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Digital Services Act must go full mile to better protect consumers, not take half-measures

A day ahead of what could be the final negotiations between the EU institutions on the Digital Services Act, the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is urging the negotiators to be bold and not water down important provisions on the table that are necessary to better protect consumers online.

The Digital Services Act (DSA) is a vital piece of legislation in the EU's plan to regulate online content and protect consumers, so that what is illegal offline is also illegal online. To achieve these objectives, BEUC urges the negotiators to:

- Prohibit the use of dark patterns [1] by all digital service providers covered by the DSA, not just online platforms. A prohibition that is too limited in scope would not be very effective, given how widespread these practices are online.
- Include an obligation for online marketplaces to verify who the traders using their platform are and to carry out random checks on the goods and services available on their platforms. Currently, online marketplaces are awash with unsafe and illegal goods, as [research](#) by BEUC's network repeatedly shows.
- Prohibit the use of children's data and sensitive data for personalised online advertising by all digital service providers, not just very large online platforms.

Ursula Pachi, Deputy Director General at the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said:
"Now is not the time for half-measures. A strong Digital Services Act, which changes the status quo and better protects consumers, is within reach. Now is the time for the EU to lead the way towards a fairer and safer online environment for consumers. This includes putting an end to dark patterns which push consumers to take decisions they don't really want through deceptive means. It is also long overdue that we start rolling back the surveillance economy by banning the use of children's data and sensitive data for targeted advertising purposes for all digital service providers covered by the DSA."

"Consumers are exposed to a tsunami of unsafe and illegal goods on online marketplaces and these platforms do not do enough to stop this. Having missed the opportunity to introduce stricter liability rules, the EU should at the very least require online marketplaces to run periodical mystery shopping exercises to check that goods, and the traders selling them, are legitimate."

ENDS

Notes to editors

[1] Dark patterns are tricks designed to deceive and manipulate consumers into making choices likely to be counter to their interests.