

Mr Wopke Hoekstra  
Commissioner for Climate, Net  
Zero and Clean Growth  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200

B-1049 Brussels

BEUC-X-2024-102

Brussels, 01/12/2024

**Subject: The Consumer Mission Letter**

Dear Commissioner Hoekstra,

On behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, I wish to congratulate you on your recent appointment as European Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth. Created in 1962, we represent 44 national consumer groups from 31 European countries. Thanks to our members' markets watchdog role, 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 stay the course on the goals set out in the EU Green Deal and lead a socially just and fair transition to a net-zero European economy. We welcome that you will pursue emissions reduction efforts while improving the EU's resilience and adaptation to climate risks.

We also well noted during your hearing that you want to direct revenues from the new Emissions Trading System and the Social Climate Fund to support people. Your commitment to complement these instruments in case they would not be sufficient is a strong sign vis-à-vis consumers across Europe. Sufficient funding will indeed be essential. We count on you to develop innovative schemes such as those you mentioned during your hearing, for example the extension of social leasing schemes for electric vehicles.

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

Our reliance on fossil fuels is causing serious environmental problems. But it also increases financial and health risks for consumers who are locked into this system and its negative externalities.

Sustainability should become the default option. Alternatives to fossil-based and unsustainable consumption patterns (i.e. in mobility, heating, food, textiles or products) should become attractive, available and affordable. This is not only a matter of social justice – consumer endorsement is a pre-requisite for a successful green transition.

## Consumers' proposals for your mission

### *Facilitate and promote lifestyle changes to meet the EU's climate targets*

Technological improvements alone will not deliver the GHG emission reductions required to reach the 2040 climate target. **Demand-side measures** will play a major role in achieving climate neutrality and are often more cost-effective. But whether it is about shifting diets or moving away from individual fossil-fuelled cars, consumers need the right infrastructures and support measures to be in place so that **sustainable lifestyles become the easy and affordable choice**. In this respect, price signals should also be directed towards sustainable consumption and behaviour notably via taxation and incentives.

### *Unlock untapped potential in cutting emissions from agrifood systems*

The **Vision for Agriculture and Food** must spell out how agriculture and food will contribute to reaching the EU climate targets for 2040 and beyond. The Common Agricultural Policy needs to better incentivise climate action, while the **shift to healthier diets, including a rebalancing towards more plant protein**, must be promoted. If carbon pricing is considered for agriculture, compensation mechanisms must be in place to safeguard food affordability for lower-income households.

### *Realign the car market with consumer needs*

Electrification is the way forward for cars, as you rightly pointed out during your hearing. Evidence [shows](#) that the transition to battery electric vehicles will contribute to slashing mobility costs for people who depend on their cars for their daily mobility needs. The Clean Industrial Deal should therefore include measures aiming to **boost the market uptake of more affordable electric cars**, for instance by introducing an electrification mandate for corporate fleets or by extending social leasing schemes.

Further supportive policies should help consumers make the sustainable choice. The revision of the **26-year-old Car Labelling Directive** should help consumers have a clear understanding of the real-life fuel or electricity consumption and the overall environmental impact of the car they want to buy, no matter where and when they buy it.

***Make sure the Social Climate Fund entirely supports consumers in the transition***

As Member States are preparing their national plans ahead of the introduction of the new ETS for housing and mobility, the Commission should support them in identifying the right policies to support middle- and lower-income consumers in the transition. The Commission should also ensure revenues from the Emission Trading Scheme 2 and national contributions are entirely channelled to consumers.

## **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 European 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)*