



Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas
Commissioner for Sustainable
Transport and Tourism
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200

The Consumer Voice in Europe

B-1049 Brussels

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Brussels, 01/12/2024

Subject: The Consumer Mission Letter

Dear Commissioner Tzitzikostas,

On behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, I wish to congratulate you on your recent appointment as European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. 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 **increase modal shift** towards sustainable transport means, and notably towards rail. One of the main avenues to improve the consumer experience of train travel is to **ease the booking and ticketing processes** when multiple operators are involved. To achieve this, we hope the Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation will be proposed without delay. We were pleased to learn during your European Parliament hearing that you consider **strengthening rail passenger rights** as a pre-requisite to make this ticketing initiative a true success.

We also support your commitment to tackle mobility poverty and provide sustainable transport alternatives to those who need it the most.

We also expect the Commission to give very clear guidance to Member States that revenues from the Emissions Trading System for road and housing should entirely flow back to consumers and help them engage in the transition. 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

Consumers are locked into a mobility system – centred around fossil-fuelled transport – which is bad for the planet, their health, their wallets and their general quality of life. Many would be willing to change their habits: using public transport instead of their own cars to go to work or taking the train instead of a plane to reach a holiday destination. Unfortunately, consumers are often not given the possibility to do so as alternatives are unavailable, unaffordable or not attractive enough. The way we organise our mobility therefore needs to adapt, and this requires profound changes, from accelerating the shift to electric cars to making public transport, walking and cycling more attractive to people.

Consumers' proposals for your mission

Adopt ambitious measures on passenger rights, including multimodal and address the role of intermediaries

In 2023, the European Commission proposed a set of policy initiatives to strengthen enforcement of passenger rights, create a multimodal passenger rights framework and define liabilities between operators and intermediaries. We count on you to ensure that this so-called “passenger mobility package” stays ambitious, notably by effectively enforcing passenger rights across modes. A basic set of rights such as information (including in real time), re-routing and care and assistance should be easily available, regardless of which platform consumers used to book their trip.

Present an ambitious package to ease the rail ticketing process and strengthen rail passenger rights

A new Regulation should mandate the exchange of all relevant data (schedules, fares and real-time travel times) between stakeholders under fair conditions so that cross-border rail offers are truly visible and available to consumers. To make this ticketing initiative truly effective, the revision of the Rail Passenger Rights should ensure the protection of consumers throughout their cross-border or multi-operator journey, no matter where they booked their ticket. In case of disruption, they should be entitled to core passenger rights: information, care and assistance, re-routing (‘hop on the next train’) and compensation. The liability of rail operators, infrastructure managers and third-party platforms should be legally defined.

Accelerate the supply of affordable, second-hand electric vehicles via legislative action on large corporate fleets

The majority of consumers buy their car on the second-hand market, they are heavily dependent on the supply of electric vehicles on the new car market, largely dominated by (leasing) companies. Therefore, we urge you to take **legislative action to electrify large corporate fleets** to bring financial savings for consumer in the transition. Such mandate should apply to all large fleets in order to capture all vehicle sizes and models.

Monitor pricing structures and competition at public charging stations

The Commission should address competition concerns and abusive pricing at **public charging stations for electric vehicles**.

The Commission and Member States should prepare for the revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) in 2027 and already address competition concerns identified by several national competition authorities, according to article 5.6 of AFIR. Abusive prices, complex pricing structures, lack of transparency and complexity of payment should be strictly monitored and addressed to foster trust in electric driving. Complementary policies to lower prices at public charging stations should be put in place.

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 Emissions Trading System for housing and mobility (ETS 2), the Commission should support them in identifying the right policies to support middle- and lower-income consumers in the mobility transition. The Commission should also ensure revenues from ETS 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)*