



The Consumer Voice in Europe

Mr Valdis Dombrovskis
Commissioner for Economy and
Productivity and Commissioner for
Implementation and Simplification
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200

B-1049 Brussels

BEUC-X-2024-101

Brussels, 01/12/2024

Subject: The Consumer Mission Letter

Dear Commissioner Dombrovskis,

On behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, I wish to congratulate you on your recent appointment as European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity and Commissioner for Implementation and Simplification. Created in 1962, we represent 44 national consumer groups from 31 European countries. Thanks to our members' market watchdog roles, their product testing and daily contacts with consumers from across Europe, we can support you with evidence-based recommendations to ensure the European economy delivers to consumers.

We fully support your mission to align reforms and investments with the EU's objectives of prosperity, decarbonisation, and a stronger social market economy. We were pleased to learn during your European Parliament hearing that the Commission will focus efforts throughout its 2024-2029 term on maintaining high social and environmental standards throughout the better regulation agenda.

Consumer organisations can, and must be, part of this process. For you to be a true consumer champion, we believe that the below proposals should be part of your mission.

The current shortcomings

Better regulation risks being focused on reducing administrative burden for companies and therefore cutting important protections for consumers. For example, consumers

expect their rights to data protection to be protected and ultimately enforced. Weakening them to reduce the burden on businesses cannot be an answer. Instead, better regulation should take a broader scope on ensuring that simplification of EU legislation does not only support businesses but, most fundamentally, provides a clear added value for people and our planet.

To ensure public acceptance of the climate transition, the sustainable option must become the most affordable and convenient one. To realise this objective, consumers need investments in public infrastructure and the right market incentives. Europe faces an important investment gap which needs to be urgently addressed, as highlighted by Mr. Draghi in his report on the future of European competitiveness.

Consumers' proposals for your mission

To ensure markets deliver to consumers, we call on you to spearhead the Commission's efforts to promote **swift and effective enforcement of all EU rules**. It is crucial to establish a common framework and a strategy for enforcement comprising, inter alia, cooperation between various enforcement networks as well as cooperation with consumer organisations. Lack of effective enforcement of EU law is a long-standing problem undermining both consumer trust and legal certainty for companies. We therefore call on this Commission to address this shortcoming and **ensure that everyone can benefit from the rights granted by EU law**.

The Commission's **better regulation policy should create added value for people and the planet**. The United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 'do no significant harm' principle must for instance form an integral part thereof.

Reality checks must ensure balanced input from all affected stakeholders including consumers. The Commission's objective is to defend the general interest of the Union which cannot be achieved by consulting only a selection of business stakeholders.

The EU's investment gap needs to be addressed in cooperation with the European Investment Bank: the transition to climate neutrality requires massive investments in public infrastructure and public support incentivising consumers to invest in sustainable mobility, home renovation and renewable energy. Long-term public support is needed to avoid investor uncertainty, worker shortages, long waiting periods and high prices triggered by short-term demand.

BEUC welcomes the legislative initiatives on the **digital euro and access and acceptance of cash** as a way to ensure a 'European way to pay' which is driven by the

general interest and improves privacy and inclusiveness of digital payment solutions.

The way forward

We are aware that you have a busy agenda but hope nonetheless that you will find the time to meet with us. We would be keen to hear your reaction to our proposals and would like to elaborate more about the expectations of consumers towards European decision-makers.

Please count on our support if you need information about the consumer perspective in your policy area. Please find enclosed our priorities for this new Commission.

I wish you a most successful mandate.

Yours sincerely,

Agustín Reyna
Director General

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