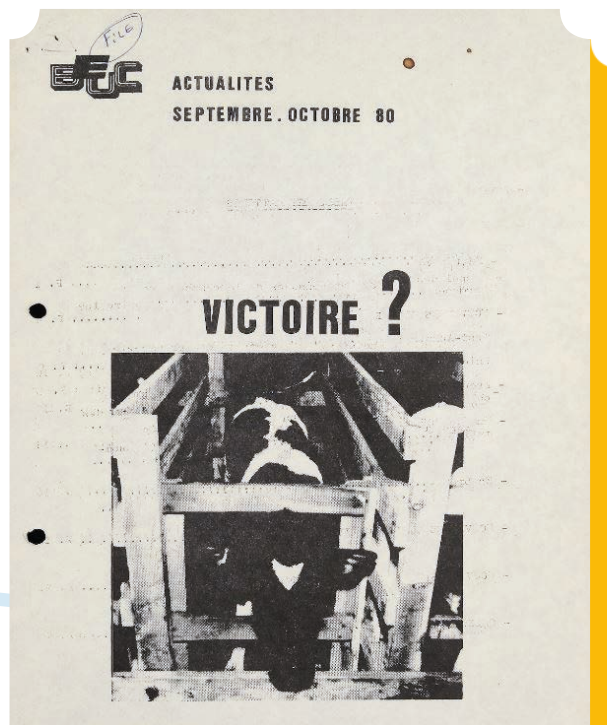
1980

**BEUC successfully called for a boycott on hormone-treated meat.** Hormone residues in Italian baby foods originating in France were suspected of causing premature breast development in two-year-old children. At that time hormones were used as growth promoters in beef cattle and to increase milk production. Work went on to win an EEC ban on using hormones in beef cattle production, which gave rise to the corresponding Directive over concerns that residues of these substances in food may cause cancer.

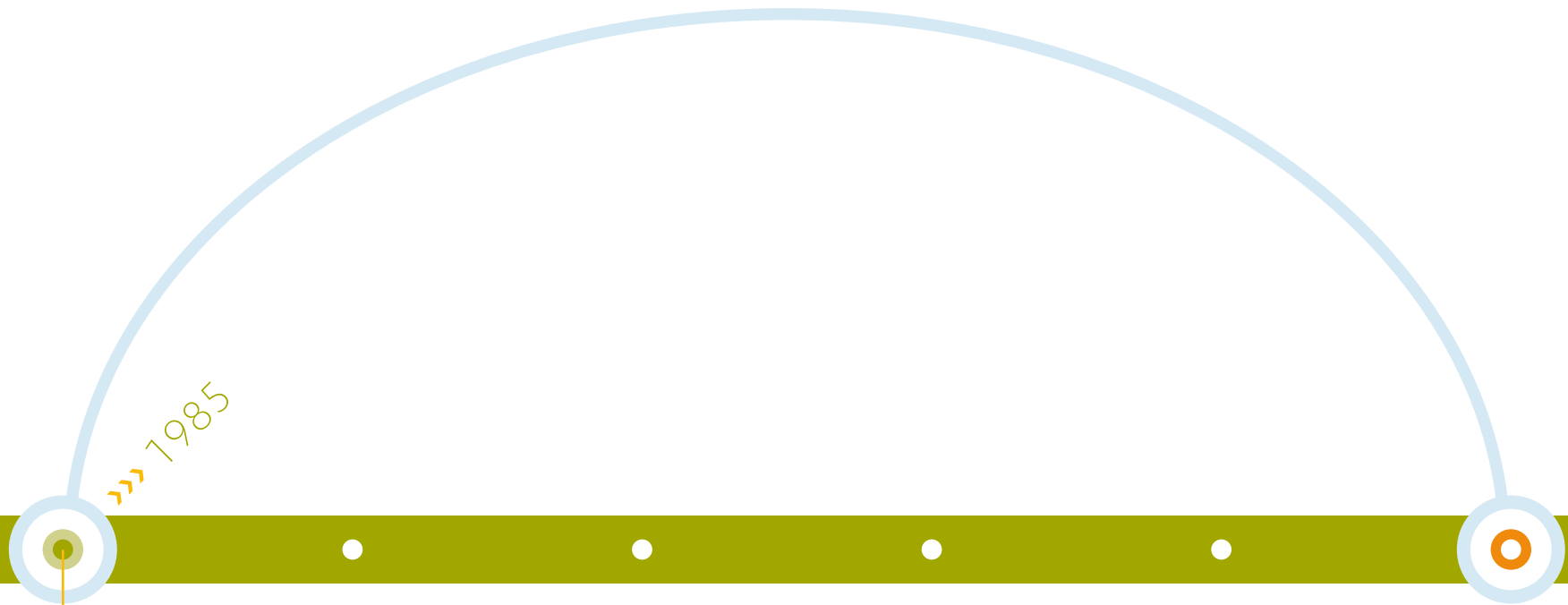
1982

BEUC launched with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) a joint **European-wide campaign for the removal of lead from petrol.** It successfully concluded after six years – a first, but far from last, step towards clean mobility. In 1988, BEUC and the EEB were together again fighting a joint campaign to phase out the use of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) in aerosols and other products as a refrigerant, a practice which created holes in the ozone layer. Victory came with a 1989 decision to phase out CFCs by 2000. Both campaigns marked the start of long-lasting, continuing cooperation between the two organisations.

Various press clippings of the time quoting BEUC.



Cover of a BEUC newsletter from October 1980, asking if a "victory" on hormone-treated meat is around the corner (the answer was "yes").



### 1985

Two major directives were adopted:

**The Product Liability Directive** was another BEUC marathon, a ten-year battle at the end of which manufacturers' liability for their products was established. It delivered important protection which gave consumers three years in which to act on harm or loss due to an unsafe product, even if no producer fault was proven. The legislation's scope did not cover agricultural products, however, because they were "God's creation" and no-one can sue God... But BEUC secured an extension to primary agricultural products after the mad cow disease crisis in 1999, so it now covers products such as meat, cereals, fruit, and vegetables.

**The Doorstep Selling Directive** – the first directive of the future "consumer law acquis", which will mark the next decade. The Directive provides specific protections, notably the consumers' right to withdraw from a contract, for when that is concluded outside a shop, for example during a visit by a trader to the consumer's home, at an excursion organised by the trader, etc.



## THE VIBRANT 90s:

# Consumer protection officially becomes a thing

Number of staff  
by end of decade:

**20**

Director:  
**Jim Murray**

**1988**

BEUC co-founds the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD). Launched in Washington and gathered more than 60 consumer representatives from the US and the EU.

Number of members  
by end of decade:

**24**

Newcomers:

**2**

- Consommation, Logement et Cadre de Vie - CLCV 
- Confederación de consumidores y usuarios - CECU 
- Fédération Romande des Consommateurs - FRC 
- Kuluttajaliitto-Konsumentförbundet ry - KKR 
- Sveriges Konsumenter - SK 
- Verein für Konsumenteninformation - VKI 
- Forbrukerrådet - FBRNO 
- Neytendasamtökin - NS 
- Zveza Potrošnikov Slovenije - ZPS 
- Federacja Konsumentów - FK 

ID-CARD



Jim Murray



To Jim Murray  
Best Wishes,

*Bill Clinton*

TACD delegation meeting with US President Bill Clinton  
in the White House, Washington D.C., 1999.



# Highlights of the decade

**The decade began for BEUC with a campaign to get more legal “name recognition” for consumers in the Treaty in the form of, finally, a specific legal article acknowledging their stake in the EEC.**

The consumer successes since the Rome Treaty had certainly been a promising start, and the Single European Act in 1986 had been the first document in primary EEC legislation to use the term “consumer”.

But in November 1990 BEUC wrote to the European Commission and Council calling for high-level protection of consumers to be an explicitly stated objective of the EEC, backed by the necessary enforcement powers.

A legal basis for the EU’s consumer policy was established via the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 – after much BEUC lobbying of Member States in the months before the Treaty signing.

The same year saw the adoption of the Unfair Contract Terms Directive – which triggered the broad harmonisation of consumer protection law. And in 1995 the first “Consumer Protection” directorate was established in the European Commission.

From then on, the nineties delivered a steady stream of consumer-based legal measures, partly driven by the need to complete the Single Market.

Two consumer policy milestones were achieved with the 1998 Injunctions Directive – the first attempt to put structures in place for cross-border enforcement by consumer organisations, and the 1999 Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive.

All this and the continuation of two long-running campaigns – on car prices and food safety – provided plenty for the BEUC family of members.



*BEUC President Jim Murray (left) speaking at an event on the Single Market, 1990.*

# Milestones

26

BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong

1990

**The Directive on nutrition labelling for foodstuffs was adopted.** It was a disappointment because nutritional labelling was not compulsory. It will take more than 20 years before legislators finally adopt a compulsory nutritional labelling of food products. And the implementation was only completed in 2016.

1992

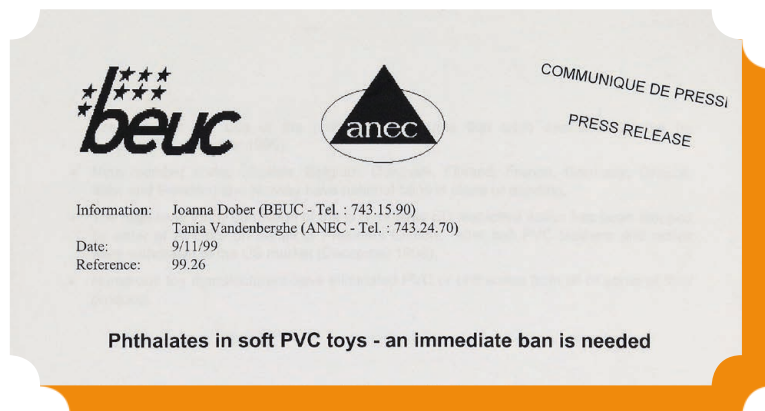
A **BEUC study on the parallel car market** showed it was still too fragmented and that price differences between the various Community countries remained very high – sometimes as much as 40%. It also revealed that consumers were often facing numerous and sometimes insurmountable obstacles when trying to buy a car in a cheaper EU market. The following year BEUC welcomed a publication by carmakers of the first, long-awaited comparative car price list – something manufacturers were forced to do by the European Commission after claiming for years such statistics were impossible to compile.

1992

**The EU Ecolabel was born**, with BEUC still involved today in setting the criteria to ensure it is a label of environmental excellence. Thirty years on, while consumers are lost in a jungle of unsubstantiated green claims, the trustworthy EU Ecolabel is alive and kicking. Consumers can find the voluntary flower label on more than 89,000 products and services, signposting a lower impact on the environment.



*EU Ecolabel logo, as it was when created in 1992 (left) and in 2022 (right)*



1995

Joint press release by BEUC and ANEC calling for a ban of phthalates in PVC toys, 1999.

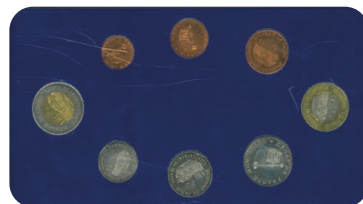
1999

### Six dangerous phthalates were banned in toys.

Following the alert by BEUC's Dutch member Consumentenbond on soft PVC toys and the problems arising from phthalates, BEUC called in 1997 and 1998 for a ban. Most of soft PVC toys or childcare articles intended for mouthing by children contained one or more of six phthalates (DINP, DEHP, DPB, DIDP, DNOP and BBP). Finally in 1999 the European Commission decided to ban the use of phthalates in certain toys and childcare articles. This decision was not as wide as we would have wished for but was nevertheless a step forward. This generated strong media interest.

1996

BEUC participated in the expert group which **tested the usability of the Euro coins**, including how to distinguish them.



Actual coins used for the test.

1997

There was an **explosion of new food safety legislation**, introduced in the Green Paper on the General Principles of Food Law in the European Union (1997) and the White Paper on Food Safety (2000). Until the mid-1990s, the responsibility for food safety was largely left to the industry. The mad cow disease crisis of 1996 was a game changer and resulted in extraordinary progress in the field of food safety.

2000

## THE TURN OF THE CENTURY 00s

# The world goes digital – but not only



Jim Murray



Monique Goyens



Willemien Bax

Number of staff  
by end of decade:

**28**

Directors:

**Jim Murray;**  
**Monique Goyens (as of 2007)**

Deputy Director:

**Willemien Bax (as of 2001)**

BEUC creates a department for capacity building to strengthen the consumer movement especially in new Member States. Training activities were organised on independent product testing in 2003-2006 by ICRT, TRACE consumer courses from 2004-2012.

Number of members  
by end of decade:

**34**

Newcomers:

**10**

- Arbeiterkammer - AK 
- Organizacija na potrošuvacite na Makedonija - OPMK 
- Združenie slovenských spotrebiteľov - ZSS 
- Kypriakos syndesmos katanaloton - CCA 
- Latvijas Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības asociācija - LPIAA 
- Eesti Tarbijakaitse Liit - ETL 
- Ghaqda Tal-Konsumaturi - CAM 
- Asociatia Pro Consumatori - APC 
- BNAAC 
- Citizens Advice - CA 

ID-CARD



# Highlights of the decade

## A new century and new challenges, particularly for consumer rights and safeguards in a swiftly changing landscape of online trading, in an increasingly digital information society.

BEUC was determined to step up efforts to guarantee consumers as much protection online as had been achieved offline. The organisation was by now already a staunch advocate for a safe, open, and neutral internet, with the protection of people's privacy and personal data a main concern.

In the century's first year the e-Commerce Directive was adopted to regulate new business models of online intermediaries, with BEUC securing guarantees that consumer protection law would not be the law of the trader.

In 2002, the e-Privacy Directive was agreed, banning the sending of unsolicited commercial communications by email and text messaging, as well as by old-fashioned fax and automated calling machines without the user's prior consent.

BEUC led another fight, this time against roaming charges after reports from one of its French member organisations (UFC-Que Choisir) about

the huge fees imposed on customers when using their phones in another EU country. BEUC lodged a formal complaint with the European Commission on the grounds that roaming charges were not only very high, but that the tariffs were suspiciously similar between the various telecoms operators in the same Member State. Spurred on by BEUC and consumer pressure, the European Commission announced swift action in 2007 to gradually reduce roaming rates. They were finally abolished in 2017.

BEUC was also busy with food during the 2000s – fighting off fierce opposition from large sections of the food industry to push for legible and comprehensive nutrition information on the back of packaging. The mission was accomplished in 2016, eight years after it began. But the mission did not stop there for BEUC, who since then has been advocating for easy-to-grasp information on the front-of-pack... Nutri-Score anyone?

Consumer groups, particularly in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries were supported in building up their professional expertise and links between consumer organisations, public authorities, and stakeholders from other networks, including from the business sector were developed.

From e-learning modules to European workshops or national training, from the exchange of best practices to networking opportunities and the development of learning resources and tools in all EU languages, BEUC has positioned itself as a unique partner in strengthening the voice of the consumer movement.

*Members of BEUC's General Assembly meeting in Brussels, 2008.*



# Milestones

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2000

**No advertising of prescription medicines:** BEUC stopped it from happening. The European Commission intended in 2001 to lift the ban on direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines for diabetes, asthma, and HIV/AIDS. BEUC feared this would lead to direct-to-consumer advertising for all prescription drugs, as is currently the case in the US.

2002

**Finally, competition in the car market!** Cars were on the agenda again, with a Block Exemption regulation enabling consumers to benefit from lower prices for new cars and for quality servicing with access to spare parts and technical information for independent repairers. Full implementation of the regulation came in October 2005, allowing car dealers to open showrooms and delivery points anywhere within the Internal Market without authorisation from the car manufacturer.



*Fake medicine box created to convince MEPs that the advertising of prescription medicines should remain banned, 2002.*

2005

**The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive was adopted.** With roots in the 1984 Directive on Misleading and Comparative Advertising, it aims to stop practices such as preventing consumers from switching service providers, not receiving enough information about the nature of a product, or aggressive doorstep selling. BEUC is still pushing for better coordinated cross-border enforcement of the 2005 rules.



2005

## 2006

### The EU adopted its primary chemicals law - REACH

– which plays a fundamental role in preventing and reducing chemical risks in Europe and globally. According to its core principle of 'no data, no market', a chemical should only be allowed on the market once manufacturers and importers prove it is safe. Nevertheless, BEUC is still fighting today to fix some flaws which result in consumers being exposed to hazardous substances.

## 2006

**The EU regulation on Nutrition and Health Claims was passed**, ensuring that messages praising the health or nutritional benefits of food and drink are scientifically proven and do not mask the overall nutritional quality of the product. BEUC's 2004 survey found most people want a healthy diet, but are heavily dependent on the advertised claims. It highlighted many untrue examples on the market such as "Food adapted to healthy living" - "Good for you" - "Relaxes your soul". The survey was an asset in our work with the Commission.



Fake cereal box created by BEUC in 2000, as part of a campaign for trustworthy nutrition and health claims.

## 2006

**No to chlorinated chickens.** BEUC criticised an EFSA decision permitting the use of chemicals to remove surface contamination from meat and for the anti-microbial treatment of poultry. BEUC was concerned that decontamination substitute for good hygiene practices and that the hygiene benefits may not outweigh the associated risks. In 2008 BEUC teamed up with the European Environmental Bureau and COPA-COGECA (EU farm lobby group) to oppose changes which would have allowed imports of chlorine-treated chicken into the EU.



Cocotte – BEUC's symbol of chlorinated chickens – accompanied Director Monique Goyens in many public events, stealing the show more than once.

2010

# Milestones, continued

32

BEUC: 60 years young, 60 years strong

2005

2007

BEUC succeeded in getting some **important changes to the final Consumer Credit** text to improve the situation for European consumers, such as the right to change their mind within 14 days without giving any reason ('cooling-off period'), and to pay back ahead of the end of the initial deadline.



BEUC publication on consumer credit, 2010.

2008

**Consumers' Right Directive:**  
**No reduction of our rights.** The European Commission's proposal for this directive aimed originally at revising four directives abandoning the long-established principle of minimum harmonisation and thus making it impossible for Member States to keep or introduce rules which provide better protection. BEUC strongly opposed this move which would have resulted in significant reductions of protection in several countries. The directive was finally reduced to only cover distance and doorstep selling contracts.



BEUC brochure, 2010.

**2009**

**Cosmetics regulation reined in nanomaterials.** For the first time the safety of nanomaterials needs to be assessed and consumers need to be informed if nanomaterials are contained in the products. The EU also agreed in the Regulation to look into misleading claims on cosmetics.



Showcasing unsafe toys during an event organised by BEUC and ANEC in the European Parliament, 2009

**2009**

**Toy safety directive got an update.** BEUC welcomed the first update since 1988 of safety standards for toys marketed in the EU: it meant better enforcement including clear safety labelling and bans on some problematic chemicals. BEUC and ANEC successfully pushed for lead to be banned in toys.

**2009**

**The Ecodesign Directive set mandatory ecological requirements for energy-using and energy-products** sold in Europe. A revision extended the scope and further resource-efficiency is now included - an important precondition to develop requirements beyond energy consumption only. Some provisions on market surveillance were improved.

2010 >>>



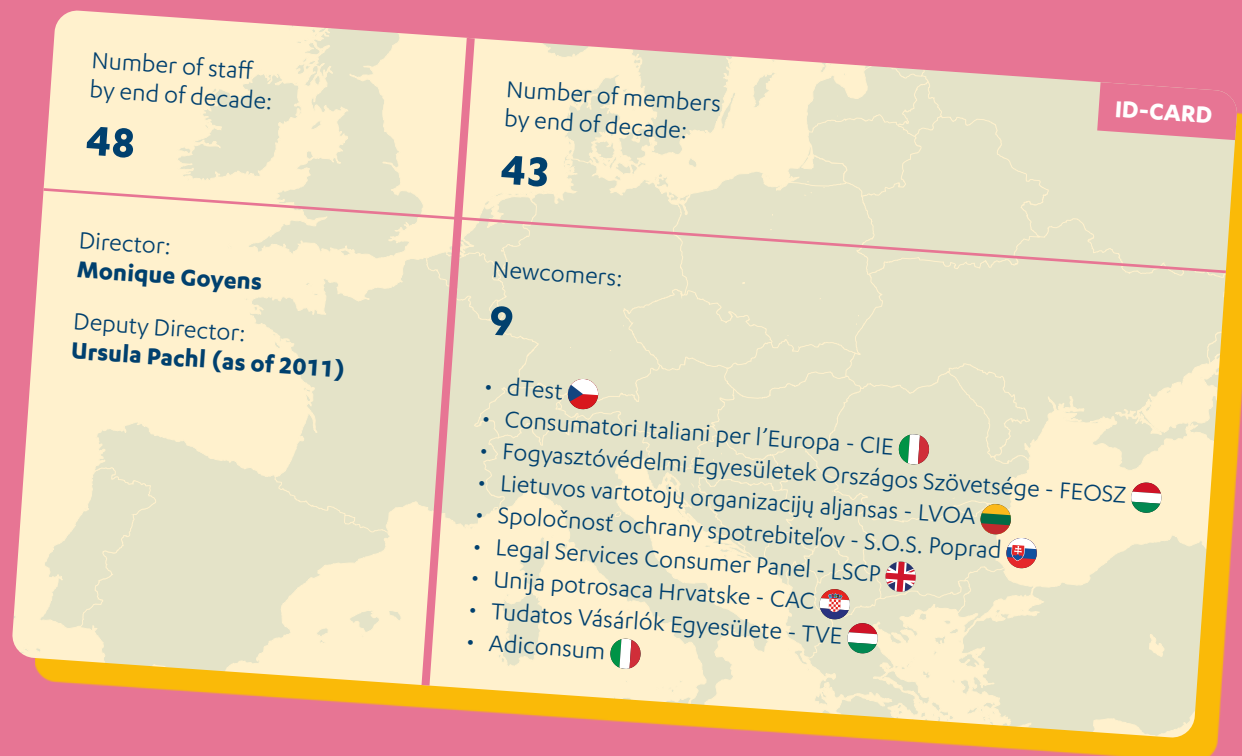
Monique Goyens



Ursula Pacht

## THE EXPANDING 2010s

# From advocacy to enforcement





# Highlights of the decade

**Digital rights continued to be a top BEUC priority in the 2010s: the growing online revolution which had brought enormous benefits to consumers was also creating major challenges for protecting their privacy.**

BEUC started a campaign for digital rights in 2005 and was behind the push for stronger legislation and enforcement to protect internet users' personal data, by championing the proposed General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Adopted in 2016 and applicable in 2018, the GDPR is the main framework for protecting European consumers' privacy and personal data in the digital era.

However, as more and more people entrusted their personal data to digital service providers, BEUC was soon campaigning for better enforcement, sounding the alarm to the European Commission that weak responses to GDPR infringements were undermining the rights and the confidence of millions of consumers in the digital economy. BEUC launched its first co-ordinated enforcement action in the field of data protection against Google's user location data processing in 2018.

The decade was not all digital: BEUC's member organisations worked hard on the "Dieselgate" as soon as details emerged in 2015 of Volkswagen's deliberate manipulation of emissions settings on some diesel models to make them appear "cleaner". BEUC started a dialogue with VW in October 2015 – which failed because of the company's refusal to accept any mistake – and supported its members' enforcement activities. BEUC also documented in two reports the lack of action by authorities as well as the collective redress claims that only very few of our members could launch against VW.

Financial services and energy were big features, with the fall-out from the late-2000s financial crisis prompting BEUC to contribute to many consumer-related legislative proposals to improve financial services sector resilience and reinforce consumer protection. These included rules on crisis management and deposit guarantee schemes, investor compensation schemes, mortgage credit and, in 2014, access to basic payments accounts.



*Members of BEUC's Enforcement Steering Group and the subgroup dedicated to competition issues meeting in Florence, Italy in April 2018.*

## Highlights of the decade, continued

BEUC delegation in Sofia, Bulgaria, about to hand over consumer recommendations to the Bulgarian government ahead of their EU Presidency, December 2017.

Energy liberalisation became a big focus when BEUC investigated energy markets and revealed that they were not working for consumers. Since then, the energy landscape changed. Thanks to the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' package, consumer rights in electricity markets should substantially improve, with clearer offers, more readable bills, easier switching of providers, access to out-of-court dispute settlement procedures, easier access to renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures, and better protection of consumers in energy poverty. Also in the gas sector, progress was achieved, although not as strong as in the electricity markets.



In 2016 a doll called Cayla launched BEUC into the business of cybersecurity and enforcement when our Norwegian member (Forbrukerrådet) alerted the network to Cayla's potential spying ability. Forbrukerrådet revealed that internet-connected talking dolls can be hacked to spy on children, and

even if the doll is not hacked, anything children say to the dolls was transferred to a US-based company specialising in voice-recognition. BEUC also unearthed that the doll was advertising chocolate bars, sugary cereals, and other unhealthy foods.

BEUC has also successfully contributed to challenging the terms of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, particularly the Investor-State Dispute mechanism, which, BEUC warned, would potentially prevent EU Member States legislating on consumer protection. The talks were halted inconclusively in 2016 and declared obsolete and irrelevant by national Trade ministers in 2019 – a result welcomed by BEUC, especially after the European Commission committed

itself to making any future EU-US trade negotiations more transparent.

As the decade ended, BEUC and members teamed up to run consumer-led projects such as STEP, to help people who face energy poverty, and BELT, which promoted the take-up of more energy-efficient products.





# Milestones

2010



**BEUC launched its first co-ordinated enforcement action**, following the Italian Competition Authority's fine against Apple for misleading practices and information about the guarantee of its hardware products, based on the alert of BEUC Italian member Altroconsumo. Eight members participated, either alerting their national consumer authorities or going to court against Apple in their country.

2011

The Directive on consumer rights introduced **substantial changes to 'distance selling' (including e-commerce) and 'doorstep selling' contracts**. It provides better online shopping protection against exorbitant credit card fees and "pre-ticked" additional services, as well as new information requirements about the operability and functionality of digital products.

2011

2011

**BEUC opposed the Common European Sales Law (CESL)**, the European Commission's approach to creating an optional and parallel legal regime for sales law – that companies could have applied *à la carte* – instead of national consumer sales rules. The Council rejected this approach and, as a result, the European Commission proposed important reforms on guarantee rights, introducing for the first time specific consumer rights for digital content and services. If BEUC had not opposed the CESL, those rules would have probably never been proposed and adopted by the EU legislator.

2013

**Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) became mandatory for fresh meat**. BEUC campaigned to make COOL compulsory for meat, echoing the wish of a categoric 90% of European consumers who wanted to know the comings and goings of their meat. While EU rules dictate that the origin of fresh meat have to be displayed, we are still advocating for the rules to apply to processed meat.



BEUC infographic showing the comings and goings of livestock animals, making a case for mandatory country of origin labelling, 2013.

## Milestones, continued



2016

### BEUC won first prize for an NGO in the European Health awards for its campaign on antibiotic resistance.

The campaign was epitomised by a 'Superbug' character who toured (digitally) various EU countries, exposing the heavy dosing of antibiotics in livestock – a practice known to boost antibiotic resistance, which claims 25,000 lives every year in Europe. In 2018, the EU passed legislation to ban the preventative use of antibiotics in herds.



European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis awarding BEUC's Director Monique Goyens the first prize for NGO health campaign, 2016.

2015

2015

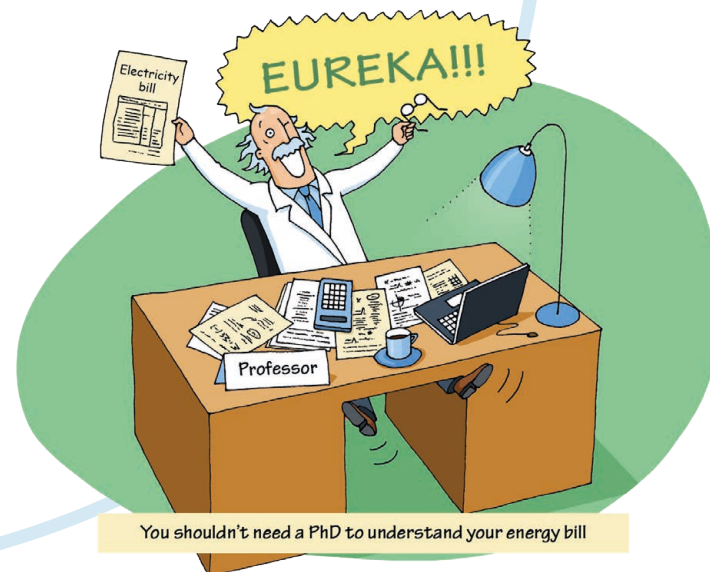
### Protecting Net Neutrality.

Since 2015, EU law stipulates citizens have a right to net neutrality, something BEUC had been long advocating for. Net neutrality rules make sure consumers can access Internet content and services without telecoms or internet companies managing internet traffic on the basis of their own commercial interests, e.g., by 'slowing down' or blocking access to specific services or degrading overall internet connection quality.

2016

### Publication of the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' package, which overhauled consumers rights and protections in electricity markets,

leading to consumer-friendly energy bills, faster switching, reliable comparison tools, more efficient out-of-court dispute settlement processes and protections for consumers in energy poverty. Thanks to this legislative action, consumers can easily engage in energy markets when they produce electricity in their homes. For instance, they can no longer be barred from selling their electricity to the grid and can enjoy simpler administrative processes. Such laws also enable consumers to engage with smart technologies and new, innovative electricity offers.



2015

### Dual food quality led to consumer frustration.

Identically-branded and similar-looking products (mostly foodstuffs) were found to be sold under different quality grades across Europe. BEUC's stance was that wherever they live, European consumers shall have confidence that the products they purchase are faithful to the expectations they derive from the branding, packaging and presentation. BEUC called on EU consumer protection law to state clearly that the practice must be considered unfair if it misleads consumers.

2018

#StopGeoblocking...

...for a true Digital Single Market.

73%\*

...of German consumers would like to be able to subscribe to sports, programmes, films or TV shows offered elsewhere in the EU.

\* = Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (vzbv), 2016.

BEUC

2017

**Mobile phone roaming charges were abolished** under the "roam like at home" Regulation – a major success story for consumers and businesses.

2018

### Two milestones against 'geoblocking'.

BEUC's longstanding aim of ensuring that the EU Digital Single Market delivers for consumers became a reality.

- As of April 2018, consumers can use their online subscriptions for their video-on-demand services, music streams or games when travelling within the EU. Previously, access to these services was limited to the country of residence where the subscription was acquired.
- Since December 2018, e-commerce merchants in Europe can no longer block consumers from other EU countries from buying items on their website. Thanks to this ban on 'e-commerce geo-blocking', consumers can shop online across Europe and take advantage of a wider choice and the best deals regardless of where they are.

2020



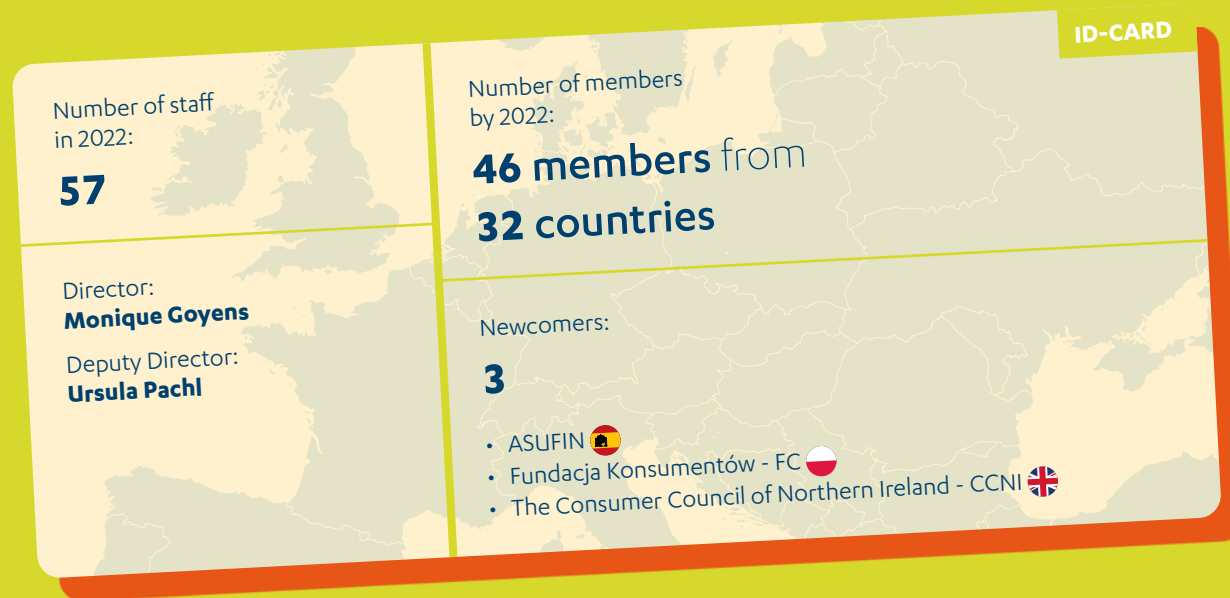
Monique Goyens



Ursula Pachl

## THE TRANSFORMATIONAL 2020s

# Every emissions cloud has a silver lining



# Highlights of the decade

**In September 2020, five years after “Dieselgate” began, the biggest car industry scandal in the world delivered a bonus for consumers worldwide.**

Dieselgate was such a glaring example of a major gap in EU collective consumer protection measures that it boosted support for a controversial longstanding European Commission proposal for a “Directive on Representative Actions” (RAD).

BEUC had used the VW emissions case to highlight the inexistence of EU-level laws on collective redress: only a few Member States allowed consumers to launch collective actions, but most did not.

A BEUC report pointed out that for years European consumers have suffered losses from a trader or company with no realistic chance of compensation – and VW strategically exploiting the legal loopholes obstructing mass claims to slow or dismiss court proceedings and limit liability across Europe.

After decades of discussion and strong industry opposition to the Directive, it was finally adopted in 2020 and will become applicable by mid-2023.



The RAD is a major win, and not just for consumers: it joins a group of measures aiming simultaneously at consumer protection and fairer competition, but also the creation of a level playing field for traders in the internal market.

The 2020s are a game changer, because we need to make people embrace the green transition. Following the European Commission's presentation of the Green New Deal in December 2019, the role of consumers will be pivotal during this decade and beyond in making a success of this flagship initiative for a climate-neutral Europe.



BEUC has well understood that consumers need to be at the centre of the transition and has developed a fully-fledged strategy to push for the most sustainable option to be also the most attractive one for consumers (easy, accessible, affordable) in sectors ranging from food and mobility to heating/cooling your house, energy-efficient products, renting rather than buying products...

*This human-sized Lady Justice was the face of BEUC's campaign for making collective redress a reality in Europe.*

## Highlights of the decade, continued

BEUC's energy work keeps thriving into the 2020s, through the CLEAR-X project which runs until 2024 and relies on BEUC members' trusted status among consumers to help them buy household renewables and thus lead the energy transition.



That is for the consumer-facing side of things, because BEUC is also a relentless advocate towards the EU institutions when it comes to helping consumers save money on energy while fostering the green transition.

For this to happen, BEUC is working on promoting policies that will make the switch to renewable energy easy, support the move to more energy-efficient homes, smart devices and services that help consumers slash energy bills while preserving their privacy. The mission of course goes beyond housing. We also strive to make sure consumers can afford the switch to more sustainable ways of moving around: electric cars, rail, the list goes on.

BEUC has become a green transition stakeholder but not only. The green transition is moving forward together with the digital transition, which will keep us busy for many years to come as you will see below.

The 2020s however will hopefully also remain in our collective memory as the moment when the EU finally started to seriously regulate the online platform and data economy. With the Digital Markets Act, Big Tech companies who are gatekeepers need to meet a series of requirements and allow for fair competition, while the Digital Services Act should put an end to the 'Wild West' of online marketplaces. Consumers becoming increasingly subject to automated decision-making by machines and artificial intelligence, enabling inter alia commercial mass surveillance – these are huge challenges we need to tackle now.

A lot will happen in the coming years, so let's meet again in ten years' time to check where all these files have ended up and how they have translated into the lives of consumers. For the better, we hope.

Last question: will BEUC have changed its name by then? Unlikely – and politicians, consumers and journalists will still be arguing over how to pronounce it...



### EU's 'Fit For 55 Package' Could Help Improve Consumers' Lives



#### How 2030 could look for Europe's energy consumers





# Milestones

2020

## 2020

**BEUC was designated as an entity eligible to submit EU-wide complaints** (external alerts) to the EU network of consumer authorities (the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network). It has pioneered this possibility four times in 2020-2021 to raise concerns against widespread infringement of EU laws.

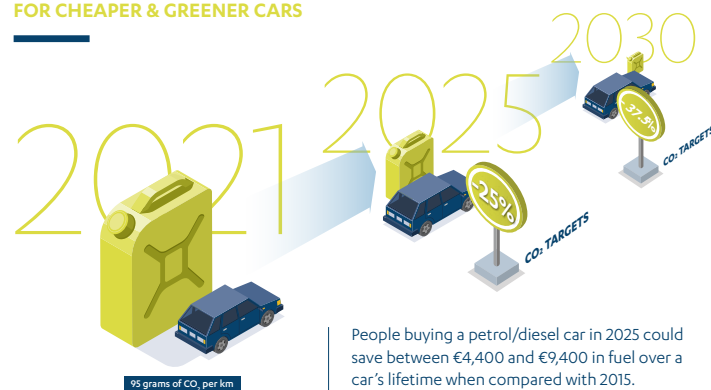
## 2020

**New type-approval legislation for cars came into force.** The new regulatory framework draws lessons from the Dieselgate, significantly strengthening oversight of carmakers' activities (through stronger market surveillance requirements) and closing many loopholes that made industry-wide cheating on emissions rules possible.

## 2020-2021

**The CO<sub>2</sub> car emissions targets adopted in 2015 and which BEUC had followed very closely, came into force.** It significantly affected the market, with many more electric vehicles being made available to consumers, benefitting their wallets and the planet.

## NEW CO<sub>2</sub> TARGETS FOR CHEAPER & GREENER CARS



People buying a petrol/diesel car in 2025 could save between €4,400 and €9,400 in fuel over a car's lifetime when compared with 2015. **That's only if there are ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> targets.**

BEUC visual about ideal CO<sub>2</sub> target for cars, 2018.

## 2020

Since December that year, **consumers with an electricity contract enjoy better protection thanks to the new Electricity Directive.** Information on consumers' bills is now easier to understand and consumers can more easily switch supplier, without having to pay termination fees or settle their disputes, thanks to alternative dispute resolution schemes. It is also easier now for consumers to become "prosumers" – empowered to produce and sell energy generated with their rooftop solar panels or to save money thanks to new contracts that reward them for using electricity more flexibly.

# Milestones, continued

**2021**

**The EU reached a deal on EU-wide coordination for assessing the added value of new medicines** ('health technology assessment'). In line with BEUC's position, as of 2025 EU Member States will carry out in a systematic way joint assessments on the relative effectiveness and safety of new medicines and other health technologies. The new system will help save money for countries' health budgets and increase the likelihood that medicines providing the greatest benefits to consumers get reimbursed.



2020

**2021**

**Ban on titanium dioxide in food:** BEUC had long sounded the alarm over 'E171', a white colouring used in foodstuffs including confectionery, sauces, and chewing-gum. After the EU's food safety watchdog EFSA could not reconfirm its safety, the European Commission and Member States decided to ban the additive for use in food, effective in 2022.

**July 1, 2022**

July 1, 2022: **Updated rules on roaming charges come into force extending consumer benefits**, such as getting the same quality of service when roaming as when they are in their home country, if technically feasible. Consumers will also be better protected against bill shocks caused by connecting inadvertently to a non-EU mobile or a satellite network.



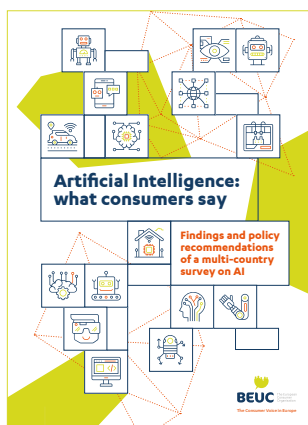
# Work in progress!

## July 2021

July 2021: **The European Commission made ambitious legislative proposals in the energy and mobility sectors**, known as the 'Fit for 55' package. Aiming to achieve strengthened climate objectives for 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050, many of the proposed measures are in line with BEUC's stance, regarding the uptake of electric cars, fighting energy poverty, accelerating housing renovation and introducing new consumer rights in district heating and gas. Although not yet adopted, the fact that such issues are now under discussion between MEPs and Member States is promising, and BEUC will fight hard to maintain the announced level of ambition.

## 2020

**Creating a fair and safe digital society: The Digital Services Act and The Digital Markets Act.** In December 2020, the European Commission put forward new rules to create a fair and safe digital environment that better serves the interests of Europe's consumers. These rules, which BEUC has strongly supported and tried to improve, aim to better protect consumers when they use digital services, for example to shop, socialise, look for information or book their holidays. They also aim to ensure open and healthy competition by curbing harming behaviour by Big Tech.



*Cover of a BEUC report carried out in nine countries in 2020. It showed consumers see the potential of artificial intelligence but raise serious concerns.*

## 2021

**Regulating Artificial Intelligence** to protect and benefit consumers. In April 2021 the European Commission put forward new rules to regulate Artificial Intelligence (the 'AI Act'), which BEUC has been long calling for. The AI Act should provide consumers with the rights and protections they need to be at ease when using AI, while also allowing space for innovation and, more broadly, ensuring EU's fundamental rights and values are respected.

## 2021

**The European Commission proposed a new General Product Safety Regulation.** As the current EU safety framework is outdated and insufficiently protects consumers in the light of new technologies and in globalised markets, the European institutions have an important opportunity to close legal loopholes and raise the level of safety. The European Commission has taken on board many BEUC recommendations in its draft regulation.



## Afterword

**Amid a war in Europe, after two years of pandemic, when the urgency to act against climate change is again put into question, when we know household poverty will increase – is it a good time to celebrate BEUC's 60th anniversary?**

46

The answer is an assertive yes. We need to take the time to hold still, look back and think of what we have achieved: so much, and together! This will give us the motivation, the inspiration and strength to meet the immense challenges that lie ahead of us, ahead of Europe, the world. With our mission and commitment, BEUC and our members can contribute to make the necessary changes happen.

So, let's celebrate and let it be a promise for the future.

As this booklet has demonstrated, in its 60 years of existence, BEUC has become something like an "institution" for consumer empowerment and protection, a unique network of independent organisations who are all pillars of the civil society in their countries. BEUC stands for strong but reasonable positions, for expertise and professionalism, for agenda setting and promoting social and economic

innovation that benefits all. We must now go on to deliver also for the next decades.

What are the main challenges ahead? The green and the digital transformations are still in their infancy and need to be rolled out faster and better. Digital technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence are changing markets and society rapidly, raising new consumer protection issues such as automated decision, mass discrimination and manipulation. And, of course, climate change, which affects everything and everyone, and, as we speak, emerges large on BEUC's agenda: the organisation's crucial and growing work on future-proof energy markets with a focus on renewables and electrification of our energy demand, the move towards more sustainable food systems, the elimination of dangerous chemicals, the roll out of sustainable mobility policies, to name a few.

In an ever more globalised market and in the context of geopolitical tensions, co-operation with partners such as the US and the UK becomes decisive to uphold European values and the welfare of our consumers and people. European consumer organisations can play a role here and must maintain the close co-operation with their counterparts, particularly across the Atlantic, to ensure that international agreements do not undermine our standards but rather build on them.

Last but certainly not least, we are just entering into a fundamental discussion about the EU's enforcement culture, competence and architecture. In a

data economy, we need new solutions to address Europe-wide – if not global – illegal business practices and reconsider the role of both national authorities and the European Commission. If the EU wants to stay a credible regulator, public and private enforcement need to improve. The trails for new tools for collective court action, and for Europe-wide actions co-ordinated or taken by BEUC itself have been laid out and we must finally open a new chapter on justice for consumers in Europe.

More than ever, fundamental and consumer rights must be at the centre of EU policy making as consumers' and citizens' needs and expectations converge, with climate change, energy crisis, big data and algorithms, disinformation and social media, access to medicines and all the other challenges that we still don't know but the future certainly has in store for us.

BEUC and its members need to be strong for the next 60 years: (only) together we can make the difference.



Ursula Pachl

*BEUC Deputy Director General*



Luis Silveira Rodrigues

*BEUC Vice President*



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**BEUC 2022**

Graphic Design by Exelmans Graphics



**Funded by the European Union.** Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

# BEUC Members

 Arbeiterkammer	 Kuluttajaliitto – Konsumentförbundet ry	 Consumentenbond
 Verein für Konsumenteninformation (VKI)	 Consommation, logement et cadre de vie (CLCV)	 Forbrukerrådet
 Test Achats/Test Aankoop	 UFC-Que Choisir	 Federacja Konsumentów
 Асоциация Активни потребители	 Unija potrošača Hrvatske	 Fundacja Konsumentów
 Fédération Romande des Consommateurs	 Fogyasztóvédelmi Egyesületek Országos Szövetsége (FEOSZ)	 DECO
 Kypriakos Syndesmos Katanalaton	 Tudatos Vásárlók Egyesülete	 Asociația Pro Consumatori
 dTest	 Consumers' Association of Ireland (CAI)	 Združenie slovenských spotrebiteľov (ZSS)
 Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (vzbv)	 Nøyttendasamtökin (NS)	 Spoločnosti ochrany spotrebiteľov (S.O.S.)
 Stiftung Warentest	 Adiconsum	 Sveriges Konsumenter
 Forbrugerrådet Tænk	 Altroconsumo	 Zveza Potrošnikov Slovenije (ZPS)
 Eesti tarbijakaitse Liit	 Consumatori Italiani per l'Europa	 Citizens Advice
 EKPIZO	 Lietuvos vartotojų organizacijų aljansas (LVOA)	 Legal Services Consumer Panel
 KEPKA	 Latvijas Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības asociācija (LPIAA)	 The Consumer Council of Northern Ireland
 Asufin	 Union Luxembourgaise des Consommateurs (ULC)	 Which?
 Confederación de consumidores y usuarios (CECU)	 Organizacija na potrošuvacite na Makedonija (OPM)	
 Organización de consumidores y usuarios (OCU)	 Għaqda tal-Konsumaturi	