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50 years of making the consumer voice heard in Brussels

When The European Consumer Organisation was founded in 1962, the word 'consumer' was nearly unknown in EU policy making circles. In the five decades of BEUC's existence, the consumer perspective has increased in importance and BEUC has achieved notable successes bringing significant practical benefits for people across Europe. Our anniversary celebrations on May 10 are the occasion to highlight a few:

- *Genetically Modified (GM) labelling*: Since 1997, labelling of products containing GMOs has been mandatory in the EU.
- *Toy Safety*: In 1999, after a campaign by BEUC, a European ban was introduced on phthalates - a harmful chemical used until then in children's soft PVC toys.
- *Unleaded petrol*: Lead, a metal very dangerous for health and harmful to the environment, has been banned from use in petrol since 2000.
- *Roaming*: Following a major BEUC survey in 2003 highlighting the excessive cost for mobile phone calling, texting or downloading data when abroad, the European Commission intervened and prices continue to fall as a result of regulation.

But, this anniversary is an opportunity to look ahead. This is why, on May 10, BEUC will unveil its vision for the next decade. Central elements will be how the EU should address challenges like the digitalisation of our economics, an ageing population or the economic crisis.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC commented:

"50 years ago, our founding members envisaged the consumer perspective as an integral part of Europe's integration process. Numerous achievements have flowed from this, from a ban on hormone treated beef, to stronger scientific proofing standards of health and nutrition claims, to product liability rules. These proved them to be visionary. Today, new challenges lie ahead, such as the digitalisation of our daily lives, the globalisation of our economies and continuous technological developments."

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- 1) For more information about BEUC achievements: <http://www.beuc50years.eu/achievements>
- 2) On May 10, BEUC will publish its EU Consumers' 2020 Vision here: <http://www.beuc50years.eu/consumer-strategy>