

The Consumer Voice in Europe

Ref.: BEUC-X-2020-055/MGO/LAU/rs

12 June 2019

Subject: The need to keep the consumer interest high on the agenda of the future partnership and to maintain the regulatory dialogues after Brexit.

Dear Mr Barnier,

We are writing to you on behalf of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and its network of consumer associations active throughout Europe. We would like to share our concerns in relation to the negotiations for the future relationship with the UK, ahead of the high-level summit.

We are fully aware of the current sticking points in the negotiations and that consumer issues are among the many areas under discussion. However, we would like to reiterate our recommendations to secure positive outcomes for consumers.

As a starting point, consumer protection should be a key objective of the future relationship. It is also important to ensure consumer choice of goods and services. From what we read in the EU and UK offers, it appears consumer protection is an area of convergence. We therefore encourage you, as well as the UK negotiating team, to keep the consumer interest high on the negotiating agenda.

The EU and UK offers for the future partnership pave the way towards promising regulatory dialogues notably on market surveillance. This is positive but it is important to have a contingency plan ready as there will be gaps that neither the withdrawal agreement nor the future partnership will be able to fill in case of no deal at the end of the transition period.

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One of these gaps is the lack of continuity of regulatory dialogues to uphold safeguards to protect the health, safety and economic interest of consumers. We wonder, for example, what is being prepared now to maintain cooperation on enforcement of consumer rights and on access to redress in this new cross-border context. That is why we call on you to discuss this important aspect during the high-level summit. All of our members stand united and call on the EU and the UK to have the necessary arrangements in place by the end of the transition period.

We trust that our message will be heard and hope that it will contribute to a positive outcome of the high-level summit.

We thank you for your support and remain at your disposal should you have any questions.

Best regards,

Monique Goyens
Director General