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## **European Consumer Day Big expectations vs. small commitments**

Today, on European Consumer Day BEUC calls on the EU to take robust actions to help consumers adopt a sustainable lifestyle. This 15 March, Consumer Day marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President John F. Kennedy being the first world leader to acknowledge the importance of consumers' basic rights.

This year's European Consumer Day focussing on sustainable consumption, BEUC deplores the fact that consumers are too often left alone when making environmentally-friendly choices. Sustainable products are often more expensive or unavailable as an option. 'Green washed' advertising and misleading labels hamper shoppers who want to choose green products.

### **The ball is in the EU's court**

As the EU reviews its Action Plan on sustainable consumption and production, BEUC urges to focus on 3 key areas to bring tangible benefits for consumers:

- Show more ambition in making everyday consumer products greener. When studies show that the application of Ecodesign measures to water taps and showerheads result in a savings potential twice the size of the UK's annual residential electricity consumption, there is a huge consumer interest in more EU action.<sup>1</sup>
- Set clear targets for retailers to green their supply chain by transforming the EU Retail Forum from a talking-shop to a binding instrument.
- Reduce consumer exposure to hazardous chemicals by taking the 'Chemical Cocktail'<sup>2</sup> effect seriously.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"By taking shorter showers or buying seasonal fruit I as a consumer can have a positive impact on the environment. But all too often companies are adept in making the sustainable choice the difficult one. The EU has the tools to ensure companies help consumers to choose green, but these tools urgently need to be sharpened.

"The EU needs to step up its efforts to boost manufacture of sustainable products and improve information to consumers about what is the greenest choice."

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat 2010/ECOS 2012

<sup>2</sup> This means that those chemicals not harmful on their own can cause harm when combined with other substances.