

Contact: Andrew Canning: press@beuc.eu
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WhatsApp under pressure to clarify practices following consumer groups' complaint

Today, the European Commission and the CPC-Network (the European network of consumer authorities) announced the launch of a dialogue with WhatsApp: the Facebook/Meta company has until March to provide clarifications about its practices which are suspected to be in breach of consumer protection rules. This follows [a complaint](#) that BEUC and eight of its member organisations¹ submitted to the European Commission and the CPC-Network in July 2021.

BEUC welcomes the decision of the European Commission and the CPC-network to investigate WhatsApp's practices. For several months, thousands of WhatsApp users across Europe were relentlessly and unduly pushed to accept WhatsApp's new terms of service and an amended privacy policy, with the fear of losing access to the service (or to some of its functionalities) if they did not accept the policy updates. Yet the policy changes were unclear to users and could expose them to far reaching consequences in relation to the protection of their privacy and the use of their data by third parties.

BEUC Deputy Director General Ursula Pachi said: "WhatsApp bombarded users for months with persistent pop-up messages. What's more, consumers didn't know what they were being pushed to accept. WhatsApp has been deliberately vague about this, laying the ground for far-reaching data processing without valid consent from consumers. We welcome the CPC-Network's decision to investigate WhatsApp. We expect WhatsApp to clarify and amend its policies in full respect of consumers' rights, including for those consumers who agreed to the new terms due to the company's unfair practices."

Background

Read the BEUC report: '[What's up with WhatsApp? An assessment of WhatsApp's practices in the light of EU consumer protection rules](#)'

ENDS

¹ APC (Romania), Consumentenbond (Netherlands), dTest (Czech Republic), Forbrukerrådet (Norway), KEPKA (Greece), EKPIZO (Greece), SOS Poprad (Slovakia) and UFC-Que Choisir (France).