

Contact: Sébastien Pant: press@beuc.eu
Date: 20/01/2022
Reference: BEUC-PR-2022-003

EU Parliament improves some protections for consumers in digital services but fails to go full mile

The European Parliament has adopted its position on the Digital Services Act (DSA), legislation which aims to create a safer online environment for consumers, but it fails to hit the heights needed to transform the situation fully to address consumers' needs despite some improvements.

Consumer groups consistently find huge amounts of dangerous products and scams on online marketplaces, with for example two-thirds of the products purchased from online marketplaces failing safety tests in a 2019 sweep across Europe [1]. German consumer testing organisation Stiftung Warentest uncovered in 2020 how fake, favourable product or service reviews on these platforms can easily be bought to influence consumers' decisions [2], and platforms' practices even incentivise this fake review system [3].

Ursula Pachi, Deputy Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said:

"This law is vital for tackling the tsunami of unsafe and illegal products that are sold on online marketplaces. We need drastic action to remedy this unacceptable situation. The Parliament has done a mixed job. While it is positive the Parliament wants marketplaces to check traders are legitimate and conduct checks on the goods sold on their platforms, it has not created a clear liability regime for marketplaces to ensure consumers are protected and compensated if they suffer damages from illegal practices taking place on these platforms. The Parliament has also included exemptions for smaller platforms and a waiver for medium-size platforms, which would mean consumers could still buy unsafe products if they head to smaller online marketplaces and that is simply a no-go.

"The Parliament should have supported a full ban on surveillance ads. These ads cause or exacerbate an epidemic of problems online, such as disinformation and manipulation of consumers' choices. Banning ads that track minors or that are based on sensitive personal data is a very positive step forward, but this will not put an end to widespread online commercial surveillance."

Negotiations will now begin between the Parliament and Member States to agree on a final text for the law. BEUC urges both sides to substantially strengthen the obligations for digital services and better protect consumers.

ENDS

Notes to editors

[1]The [tests](#) were carried out by ICRT and involved BEUC members Test Achats/Test Aankoop (Belgium), Altroconsumo (Italy), Consumentenbond (Netherlands), Forbrugerrådet Tænk (Denmark), Stiftung Warentest (Germany) and Which? (United Kingdom).

[2] Stiftung Warentest, '[Wie Verkäufer mit gekauftem Lob Kunden manipulieren](#)' (23 June 2020).

[3] OCU, '[Fake reviews en Amazon, Tripadvisor y Booking](#)' (1 June 2020).

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

