



Cyprus Presidency of the European Union

BEUC priorities
2026



Cyprus Presidency of the European Union

BEUC priorities
2026

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Consumer agenda	6
CONSUMER RIGHTS	7
Passenger rights	7
Digital Fairness Act	8
DIGITAL POLICY	10
Safeguarding the consumers' data protection rights	10
ePrivacy	11
Digital Networks Act	13
ENERGY	15
The Commission's strategies on energy and housing	15
ENFORCEMENT AND REDRESS	17
Revision of the CPC Regulation	17
Collective redress and support for qualified entities	18
FINANCIAL SERVICES	20
Digital euro project and the future of cash	20
Savings and Investment Union	21
FOOD	23
Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy	23
Fairness of the food supply chain	24
HEALTH	27
Access to medicines	27
Medical devices	29
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS	30
EU-US relations	30
Customs reform	31
EU-UK relations	32
Digital trade	33
SAFETY	35
REACH revision	35
Chemicals omnibus	36
SUSTAINABILITY	38
Substantiating green claims	38
TRANSPORT	40
Revision of the CO2 standards for cars and automotive package	40



Introduction

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is the umbrella organisation for 42 independent consumer organisations in 31 European countries. Our mission is to represent and promote consumers' interests to EU decision makers in all consumer-relevant areas that match our members' strategic priorities.

Our Cyprus member is Kypriakos Syndesmos Katanaloton.

In this Memorandum we outline concrete proposals for how the Council of Ministers, together with the European Parliament, should legislate to achieve a high level of consumer protection and empowerment.

We count on the Cyprus EU Presidency to help shape the strategic agenda of the European Union in a way that serves both society and the economy. EU policies should enable Europeans to live in a fair market – online and offline – where the sustainable choice is the easy and affordable one, and digitisation works to the benefit of all.

Simplification of EU rules for businesses is now topping the European Commission agenda and has materialised in several proposals. While BEUC and its members see some potential benefits for consumers in such an approach, ensuring a high level of consumer protection remains key. We raise concerns about the latest developments such as lowering rules for data protection and those against harmful chemicals in cosmetics and food products.

Horizontally, the EU Commission came forward with its new Consumer Agenda providing a clear pathway for the future of consumer policy in the EU. This underlines the importance of putting consumer protection at the core of the Single Market. It will be crucial that the Council helps with the implementation of this Agenda by taking it to the core of all its policy decisions.

Numerous legislative and non-legislative files of relevance to consumers will be on the Cyprus EU Presidency's agenda. We expect the Cyprus EU Presidency to help to advance or finalise them in a way that benefits consumers. We would like to draw your particular attention to the following initiatives:

Simplification proposals:

- **Digital Omnibus:** The Commission's proposal aims to simplify the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and rolling back the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) at the expense of consumers and to the benefit of large tech companies. The EU should refocus the discussion on better implementation and enforcement of the currently agreed and applicable rules.
- **Chemicals Omnibus:** The Commission's proposals water down the preventive ban on toxic cosmetic ingredients and roll back new rules meant to clarify labels for the safe use of common household chemicals which put consumers health and safety at risk. The Council must ensure that consumers are not exposed to harmful chemicals via cosmetics, and that labelling rules are easily enforceable.
- **Food and Feed Omnibus:** the Commission aims at increasing the competitiveness of EU farmers and the food and feed industry, as well as reducing administrative burden on Member States. It will be important to ensure that simplification does not result in de-regulation and that the precautionary principle is safeguarded: consumers need high food safety standards.

Ongoing discussions:

- **Passenger Rights initiative:** The Air Passenger Rights revision and the proposals published as part of the 'Passenger Mobility Package' in 2023 should be reviewed consistently and provide a high level of consumer protection.
- **EU customs policy:** This reform is crucial to better protect consumers from dangerous and non-compliant products entering the Single Market and ensure they comply with EU environmental requirements. We count on the swift adoption of an ambitious agreement.
- **EU's response to US tariffs and regulatory pressure:** The US are using tariffs as a coercive tool to obtain greater market access to the EU, modify EU laws and weaken consumer protections. The EU must stand firm in enforcing its laws and prevent damage to consumers when designing its counter measures.
- **Critical Medicines Act:** The Commission's proposal aims at strengthening supply security for critical medicines and at enabling joint procurement for treatments for which there are inequalities in access, such as medicines for rare diseases. The final text should incorporate stronger conditions on medicine availability and affordability for companies receiving financial support for manufacturing, and lead to greater EU coordination on contingency stock obligations and solidarity.
- **Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation:** Strong criteria and simple, reliable product categories are required to build consumer confidence. With the EU proposal recently published, the process must create a framework consumers can rely on to get investment products with the features they wanted and paid for.
- **Common Market Organisation:** the Commission has made several proposals to amend the CMO Regulation - a key objective is to strengthen the agri-food sector. To ensure that the revised CMO is well aligned with consumers' needs, it must include measures that contribute to making the healthy choice the easy choice for consumers.
- **CO2 standards for cars and the automotive package:** Following the Strategic Dialogue on the future of the automotive industry, consumers are expecting from the Commission concrete solutions to lower their mobility costs, and electric vehicles are the way forward.

Upcoming EU proposals:

- **Digital Networks Act:** The upcoming Commission proposal to review the EU rules for electronic communications should safeguard the current rules which promote competition and consumer rights as key objectives in the EU telecoms markets.
- **Medical devices:** The Commission seeks to simplify EU rules for medical devices and in vitro diagnostics. For this proposal to work for consumers, it must build on the progress made on safety standards in the 2017 revision and include new measures to address pressing challenges such as shortages. Enhanced coordination amongst public authorities will contribute to more effective implementation.
- **REACH:** The revision of the EU's most important chemicals legislation should better prevent exposure to harmful chemicals, including enhancing enforcement at the EU's borders and on online marketplaces. In parallel, the EU's efforts to simplify chemicals legislation overall should in no way lower protection standards.
- **The revision of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation** should ensure that consumers are well protected in case of infringements and that there is a level playing field between EU and non-EU traders.
- **Savings and Investments Union:** The objective is to incentivise consumers to invest their savings and to improve investment outcomes. A low-cost saving and investment product for consumers would help to achieve these aims and tackle the increasing pensions gap.
- **The post 2027 CAP reform:** The next CAP reform needs to become much more targeted and ensure that it aligns better with consumer priorities and expectations for subsidies, including a fairer distribution of the funds as well as rewarding farmers who make the effort to farm in more environmentally friendly ways.

We count on the Cyprus EU Presidency to facilitate progress on these and other initiatives mentioned in this Memorandum, with an assertive aim of delivering clear benefits to European consumers.

We wish Cyprus a most successful Presidency.

Agustín Reyna - Director General | Arnold Koopmans - President



CONSUMER AGENDA 2025 – 2030

Why it matters to consumers

For the last 50 years, consumer policy has been the EU's success story. It ensured consumer trust which resulted in the rapid development of the EU Single Market. The overarching principle of high level of consumer protection as enshrined in the EU treaties ensured that policymakers had to integrate consumer policy in all policy fields. Today, consumers face many new challenges that need to be tackled.

State of play

In November 2025, the **Commission** adopted its Consumer Agenda 2025-2030 unveiling its vision for the consumer policy for the next five years.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to adopt Council conclusions supporting the Consumer Agenda 2025-2030.

What consumers need

- Support for the announced important legislative initiatives aiming at improving consumer rights and their enforcement, i.e. the Digital Fairness Act, CPC Regulation revision or the European Product Act, which will include the revision of Market Surveillance Regulation.
- Strengthened and independent consumer organisations that can benefit from the Commission's support.
- Ensuring that any simplification initiative safeguards consumer protection or core policy objectives.
- The EU must remain ambitious in the field of sustainable consumption and retain strong commitment to the goals of the European Green Deal.
- Remove the remaining barriers that consumers face to fully benefit from the EU Single Market, i.e. excessive surcharges on intra-EU calls, difficulties to get redress in case of cross-border harm, significant variations in food prices across countries, geo-blocking of digital content, etc.
- Ensure that consumer rights are improved in specific sectors such as mobility, energy, housing, health, food or water consumption.

ADDITIONAL SOURCE



CONSUMER RIGHTS

1

Passenger rights

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers often experience stressful and frustrating issues such as delays and cancellations when travelling in a single mode of transport or when combining different transport modes (Multimodal). They need strong passenger rights to protect them in such situations. EU legislation in this field has been a great achievement but, as shown by events such as the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it needs to be improved, especially regarding enforcement and online booking intermediaries.

State of play

In November 2023, the **European Commission** published two legislative proposals on passenger rights: (1) a proposal for a Regulation on passenger rights in the context of multimodal journeys and; (2) a proposal for a Regulation on the enforcement of passenger rights in the EU. The **Council** adopted its positions on both proposals in December 2024. In June 2025, the **Council** adopted its position on the 2013 proposal for a Revision of the Air Passenger Rights Regulation, after resuming negotiations that had been blocked for over a decade. Trilogue negotiations on those files kicked off in October 2025.

Recommendations for the Presidency

BEUC encourages the Cyprus EU Presidency to drive the negotiations during the trilogues and to make sure that EU passenger rights are strengthened, not weakened.

What consumers need

- Compensation rights in case of flight delays and cancellations should be upheld, not reduced.
- Efficient enforcement and easy access to redress: ambitious and innovative provisions must be considered to strengthen the enforcement of the passenger rights regulations and ensure that consumers can easily assert their rights (e.g., automated refund, harmonised investigative and sanctioning powers for authorities, mandatory Alternative Dispute Resolution participation for carriers).
- The non-exhaustive list of extraordinary circumstances should be aligned with the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union.
- Core rights for multimodal passengers, such as information, re-routing, care and assistance should apply not only for passengers buying 'single multimodal contracts'¹ but also 'combined multimodal tickets'.²

¹ Transport contracts containing successive transport services, that only represent around 5% of all multimodal journeys.

² Tickets purchased via a single payment that represent separate transport contracts combined by the carrier or by the intermediary on their own initiative.

- Strong rules for online booking intermediaries should be introduced in all transport sectors, not only air. Such rules should:
 - Cover all types of cancellations and consumer refunds (including self-cancellations)
 - Introduce an intermediaries' liability for failure to provide pre-contractual information to passengers about the type of tickets and the associated rights when booking via intermediaries
 - Mandate the establishment by intermediaries of a complaint handling process and introduce a deadline for intermediaries to answer consumer complaints.
- A mandatory insolvency protection regime for airlines as already exists in the Package Travel Directive.
- No-show clauses should be prohibited for all types of flights.
- The right to cancel standalone tickets should be at no cost in case of unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, such as in the Package Travel Directive.
- Hand luggage should be included in the basic plane ticket price free of charge. Consumer groups have denounced that some airlines unfairly charge passengers for their hand luggage.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Digital Fairness Act

Why it matters to consumers

Digital asymmetry, defined as an omnipresent imbalance of power and knowledge in the digital world, puts consumers in a weaker position towards traders using new technologies. It also leads to completely new challenges that will need to be addressed not only by rethinking some core concepts of consumer law but also targeted new rules tackling specific unfair commercial practices online.

State of play

In October 2024, the **European Commission** published the results of its Digital Fairness Fitness Check on consumer law. The report points out that existing EU legislation does not provide enough protection against harmful commercial practices online such as dark patterns, addictive design, influencer marketing and unfair personalisation. The report also finds that EU consumer law needs to be updated to close legal gaps and ensure more legal clarity. Based on the findings, the **European Commission** has announced it will develop a Digital Fairness Act to tackle those issues and potential other unfair commercial practices.

Recommendations for the Presidency

BEUC calls on the Cyprus EU Presidency to encourage the European Commission to present an ambitious proposal for a Digital Fairness Act addressing the shortcomings of EU consumer law identified in the Digital Fairness Fitness Check report.

What consumers need

- The digital environment must be fair by design and by default, supporting free choice and protecting consumers against misleading practices.
- The burden of proof for infringements of EU law must be eased, in particular in case of unfair personalisation, dark patterns and addictive design.
- A clear and comprehensive horizontal prohibition on dark patterns must be introduced alongside the ban of specific dark patterns (such as giving more prominence to certain choices or making the procedure to unsubscribe more burdensome than to subscribe).
- Addictive design features must be turned off by default.
- Premium virtual currencies and gambling elements in video games (such as loot boxes) must be prohibited.
- Influencer marketing must be more transparent and prohibited for certain dangerous or risky products or services.
- Personalised pricing and personalised advertising based on tracking and profiling must be prohibited.
- The cancellation of subscriptions must be facilitated, for instance by introducing a cancellation button.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: consumer-rights@beuc.eu



DIGITAL POLICY

1

Safeguarding the consumers' data protection rights

Why it matters to consumers

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a pillar on which the digital economy in Europe now depends and is fundamental to protecting people's right to personal data. Modifying the GDPR could create legal uncertainty, potentially more costs for businesses and make personal data protection dependent on the size of the company, which would be at odds with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU treaties.

The AI Act is an important piece of Europe's digital rulebook and a crucial safeguard ensuring that AI systems placed on the market are safe, fair, and accountable. Reopening the AI Act immediately after its adoption would risk weakening carefully negotiated safeguards and inviting renewed pressure for broad exemptions. This would create uncertainty for consumers and responsible businesses alike and undermine the EU's ability to uphold high standards of protection and trust in AI technologies.

State of play

In May 2025, as part of its Fourth Omnibus Proposal on small mid-cap companies, the **European Commission** presented targeted amendments to the GDPR to exempt more companies from the obligation to hold documentation on its data processing.

In November 2025, the **European Commission** presented its Digital Omnibus Proposals amending the GDPR and the AI Act.

What consumers need

- **Simplification must not become deregulation.** The fundamental rights of consumers under the GDPR and AI Act must be protected: the right to privacy should not become a trade-off for the sake of AI deployment and (a few) AI companies' profitability.
- **Safeguarding rules that ensure a level playing field to strengthen competitiveness.** Effective and consistent enforcement of the GDPR ensures that all companies – especially non-European Big Tech – play by the same rules. This prevents unfair advantages for dominant players and supports a competitive market that benefits EU companies and consumers alike.
- **Focusing the simplification effort on improving the enforcement of the GDPR,** particularly in cross-border cases. The European Commission conducted thorough evaluation reports in 2020 and 2024 which failed to find evidence for a need to reopen the GDPR. The latest evaluation report and the EU's Competitiveness Compass instead identified a need to improve its implementation and enforcement.
- **Measures to support small companies to raise awareness about their obligations and help them comply.** It is in people's interest to ensure all companies comply with the law. However, this should not require amending the GDPR.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

ePrivacy

Why it matters to consumers

Although beneficial to consumers, current and emerging technologies represent a major challenge to the fundamental rights of privacy and personal data protection. Consumers should benefit from innovative products and online services without having to give up their privacy rights. A reform of the 2002 ePrivacy Directive is essential to strengthen individuals' right to privacy and the confidentiality of communications, as well as for rebuilding and reinforcing public trust and security in the digital economy.

State of play

In January 2017, the **European Commission** proposed a Regulation on ePrivacy. In October 2017, the **European Parliament** adopted a very strong and consumer-friendly position. In February 2021, the Portuguese Presidency adopted a mandate for trilogue negotiations. Trilogues started in May 2021 but have not reached a political agreement yet. In their conclusions on the 'Future of EU Digital Policy', Member States asked the Commission to assess the functioning and shortcomings of the ePrivacy Directive. In October 2025, the **European Commission** withdrew its proposal.

In November, the **European Commission** presented a Digital Omnibus proposal which substantially weakens key aspects of the ePrivacy Directive.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We urge the Cyprus EU Presidency to consider amendments to the Digital Omnibus in line with the conclusions of the Council's 'Future of EU Digital Policy' and the EU Parliament's positions listed below. The result must maintain the protection granted in the existing ePrivacy Directive and the GDPR.

What consumers need

- **Electronic communications must be confidential.** It should not be possible to process electronic communications data under broad legal grounds such as for 'legitimate interests' or 'compatible purposes'. Whereas the processing of metadata without prior user consent for statistical counting could be envisaged, this must be subject to strong safeguards and strictly limited to public interest purposes.
- **Devices and software must be set by default to provide the highest level of privacy protection.** An obligation to simply provide information about the privacy settings would undermine the 'data protection by design and by default' principle enshrined in the GDPR.
- **Consumers' consent is indispensable to monitor their behaviour and activities.** They must have access to digital services without being forced to accept unnecessary invasions of their privacy.
- **Consumers should be able to rely on NGOs, including consumer organisations,** to represent their interests and take initiatives whenever users' rights have been breached.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

3

Digital Networks Act

Why it matters to consumers

EU telecoms regulation has been a success story for the past three decades. Fair and competitive markets, combined with effective regulatory measures, have been the driving force behind investment, innovation and consumer welfare. The aims announced for a 'Digital Networks Act' to enable market deregulation, consolidation and challenge net neutrality would run contrary to the EU's achievements over recent decades.

State of play

Following a [European Commission](#) White Paper in February 2024 and a Call for Evidence in June 2024, to which BEUC [responded](#), EU Member States adopted conclusions on "EU's future digital infrastructure needs" in December 2024. The Commission will propose a Digital Networks Act in January 2026.

Recommendations for the Presidency

As the Cyprus EU Presidency is expected to start the discussion on the upcoming proposal, we encourage the Presidency to ensure the preservation of the pro-competitive and consumer-centric regulatory framework for EU telecoms. It should resist proposals for further deregulation challenging net neutrality and reducing competition in this sector. We recommend the Presidency to ensure that any upcoming proposal is strictly evidence-based, fully observes the European Commission's Better Regulation Principles, and is preceded by a proper impact assessment and a public consultation.

What consumers need

- The Digital Networks Act should support the primary objectives of the EU legal framework for electronic communications enshrined in the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) of "promoting competition, the internal market, and the safeguard of end-user interests."
- Member States and regulators to ensure the EECC is fully implemented and enforced across the EU.
- Consumers need affordable, high-quality access to the internet to be able to participate in a digital society and economy.
- Any potential measure to increase investment in high-quality broadband connectivity infrastructure should preserve a high level of competition, ensure net neutrality and avoid market deregulation.
- Reaching the 2030 connectivity targets must prioritise the deployment of infrastructure to areas where connectivity is lacking, focusing on remote areas and supporting vulnerable consumers.
- The Digital Networks Act should advance, not water down, the rights of end-users under the EECC, increasing protections on contract transparency and information requirements, guarantees on portability and switching, accessibility and affordability measures, and Universal Service obligations.

- Completing the EU Single Market for electronic communications should concentrate on promoting competition and protecting consumers, with a focus on removing barriers for consumers to use and access telecoms services.
- Policymakers should reject network fees or similar measures, such as contribution mechanisms' or 'dispute resolution mechanisms' between content providers and telecom operators that could amount to a 'sending-party-pays' system.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: digital@beuc.eu



ENERGY

1

The Commission's strategies on energy and housing

Why it matters to consumers

Costs for energy and housing continue to put consumers' budgets under real pressure and many people from across Europe are increasingly facing hurdles to pay their bills. The EU needs to tackle the root causes of high energy and housing prices (e.g. through making energetic housing renovation and retrofit affordable and convenient) while maintaining its commitment towards the energy transition.

State of play

Almost a year ago, the **Commission** proposed an 'Action Plan for Affordable Energy'. This plan gave a good overview of the many aspects needed to make clean energy a reality for Europeans and is now due to be followed by many initiatives. Some of these were published during the Danish Presidency (Grids Package, European Affordable Housing Plan) and many will be presented during the Cyprus EU Presidency (Citizens Energy Package, Electrification Action Plan and Heating and Cooling Strategy).

Recommendations for the Presidency

BEUC calls on the Cyprus EU Presidency to progress on the implementation of the Commission initiatives and to contribute to the preparation of the upcoming ones. This could, for instance, include discussions in the Council about what priority measures the action plans should put forward.

What consumers need

- The Electrification Action Plan should help bring affordable, secure and clean electricity to households. The Action Plan should for example incentivise Member States to correct price signals to favour clean technologies over fossil-fuel alternatives. This could happen by addressing the high charges and levies borne by electricity and clean up electricity bills from non-energy related levies.
- The Heating and Cooling Strategy should speed up the uptake of heat pumps, expands renewable-based district heating, and accelerate housing renovations. For example, the Strategy should include clear guidance to Member States on the future of gas networks, including measures adequately protecting consumers during the gas phase-out.

- The 'Citizens Energy Package' should provide detailed recommendations on how to practically implement the new consumer energy rights and protections introduced under the last mandate. The new package should touch upon emerging issues, such as how to best protect consumers signing up to dynamic price contracts, stronger protection in district heating markets and protection of vulnerable consumers when gas networks are decommissioned.
- The digitalising and use of AI in the energy sector should benefit consumers. For this to happen, safeguards should be put in place to ensure data privacy and protection, the cybersecure products and services, and trustworthy AI systems.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: energy@beuc.eu



ENFORCEMENT AND REDRESS

1

Revision of the CPC Regulation

Why it matters to consumers

Enforcement of EU laws faces growing challenges. A widening gap in power and resources separates large traders from enforcement authorities, which often operate under tight budgets and limited staffing. In the digital space, violations can occur rapidly and invisibly, allowing traders to profit before authorities can respond – sometimes years later.

State of play

The Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (CPC Regulation) sets up an enforcement framework coordinating the work of national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws. A revision has been discussed for years and a **European Commission** proposal is expected by Q4 2026.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We ask the Cyprus EU Presidency to hold a discussion with stakeholders in early 2026 to identify the key obstacles that the revision of the CPC Regulation should address and to propose solutions to mitigate them.

What consumers need

- **Greater centralised enforcement for addressing EU-wide issues:** When infringements affect consumers across multiple countries, relying solely on national authorities leads to inefficiencies. To address strategic cross-border cases, enforcement must be more centralised. The European Commission should be empowered to initiate and lead investigations with Member States and impose sanctions when traders fail to cooperate or breach commitments.
- **Enhancing the European Commission's independence and resources:** A stronger enforcement role for the Commission must come with greater independence. CPC actions against traders should be free from political influence to ensure credibility and public trust.
- **Bridging private and public enforcement:** Effective consumer protection depends on synergy between public and private enforcement. The CPC Regulation, Representative Actions Directive, and Consumer Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive should be interconnected. For example, CPC decisions should impose follow-on representative actions.

- **Upgrading enforcement procedures and tools:** Authorities only use a minority of tools at their disposal to address unlawful practices. Selecting the right remedy requires understanding of what impacts traders most, considering their resources and market power.
- **Strengthening cooperation with consumer organisations in CPC procedures:** Under the CPC Regulation, certain entities can issue external alerts when they detect potential violations - BEUC has used this mechanism 11 times so far. While this cooperation has helped build trust, the process remains opaque. Complainants are still scarcely informed about investigations' progress or ongoing discussions with traders. Consumer organisations could contribute beyond alerts, providing evidence and engaging in remedy discussions.
- **Breaking silos and ensuring cross-cutting cooperation between authorities:** Many harmful practices - especially digital ones - have implications beyond consumer protection, touching on data privacy, competition, and safety. Yet cooperation between authorities remains limited.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Collective redress and support for qualified entities

Why it matters to consumers

From financial mis-selling scandals to faulty medical implants, consumers across the EU sometimes fall victim to multiple products or services that cause harm. But they usually have very little chance to get compensation in court because legal proceedings are expensive and time-consuming. In situations of mass harm, often the only realistic option for consumers is to try to obtain compensation by going to court together (collective redress). It is important that consumer associations and other entities representing harmed consumers can bring representative actions in practice and that they do not face too many barriers.

State of play

The adoption of the Representative Actions Directive in 2020 was a milestone in EU consumer policy. The **European Commission** is evaluating whether Member States have implemented the rules in line with the Directive's key objective, which is ensuring access to justice in mass harm situations.

The **European Commission** is also evaluating whether the existing EU private international law framework remains adequate for cross-border collective redress actions.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We ask the Cyprus EU Presidency to hold a discussion in Council about how the Directive has been rolled out in Member States. Particular attention must be given to sufficient financing for representative actions and the revision of EU private international law rules applicable to cross-border mass claims.

What consumers need

- Consumer associations must be supported by governments to become strong private enforcers, using both injunctions and collective redress actions. This would deliver better access to justice and more equality for consumers, as well as ensuring that recovering consumer markets are also fair and transparent for competitors.
- EU private international law rules must be adapted to the specificities of cross-border representative actions. The Representative Actions Directive did not touch upon the existing EU private international law rules making the resolution of cross-border mass claims very complex and uncertain in practice.
- There is today no evidence showing that third-party litigation funding (TPLF) has had detrimental consequences and brought abusive litigation in Europe. On the contrary, TPLF remains a crucial option for organisations willing to bring court cases as they are very expensive. Discussions on the need to regulate TPLF funding are premature and should not take place before the Representative Action Directive will be evaluated in 2028.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: enforcement@beuc.eu



FINANCIAL SERVICES

1

Digital euro project and the future of cash

Why it matters to consumers

Today, the consumer has two main options to pay: either cash or electronic means (card, transfer or direct debit). Cash is managed by central banks, electronic payments by private banks. As payments are becoming increasingly digital, more payments will be in the hands of private banks. This is the main reason for the European Central Bank (ECB) initiative to create a digital version of the euro. Once adopted, it should possess the same characteristics as cash to bring an added value to consumers (e.g. same level of privacy as cash, high security standards, off-line availability).

State of play

The **Commission** published legislative proposals on the digital euro and on the legal tender of cash in June 2023. Both Parliament and Council negotiation mandates are still outstanding.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We encourage the Cyprus EU Presidency to continue Council negotiations on the legislative framework for the digital euro with a view to adopting a Council position.

What consumers need

The digital euro must:

- Be designed with consumers at its heart and guided by the public interest, not that of private banks.
- Always follow the principles of privacy by design and by default, allowing for anonymous transactions up to a certain amount in compliance with anti-money laundering laws.
- Offer the possibility to make offline transactions to increase its resilience and acceptability.
- Improve financial inclusion and be offered to all consumers free of charge.
- Ensure fair reimbursement in case of fraud in the form of charge-back mechanisms.

In addition, cash must continue to be accepted widely and remain easily accessible to consumers.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Savings and Investment Union

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers need to be able to save, invest and be protected effectively. This could be for their own retirement, large purchases like a home or renovations, their children's education, or to have appropriate reserves in case of life events. To do this, it is necessary to invest money, to beat inflation but also to be able to increase their ability to afford things in general. As it stands, retail investment products in the EU underperform significantly, leading consumers to refrain from engaging with this market. In addition, significant proportions of European consumers lack easy access to a reasonable quality retirement savings product.

State of play

The Savings and Investment Union must establish a standardised, simple and low-cost saving and investment product for consumers to provide an alternative to the wide variety of low-quality products currently sold on EU capital markets. The current narrative circles around increasing consumer participation in capital markets as a way to fund European industries, which can only be achieved if a product as described above is easily available to retail investors.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We encourage the Cyprus EU Presidency to focus on the consumers' perspective during trilogue negotiations on the Retail Investment Strategy proposal, securing a sound approach to the value for money system, including objective benchmarks and high-quality reporting standards. In view of the Savings and Investment Union, we encourage the Presidency to re-introduce the 1% cost cap for the Pan-European personal pension product (PEPP) so that low-cost savings and investment products become available and are effectively distributed to consumers.

What consumers need

- To avoid conflicts of interest, an EU-wide ban on inducements for financial advisers involved in the sale of retail financial products, based on the Dutch and UK experiences. In the absence of political support, alternatives must include a ban on inducements for sales without advice.
- Effective value for money rules to contain the worst excesses allowed by the current market failure. Whether by stronger supervision or legislation, investment products whose quality is too low to justify to consumers must be removed from the market.
- A review of the results of this process must happen as soon as possible, to check if the current package has contributed to reducing consumer harm - the proposed review clause should not therefore be diluted.
- The Savings and Investment Union must focus on improving the situation of retail investors to make this market attractive to them. Unless consumers' investment outcomes improve, higher engagement is unlikely.
- To address the pensions gap, it is important to establish a standard investment product, at low cost and offering high returns, that is easily accessible to all EU consumers. An advice-free PEPP with a cost cap of 1% would enable this.
- Auto-enrolment solutions could circumvent the failure of our current financial advice architecture and contribute to higher engagement, provided the underlying product is of good quality. Auto-enrolment into poor quality products would be highly counterproductive.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: financialservices@beuc.eu



FOOD

1

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

Why it matters to consumers

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) represents close to a third of the total EU budget for the period 2021-2027. Although there is broad support among consumers for a strong CAP budget overall, the way farm subsidies are currently being used and distributed does not sufficiently align with consumer priorities. Moreover, a key objective of the CAP – ensuring reasonable food prices for consumers – is not being met.

State of play

The **European Commission** presented its proposal for the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in July 2025. Negotiations with the **European Parliament** and the **Council** are ongoing, with discussions focusing on the CAP's budgetary autonomy, governance architecture, and the balance between flexibility and common standards. The final post-2027 CAP will depend on the outcome of these inter-institutional negotiations and subsequent national strategic planning.

Recommendations for the Presidency

Consumers expect the CAP to sustain environmental goals, contribute to food affordability, and to better incorporate their concerns. The Cyprus EU Presidency should ensure that consumer priorities regarding how subsidies are distributed and spent are better reflected in the next CAP.

What consumers need

- The CAP represents about a third of the EU budget. As such, to retain its social license and legitimacy in the eyes of consumers it needs to align more closely with how consumers would like farming subsidies to be distributed and spent.
- The CAP needs to be much more targeted. Less than one in four consumers find that the CAP subsidies are fairly distributed, either amongst countries or between different types of farms. At the same time, two thirds want subsidies to go primarily to small- and medium-farms and young farmers. It is positive that current post-2027 CAP proposal includes degressivity and capping.
- CAP subsidies should support farmers – both big and small – for adopting more sustainable practices, which respond to environmental challenges. Financial incentives can help to reward such farmers. However, incentives are not a substitute for baseline environmental protection via conditionalities.

- Our BEUC consumer survey on the CAP showed that almost one third of consumers reported difficulties in dealing with food expenses. Against these findings, the CAP should contribute to securing affordable food for consumers.
- Sustainable food consumption policies need to accompany more sustainable food production practices, such as the improvement of food environments where the healthy and sustainable choice is the easy one.

ADDITIONAL SOURCE

2

Fairness of the food supply chain

Why it matters to consumers

Food prices have reached unprecedentedly high levels over the past couple of years in the EU, pushing many consumers towards less healthy, less sustainable food or even to restrict the amount of food they eat. Consumers want to eat more healthily and sustainably but face significant barriers to turn their intentions into action. Food environments need to change to make the healthy and sustainable choice the easy one for consumers. At the same time, farmers have taken to the streets to call for a fairer revenue, raising questions on the (in)equitable distribution of costs and margins in the food supply chain. A fairer food supply chain must benefit farmers and consumers alike.

State of play

In March 2024, the **Commission** outlined plans for measures aimed at improving the position of farmers in the food supply chain. The EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory (AFCO) on costs, margins and trading practices was set up to increase transparency in the chain, and the **Commission** has made a series of targeted amendments to the Directive on Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) and the Common Market Organisation (CMO) regulation in December 2024.

Following the **European Parliament's** adoption of amendments to the CMO regulation reserving 'meaty' names - such as "steak", "escalope" and "burger" - exclusively for meat, interinstitutional negotiations started in October 2025. The **European Commission** also published a proposal for a regular revision of the CMO Regulation, restricting names allowed for plant-based products.

In addition, the **Commission** aims to publish an omnibus proposal to increase the competitiveness of EU farmers and the food and feed industry.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We encourage the Cyprus EU Presidency to critically assess and discuss the above-mentioned proposals within the Council to ensure they promote a fair food supply from farm to fork, where costs and benefits are equitably shared among the various actors, and consumers are not disproportionately burdened. The Council should also ensure that uptake of healthy and sustainable diets, including more plant-based foods, are facilitated instead of constrained. In addition, the Presidency should help ensure that any simplification initiative in the food and feed sector does not lower consumer protection standards.

What consumers need

- The EU AFCCO must bring much-needed transparency on where consumers' money goes in the food supply chain.
- The healthy and sustainable choice needs to be the most affordable, widely available and attractive one for consumers. This can be done through fiscal measures and subsidies that support the shift to healthier diets, sustainable public procurement that covers environmental and health dimensions, as well as banning the marketing of unhealthy foods to children which strongly impacts the rise of childhood obesity.
- Banning meat denominations for plant-based alternatives makes little sense from a consumer perspective. Evidence confirms that almost 70% of consumers clearly understand when terms like "burger" or "sausage" are used for plant-based products, if they are clearly identifiable as vegetarian or vegan.
- It is essential for children's health to limit their consumption at school of products high in free sugars and fats and exclude processed foods. It is also necessary to encourage children to learn about healthy diets, local food systems, and sustainability. To do so, the WHO guidelines on healthy diets must be strictly applied across Member States, funding must prioritise fresh, minimally processed fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and legumes. Vulnerable children should be considered a priority.
- Consumers expect clear information on the food they consume on the physical label of the product. They also expect essential information (nutrition and ingredients) to be present on the physical label of alcohol beverages, not as a QR code. The latter should only be used for complementary information.
- Consumers expect food imported into the EU from third countries to comply with the same standards as EU products. Import requirements must be introduced in EU legislation to ensure fair markets for farmers and consumers alike. The Council should call on the Commission to finally publish proposals to revise the animal welfare legislation, including provisions to apply the same requirements to imports as to domestic production.
- Consumers need EU legislation that protects their rights. Any simplification proposal in the food sector must uphold the precautionary principle, ensuring that any changes to the regulatory framework prioritise consumer protection over economic convenience for other stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: food@beuc.eu



HEALTH

1

Access to medicines

Why it matters to consumers

Consumer surveys have revealed that people struggle to get the medicines they need because of shortages. Latest data shows that half of those who had experienced a medicine shortage said it had a negative impact on their health.³ In addition, focus groups carried out with BEUC members showed consumers consider medicines an essential good. As a result, high drug prices and excessive profits by pharma companies do not sit well with consumers, and even less so when they consider public sector financial support for the development of medicines which leads often to excessive private profits. High medicine prices fuel inequalities in patient access across the EU and hinder the financial sustainability of healthcare systems.

State of play

In April 2023, the **European Commission** tabled a proposal for a revised Directive on medicinal products, and a revised Regulation on the centralised marketing authorisation procedure and the European Medicines Agency. In April 2024, the **European Parliament** adopted its position on the legislative package. The **Council** reached an agreement in June 2025 and co-legislators reached a deal in December. In addition, earlier in the year the **European Commission** published its proposal for a Critical Medicines Act. The **Council** agreed its position in December.

Recommendations for the Presidency

The Cyprus EU Presidency should ensure that the EU adopts a pro-consumer pharmaceutical legislation. Consumers need urgent solutions that improve access to safe, effective and affordable medicines. The Presidency should also help ensure that the triologue talks on the Critical Medicines Act deliver a text that strengthens supply security to the benefit of consumers across the EU.

What consumers need

The Critical Medicines Act must:

- Facilitate joint procurement by Member States beyond crisis situations, for example for expensive cancer treatments.
- Incorporate in procurement criteria for critical medicines supply security measures, while ensuring fair pricing.

³ <https://www.euroconsumers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Drug-shortages-survey-report-2.pdf>

- Ensure coordinated approaches to stockpiling.
- Foster partnerships and trade agreements with third countries that lead to more diversified supply chains.
- Ensure that the provision of State Aid complies with competition rules and principles and goes hand in hand with conditionalities on medicine availability and affordability.
- Support non-profit production models.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Medical devices

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers use a wide range of medical devices in their daily lives to walk, keep their heart beating, or check their glucose levels for instance. If these products perform poorly, they can disrupt consumers' health and quality of life. Consumers can also be negatively impacted by the shortage of safe and effective medical devices.

State of play

The 2017 revision of the EU rules on medical devices and in-vitro diagnostics reinforced public trust in the approval and post-market surveillance systems for these important products. However, the extended transition periods to implement the rules means that consumers have not yet reaped the full benefits. In recent years, there has been growing attention to the shortage and withdrawal of medical devices, the root causes of which are not always clear. The [European Commission](#) started an evaluation of the regulations on Medical Devices (MDR) and the In-Vitro Diagnostics (IVDR) and wants to propose some targeted changes.

Recommendations for the Presidency

The Cyprus EU Presidency should contribute to ensuring that the partial revision of the MDR and IVDR builds on the consumer-friendly measures introduced in 2017 and reinforces them where gaps have been identified.

What consumers need

- Safety standards in the approval process for medical devices must be strong. Post-market surveillance must be adequate and irrespective of the various sales channels, including online marketplaces. High quality clinical investigations and transparency are necessary.
- Product information should be primarily in paper format, complemented by digital means of information that are privacy friendly.
- Effective measures on shortage prevention and mitigation are needed, with a possibility of reporting medical device shortages to competent authorities.
- Health apps must safeguard data privacy and security and be reliable.
- Enhanced coordination between national competent authorities, the European Medicines Agency, expert panels, the European Commission and notified bodies will smoothen implementation of the legislation.

ADDITIONAL SOURCE



For more information: health@beuc.eu



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1

EU-US relations

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers in the EU and the US face similar challenges. Maintaining cooperation between regulators on both sides of the Atlantic can help better protect consumers. On the other hand, a deterioration of the transatlantic relationship in the form of a trade war would negatively impact consumers, leading to increased prices and reduced choice.

State of play

The EU concluded a framework agreement with the US in July 2025 to avoid the imposition of high tariffs on EU goods exported to the US. To materialise the agreement, the **Commission** put forward two legislative proposals to eliminate tariffs on industrial goods from the US and open further quotas for the US to export to the EU. **Parliament** and **Council** are now considering these proposals. The US have partially started to implement the tariff part of the agreement. However, the situation remains highly unstable, with the US administration asking the EU for more concessions, such as weakening consumer and environmental protection.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to remain strong on preserving and enforcing EU laws, despite the US deregulatory pressures. We encourage the Presidency to explore other options and maintain cooperation between EU and US consumer protection regulators, such as on rising e-commerce flows affecting EU and US customs.

What consumers need

- Consumers should be able to trust that their current and future level of protections will resist US coercion. The EU must stand firm and enforce its laws designed to protect EU consumers and ensure EU's competitiveness. The follow-up discussions on the framework agreement must be highly transparent and engage civil society. Such discussions will be about regulations and could significantly impact consumer protection.
- Consumers should not be the collateral victim of a trade war:
 - Should the framework agreement fail for any reason, consumers' cost of living and choice must be upheld. This means the EU should refrain from imposing tariffs on US products for which alternatives are lacking – such as almonds – and on products relevant for the energy transition – such as heat pumps.
 - Should the EU decide to explore the use of the anti-coercion instrument with the US, a careful approach will be needed to avoid creating obstacles to services for which consumers have few alternatives. This is the case of payment services and retail investment products.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Customs reform

Why it matters to consumers

A significant proportion of household appliances, clothes, toys and food comes from outside the EU. International e-commerce is causing these imports to grow rapidly. While consumers may think all imports are safe and comply with EU standards, the reality is more complicated. BEUC members have found a significant inflow of non-compliant, dangerous and low-quality products coming into the EU. EU law requires traders to inform consumers of the total cost at the time of purchase, yet consumers are sometimes charged unexpected import fees upon delivery.

State of play

The **Commission** proposed in May 2023 to reform EU customs policy, and the **Parliament** adopted its position in April 2024. The **Council** adopted its partial approach in June 2025 and added the concept of handling fees to help customs authorities cope with the increased e-commerce volumes. Trilogue negotiations are now ongoing. The Cyprus EU Presidency will have a key role to play in reaching an agreement on this proposal.

Recommendations for the Presidency

This reform is of utmost importance to better protect consumers from dangerous and non-compliant products in the Single Market and ensure they comply with EU environmental requirements, such as Ecodesign. We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to facilitate the swift adoption of an ambitious agreement.

What consumers need

- **Safe and compliant imports:** we call on the Council to create clearer responsibility for importers to improve the enforcement of EU law, including safety and sustainability. It should be accompanied by deterring sanctions in case of infringement of non-fiscal obligations.

- **Well-resourced customs authorities:** to fulfil their mission, they need more financial and human resources. Training resources should be available as well as efficient IT tools to support their work. The idea of introducing handling fees to support authorities could be part of the solution, as long as it is supported by importers and not consumers.
- **Effective cross-checking of products between authorities:** customs authorities need to exchange information through a common data hub. They should also work better together on-site and be trained jointly.
- **No more surprise import fees:** the concept of a deemed importer would also ensure that consumers do not have to pay extra customs duties at the time of delivery. We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to ensure that any other fees will be paid by the importer and deemed importer, beyond customs duties, to fully put an end to surprise custom fees for consumers.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

3

EU-UK relations

Why it matters to consumers

The UK and EU are major trading partners. Their relationship matters given the impact it can have on the choices, rights and protections that UK and EU consumers can expect when consuming goods and services from each other's markets such as household goods, food and travel. Consumers from both sides of the Channel face common challenges, such as the cost-of-living crisis, scams, and the rise of dangerous products reaching their homes.

State of play

The EU and the UK trade relations are based on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) concluded in 2020. The relationship has been improving recently. The EU and the UK summit of 19 May 2025 gave further impetus to deepening the partnership. The Commission has proposed to the Council negotiating directives for agreements on food safety and electricity. The Cyprus EU Presidency will have a key role in this context.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to contribute to further improving the relationship. It is time to enter a new phase of normalisation of the relationship, based on mutual trust and aiming at enhancing consumer welfare.

What consumers need

- **A forward-looking food safety agreement:** the potential agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) should enable smoother trade in food across the channel. However, the EU negotiating directives indicate that the EU and the UK can regulate to protect consumers and health, as long as this does not create obstacles to their bilateral trade. In this context, a draft law providing better food labelling for consumers, or a law requiring imported products to comply with domestic animal welfare standards, could be considered as barriers to trade. In such case, the draft laws could be withdrawn. This would prevent consumers from making more informed choices when buying food. It is important that the Presidency prevents such unintended consequences from happening.
- **Preventing unfair practices:** A meaningful way to better protect consumers against these practices would be cooperation between the UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the EU Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network.
- **Combatting fraud:** The existing cooperation on financial services between the EU and the UK should focus on scams including discussions on the right for reimbursement for consumers, fraud prevention measures and obligations for online platforms etc. to help prevent fraud.
- **Special attention to Northern Ireland:** EU retailers and online marketplaces have decided to no longer deliver to Northern Ireland, creating supply issues for consumers. This should be monitored. We also recommend creating a parcel dialogue between authorities, operators and consumer organisations to monitor new parcel processes under the Windsor Framework.

ADDITIONAL SOURCE

4

Digital trade

Why it matters to consumers

EU consumers frequently shop online, but when buying from non-EU sellers, they are exposed to risks such as insufficient traceability of traders, unsafe products and unfair AI systems. It can also be complicated for consumers to act if something goes wrong. Recent EU trade agreements have begun to address this issue through digital trade provisions or standalone Digital Trade Agreements, which is a positive development. However, the EU is also including other rules in its trade agreements on cross-border data flows and access to source code, which could undermine consumer privacy and limit regulatory oversight of algorithmic systems.

State of play

In 2025, the EU concluded the negotiations of Digital Trade Agreements with Singapore and South Korea, while accelerating negotiations with Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Canada and Malaysia. This new type of deal focuses solely on digital trade and reflects the EU's ambition to become the global standard-setter for digital trade rules and cross-border data flows.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We call on the Cyprus EU Presidency to ensure that these digital trade deals are designed with consumers' interests at their core. They should enhance consumer trust online without undermining the EU's ability to regulate, enforce its laws, or uphold fundamental protections in the long run. Sensitive issues for consumers, such as cross-border data flows and access to source code, should be excluded from trade talks.

What consumers need

- **The EU must fully preserve its ability to protect citizens' personal data and privacy.** The EU should no longer include rules on data flows in its agreements. Should the EU pursue such negotiations despite our concerns, the rules on data flows agreed in the EU-New Zealand trade and cooperation agreement should be used as a model, not the ones agreed with Japan in October 2023 or with Singapore in July 2024.
- **The EU must ensure that restrictions on accessing source code do not prevent authorities from scrutinising AI and software-based systems,** which is essential for algorithmic transparency and accountability. Restrictions could also create obstacles to the right of consumers to repair their everyday products, as most products nowadays cannot be fixed without access to software tools. To that end, the EU should stop including source code rules in its trade agreements. If the EU decides otherwise, the Commission should revise its proposals on source code in ongoing negotiations to narrow the exceptions.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: international@beuc.eu



SAFETY

1

REACH revision

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers worry about their own – and their children’s – exposure to harmful chemicals. Product testing by BEUC members show that dangerous – and often illegal – chemicals are prevalent in many everyday consumer goods such as clothes or childcare products. A reform of the main EU chemicals law REACH is urgent to prevent consumer exposure to harmful chemicals including by enhancing enforcement at the EU’s borders and on online marketplaces.

State of play

The Political Guidelines for the 2024-2029 European Commission announced a new Chemical Industry Package among others to simplify REACH. Preparatory work for the REACH revision is ongoing.

Recommendations for the Presidency

We encourage the Cyprus EU Presidency to launch Council discussions once the Commission proposal is published, with a view to swiftly reach a General Approach which will ensure progress in protecting consumers’ health and the environment.

What consumers need

- The REACH revision needs to simplify the REACH risk-management processes to enable faster, protective action against harmful chemicals such as PFAS (known as ‘forever chemicals’) before their use becomes widespread across society. This should be done by reducing the evidence needed to justify preventive action.
- The Generic Risk Approach should be extended to endocrine disruptors and other chemicals of high concern. Legal implementation targets are needed to ensure that such chemicals are phased out from consumer products within a clear timeframe.
- An obligation to establish within the EU an economic operator responsible for compliance with REACH should be introduced. This will aid enforcement efforts against non-EU traders while also preventing situations where consumers become the de facto importer.
- The role and responsibilities of online marketplaces need to be adequately regulated with the possibility to hold them liable for non-compliant products if no other EU-based economic actor can be identified.

- The Generic Risk Approach should be extended to endocrine disruptors and other chemicals of high concern. Legal implementation targets are needed to ensure that such chemicals are phased out from consumer products within a clear timeframe.
- An obligation to establish within the EU an economic operator responsible for compliance with REACH should be introduced. This will aid enforcement efforts against non-EU traders while also preventing situations where consumers become the de facto importer.
- The role and responsibilities of online marketplaces need to be adequately regulated with the possibility to hold them liable for non-compliant products if no other EU-based economic actor can be identified.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

2

Chemicals omnibus

Why it matters to consumers

Omnibus VI on chemicals aims to simplify core EU laws to reduce compliance costs and administrative burdens for businesses. This includes proposals to water down the preventive ban on toxic cosmetic ingredients while also rolling back new rules meant to make common household chemicals like glues or detergents safer to use for consumers through clearer labels. If agreed, Omnibus VI would therefore greatly weaken consumer protection against hazardous chemicals.

State of play

The **Commission** published a simplification ‘omnibus’ on chemicals in July 2025. The **Council** reached its General Approach in November 2025.

Recommendations for the Presidency

BEUC encourages the Cyprus EU Presidency to drive forward the trilogue negotiations once the European Parliament position is available to ensure that efforts to simplify EU chemicals rules strengthen rather than weaken consumer protection against hazardous chemicals.

What consumers need

- EU cosmetics legislation prohibits use of cosmetic ingredients that may cause cancer, change DNA, or harm reproductive health (CMR substances). This CMR ban is an essential consumer safeguard that should be maintained by rejecting the changes proposed by the Commission.
- The CMR ban should instead be extended to endocrine disruptors to enable a simpler, faster risk management approach for such substances in the future. This would both increase consumer protection and would also reduce burdens on authorities by reversing the burden of proof, while enhancing legal signals to market actors on the areas where innovation in safer alternatives should be prioritised.
- Chemical labels should work for consumers by being useful, understandable, and reliable. This will contribute to a high level of protection for consumer health and the environment.
- Consumer should have access to all important information related to an advertised chemical as part of the advertisement and not only at the time of purchase when a decision may already have been made.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: safety@beuc.eu



SUSTAINABILITY

1

Substantiating green claims

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers' growing interest in making sustainable purchases has led to a rise in green claims and labels, which are not always reliable or accurate. With three out of four products carrying an environmental claim, the confusion and lack of trust concerning environmental information among Europeans is a real barrier to the green transition. As 53% of green claims are based on vague, misleading or unfounded information, 61% of EU consumers find it hard to tell which products are truly green. To prevent greenwashing, information displayed on products must be reliable, comparable and verifiable.

State of play

In March 2023, the **European Commission** published its proposal for a Directive on Green Claims. While the proposal should ensure that labels are robust and trustworthy, we are concerned that it further limits environmental labelling schemes which can benefit consumers. In March 2024, the **European Parliament** adopted its position bringing improvements to the text in line with BEUC recommendations. The **Council** adopted its general approach in June 2024. Trilogue negotiations started in January 2025 and technical continued during the Danish Presidency.

Recommendations for the Presidency

BEUC calls on the Cyprus EU Presidency to reach an agreement on the proposed Directive on Green Claims – which BEUC supports but considers needs significant improvements – and to ensure coherence with the Empowering the Consumers for the Green Transition Directive. Both pieces of legislation must, in combination, guarantee that green claims and labels are robust and trustworthy. The Council should preserve the ambition of the Commission's proposal and further improve it.

What consumers need

- The requirements for substantiating and communicating green claims should be developed with balanced participation of Member State representatives and relevant stakeholders, including consumer organisations, through a dedicated consultation forum.
- Green claims should be transparent and reflect the real environmental impact of products and traders, without hiding it or giving the impression that it is minimised or compensated through financial contributions to external projects like in carbon neutral claims.

- Green claims must be backed by robust evidence building on the principle of 'no data, no claim'. Companies must be transparent - publicly disclosing the evidence substantiating their claims and having the claims verified before making them.
- Trustworthy labels should be reinforced to increase consumer access to eco-labelled products. The verification procedures for claims and labelling schemes should be swift enough to ensure the organisations in charge of trustworthy labels are not forced to discontinue them.
- The Directive should ensure environmental labels are trustworthy and reliable, while not restricting the development of those which bring added value. Notably, environmental labels based on aggregated indicators of environmental impacts or aspects, as well as new labels developed by Member States should not be prohibited, provided they are based on robust assessment methods and independent governance.
- Enforcement processes and penalties must be sufficiently strong to dissuade companies from making unsubstantiated claims.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: sustainability@beuc.eu



TRANSPORT

1

Revision of the CO2 standards for cars and automotive package

Why it matters to consumers

Mobility is the second-largest area of expenditure for European households. For those that depend on a car for their daily journeys, the purchase of a vehicle is therefore an important financial decision. BEUC research shows that electric cars can be a good deal for consumers. Small and medium-sized electric vehicles will soon be cheaper to run than their petrol equivalents. Most importantly, any new electric vehicle sold today will bring financial benefits to its second and third owners. This is crucial, as most consumers buy second-hand. Importantly, alternatives such as e-fuels or plug-in hybrids do not compete with electric vehicles.

State of play

The **Commission** plans to soon present a package of measures for the automotive industry, including:

- A review of the CO2 standards for cars and vans
- A proposal on Greening Corporate Fleets
- An initiative to boost small electric vehicles made in Europe
- The revision of the Car Labelling Directive
- An Automotive Omnibus

Recommendations for the Presidency

To stay on course and boost consumer confidence, policymakers should ensure that 2030 and 2035 car CO2 targets are maintained. BEUC also calls for improving public support to consumers, for example via social leasing schemes, and accelerating the supply of second-hand electric cars. We also need better access to and more affordable charging solutions, along with better information about how long-lasting batteries are and how far they can go in real road conditions.

The review of the CO2 standards should refrain from offering costly solutions to consumers, such as plug-in hybrids, e-fuels and biofuels.

What consumers need

- Certainty regarding the trajectory for the car industry, boosting the availability and affordability of electric vehicles, by maintaining the 2030 and 2035 targets.
- Keeping the Plug-in Hybrids in check: real-world data show they are barely driven in electric modes, inducing high costs and creating affordability issues as they are not fit for the second-hand market.
- E-fuels and biofuels are expensive and should not be allowed in passenger cars.
- Corporate fleets should electrify faster to stimulate the supply of electric vehicles on the second-hand market, which is the relevant one for consumers.
- Clear information on the sustainability of cars and the technical specifications of electric vehicles, including the health status of the car's battery, the charging power and the real-life fuel/electricity consumption.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES



For more information: sustainability@beuc.eu

END

Published in December 2025 by BEUC, Brussels, Belgium.



The European Consumer Organisation
Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs
Europäischer Verbraucherverband
Rue d'Arlon, 80 Bte 1, B - 1040 Bruxelles

The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and it is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

- AB Qendra Konsumatori shqiptar
- AT Arbeiterkammer
- AT Verein für Konsumenteninformation (VKI)
- BG Асоциация Активни потребители
- CH Fédération romande des consommateurs
- CY Kypriakos Syndesmos Katanaloton
- CZ dTest
- DE Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (vzbv)
- DE Stiftung Warentest
- DK Forbrugerrådet Tænk
- EL EKPIZO
- EL KEPKA
- ES Asufin
- ES Confederación de consumidores y usuarios (CECU)
- FI Kuluttajaliitto ry
- FR Consommation, logement et cadre de vie (CLCV)
- FR UFC-Que Choisir
- HR Unija potrosaca Hrvatske
- HU Fogasztóvédelmi Egyesületek Országos Szövetsége (FEOSZ)
- HU Tudatos Vásárlók Egyesülete
- IE Consumers' Association of Ireland (CAI)
- IS Neytendasamtökin (NS)
- IT Adiconsum
- IT Consumatori Italiani per l'Europa
- LT Vartotojų aljansas
- LV Latvijas Patērētāju interešu aizstāvības asociācija (LPIAA)
- LU Union Luxembourgeoise des Consommateurs (ULC)
- MK Organizacija na potrosuvacite na Makedonija (OPM)
- MT ACR Malta
- NL Consumentenbond
- NO Forbrukerrådet
- PL Federacja Konsumentów
- PL Fundacja Konsumentów
- PT DECO
- RO Asociația Pro Consumatori
- SK Spoločnosti ochrany spotrebiteľov (S.O.S.)
- SE Sveriges Konsumenter
- SI Zveza Potrošnikov Slovenije (ZPS)
- UK Citizens Advice
- UK Legal Services Consumer Panel
- UK The Consumer Council of Northern Ireland
- UK Which?



The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is the largest organisation promoting the general interests of Europe's consumers. Founded in 1962, it proudly represents more than 40 independent national consumer organisations from over 30 European countries. Together with our members, we inform EU policies to improve people's lives in a sustainable and fair economy and society.



Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.