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Major EU law to ban carbon neutral claims and help consumers make sustainable choices

Consumers will be granted new rights to help them make more sustainable choices [following a deal struck yesterday by European legislators](#) on the 'Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive'. The rules are a major step forward to contribute to Europe's efforts towards a more circular economy.

The changes, which will take effect in 2026, will better protect consumers against greenwashing, inform them about how durable and repairable products are, and ban unfair business practices leading to short lifespans of products.

BEUC Deputy Director General Ursula Pachl commented:

"Consumers have a crucial role to play in the green transition, so it's good news they will have more information to make sustainable choices when buying food, new clothes or home appliances. The new EU rules will enable consumers to navigate through a sea of green claims and choose durable products that live up to expectations.

"Generic environmental claims are popping up everywhere, from food to textiles. Consumers end up lost in a jungle of green claims with no clue about which ones are trustworthy. Thankfully, the new rules are putting some order in the green claims' chaos. Companies will have to explain why a product is environmentally friendly. This is crucial if we are to guide consumers to make more sustainable consumption choices.

"A ban on carbon neutral claims is great news for consumers. There is no such thing as 'carbon neutral' or 'CO2 neutral' [cheese](#), plastic bottles, [flights](#) or bank accounts. Carbon neutral claims are greenwashing, plain and simple. It's a smoke screen giving the impression companies are taking serious action on their climate impact. The truth is that these claims are scientifically incorrect and should never be used. We are delighted to see that the EU has seized this legislative opportunity to ban carbon neutral claims.

"It's important that consumers are informed on how long a washing machine or TV is expected to last. Thanks to the new EU label, consumers from all over Europe will have more clarity on product guarantees. The rules could make more durable products more competitive and incentivise consumers to invest in quality, rather than quantity."

For consumers, the new law will bring:

- **Ban on generic environmental claims** for which the trader cannot demonstrate an excellent environmental performance.

- **Ban on sustainability labels** which are not based on certification schemes or established by public authorities.
- **Stricter rules for future environmental performance claims** which will only be allowed if they include a realistic implementation plan, feasible targets and if they are regularly reviewed by independent third-party experts, whose findings shall be made available to consumers.
- **Ban on 'carbon neutral' claims**, which are highly misleading to consumers and are everywhere on the market, often in the most environmentally-harmful sectors such as [aviation](#) and [food](#).
- **New information obligations on repairability and software updates** to help consumers choose more sustainable products at the point of sale.
- **New harmonised guarantee label** to allow consumers to make more informed choices. Consumers will be informed about the durability of products on the market which could influence their purchasing decisions.
- **Ban on business' premature obsolescence practices** which can cause early product failures.

Next steps

These new rules, once formally adopted, will need to be implemented in EU countries by national governments and will take effect in 2026.

More information

BEUC action against airlines' greenwashing: [Green \(F\)lying](#)

BEUC report on carbon-neutral claims on food: [A climate-neutral food basket, too good to be true?](#)

BEUC recommendations for the trilogue negotiations: [Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition](#)

