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### **Authorities back consumer groups in taking action against Meta pay-or-consent policy**

Today, the European Commission and national consumer protection authorities in the EU (the Consumer Protection Cooperation network) [announced](#) they have taken action against Meta's pay-or-consent policy rolled out as of November 2023 to Facebook and Instagram users. BEUC welcomes that the Commission and the national authorities agreed to follow up on BEUC's coordinated set of complaints [filed](#) against the company.

National consumer authorities have sent a letter to Meta asking the company to propose solutions by 1 September 2024.

In November 2023, Meta rolled out changes to its service in the EU which require Facebook and Instagram users to, either consent to the processing of their data for advertising purposes by the company, or pay in order not to be shown advertisements. For instance, consumers were misled to assume that their data would be less tracked if they paid the fee. According to [our analysis](#) with 19 members,<sup>1</sup> this move breached the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive by using unfair, deceptive and aggressive practices.

Agustín Reyna, Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said:

"Consumers on Facebook and Instagram have been facing a grossly unfair choice since November where consent to Meta's data processing was anything but freely given. The good news is that the Consumer Protection Cooperation network has now officially acknowledged the concerning practices Meta engaged in.

"We now urge Meta to change its pay-or-consent choice screen as soon as possible and in a way that provides consumers with a fair and freely-given choice. Meta must test any changes before rolling them out to demonstrate compliance with all relevant laws. We urge authorities to take deterrent enforcement measures against Meta in relation to consumer law and other applicable legislation, such as the Digital Markets Act and the General Data Protection Regulation."

#### **Background**

This investigation from national consumer protection authorities is coordinated by the Commission and led by the French authority. It is separate from the preliminary findings reached

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<sup>1</sup> The BEUC members participating in this action are: Асоциация Активни потребители (Bulgaria), dTest (Czech Republic), Forbrugerrådet Tænk (Denmark), UFC-Que Choisir (France), EKPIZO & KEPKA (Greece), Adiconsum (Italy), Latvijas Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības asociācija (Latvia), Vartotojų aljansas (Lithuania), Consumentenbond (Netherlands), Forbrukerrådet (Norway), Federacja Konsumentów & Fundacja Konsumentów (Poland), Spoločnosť ochrany spotrebiteľov (S.O.S.) Poprad (Slovakia), ZPS (Slovenia), Asufin & CECU (Spain), Sveriges Konsumenter (Sweden), Union Luxembourgeoise des Consommateurs (Luxembourg).

by the European Commission earlier this month that Meta's pay-or-consent approach [breached](#) the landmark Digital Markets Act. It is also separate from ongoing work by the Irish data protection authority into whether [Meta breached the General Data Protection Regulation](#).

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