Contact: Johannes Kleis: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 10/09/2014
Reference: BEUC-WEB-2014-024

New European Commission announced: First BEUC comments

Following this morning's announcement, Monique Goyens Director General of The European Consumer Organisation commented:

"We are encouraged that consumer affairs have been prominently placed within the new Commission. Our preference would always be for a dedicated consumer chief, but bundling consumer policy and justice issues can be made to succeed. That combination of EU responsibilities will help strengthen the enforcement of consumers' legal rights, something which is a top priority for consumer organisations.

"Consumers are drivers of growth if they have trust in the market. In times of economic recovery, the very same who drive the market should be at the forefront of the new commission's preoccupation.

"The focus of Juncker I on 'better regulation' is explicit. It is evident that laws need to be efficient. But, let's be clear, a one-sided reduction of regulatory burdens on business does not equate to better law-making and should never be at the expense of consumers, the environment or workers. To shy away from taking necessary actions can be a very costly exercise for our societies in the long-term.

"On the flipside, a chance has been passed as health related issues move back to the Enterprise and Industry Directorate General. Policies on pharmaceuticals and medical devices should be designed to promote and protect public health, but DG Enterprise is mandated to promote the competitiveness of these industries, not the health of consumers.

"Consumer policy affects many sectors and key issues including product safety, data protection, medical devices and financial services will be allocated to various Commissioners. With this scattered structure, it is crucial that the new Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Commissioner Ms. Jourová becomes a consumer 'watchdog' to integrate consumer interests into all EU policies and have them high on the agenda."

ENDS