

**Subject: European consumers' input to your 2024-2029 Commission**

Dear President von der Leyen,

On behalf of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), representing 44 national consumer groups from 31 European countries, we congratulate you on your appointment as Commission President for a second term.

To support you in this crucial task, we would like to present our ideas on how best to advance consumers' interests in your capacity as Commission President.

**Your Political Guidelines 2024 – 2029**

BEUC strongly welcomes your focus on protecting our planet, ensuring social fairness, defending democracy and working to offer a healthier and more prosperous future to people in the EU. Tackling medicine shortages, high energy prices, housing and mobility needs and enforcing newly adopted legislation such as the Digital Services and Digital Market Acts matter greatly. While the cost-of-living crisis continues to be the number one concern for most consumers, the EU has an important role to play to ensure a just transition.

While we trust that many of your announced initiatives have significant potential to respond to consumers expectations, we would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- The revision of the EU's chemicals legislation REACH is urgent. However, this project needs to be about better protecting people's health and the environment and not about cutting red tape for industry.
- On food and agriculture, we welcome the multi-stakeholder approach taken by the Commission in the Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture. However, we also expect the EU to take decisive measures to make sustainable and healthy diets the most available, affordable, attractive, and widely promoted option. Your Commission can do so by proposing and pushing for the adoption of a strong law on 'sustainable food systems', as well as legislation to provide for mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling, which are long overdue.
- We object to amending the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for cars regulation to allow for the use of e-fuels after 2035. This is not feasible for environmental and cost-related reasons. Operating cars only with electricity from renewable sources is the only way forward.
- A new approach to competition policy must remain within the law and cannot undermine its well-established purpose to protect consumers' well-being. As you have rightly stated, it must prevent market concentration from raising prices or lowering the quality of goods or services for consumers, even more so in times of crisis.

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## Ensuring a high-level of consumer protection across EU policies

The strong emphasis on treating SMEs differently, on boosting European champions, reducing the administrative burden and to simplify, consolidate and codify legislation could clash with the objective of ensuring a high level of consumer protection across European policies. We therefore urge you steer a process ensuring that consumers' interests are effectively protected and more systematically integrated into all other relevant EU policies, as set out in Article 12 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

## A new consumer agenda

In 2025, the current Consumer Agenda will expire. We count on the new European Commission to swiftly start preparing a new political programme and Consumer Agenda for the 2025-2030 period which will contribute greatly to improving the quality of life in Europe.

The current Consumer Agenda has improved consumer conditions across key markets and sectors and should keep doing so. Its focus on reaping the benefits of digitalisation and empowering consumers to play their part in the green transition remains highly relevant. Now it is time to move forward in key areas, such as strengthening the European Consumer Protection Cooperation Network to tackle more efficiently pan-European infringements of consumer rights. It is also crucial to reform EU consumer law to better face the challenges brought by digitalisation in consumer markets by proposing a Digital Fairness Act.

## A strong and sustainable consumer movement in the EU

Consumer organisations play a key role in ensuring that consumers are aware of and able to exercise their rights foreseen by EU law. They support enforcement authorities in playing a genuine watchdog role in how markets perform and ensuring consumers get redress when their rights are breached. However, in current times, consumer organisations face challenges related to their sustainability across Europe. For example, authoritarian regimes are restricting the actions of NGOs, and the spread of misleading information online is undermining consumer organisations' high qualitative independent advice on products and services. We therefore call on you and on the European Commission to support a strong civil society and consumer movement during the next mandate.

In attachment, you will find more details of our proposals, based on sound evidence from our members who are in constant contact with the consumers of their respective EU countries.

Finally, on behalf of all BEUC members I would like to wish you all the best for the Commission's new mandate. We look forward to a constructive dialogue with your cabinet, the future Commissioners and the services from the different DGs to discuss our proposals in detail and to provide insights into the expectations of European consumers for the coming years.

Yours faithfully,

Agustín Reyna  
Director General

**Encl.:** Europe, Consumers Count on You – BEUC priorities for the next European Commission (2024-2029)