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Date: 13/06/2012
Reference: PR 2012/018

European consumer delegates meet upcoming Cypriot EU Presidency

A few weeks short of the Cypriot Presidency of the European Union, a BEUC¹ delegation and its member the *Cyprus Consumers' Association* presented its priorities to the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Tourism Mr. Neokles Silikiotis, also responsible for consumer policy.

In light of the Cypriot Presidency's objective "to make a better Europe for citizens", BEUC urged the Minister to ensure consumer welfare is recognised as a key factor of sound policymaking and a core element of economic and social growth. The BEUC delegation highlighted the importance of the Consumer Agenda recently published by the European Commission and the proposed EU Consumer Programme 2014-2020. The fact that Cyprus will stir the Council's decisions on these two fundamental and interlinked instruments afford the Cypriot Presidency a unique opportunity to leave a lasting, consumer-friendly footprint in the EU.

Minister Silikiotis confirmed that the imminent Commission proposals on Alternative and Online Dispute Resolution would be a key priority of its Presidency. This has been welcomed by the consumer delegation who reiterated the importance of this draft law to provide – once further improved – consumers with an efficient means of accessing justice.

The meeting also addressed the EU-wide increases in energy prices, particularly concerning for Cypriot consumers and energy efficiency, the vital issue of e-commerce, access to online goods and product safety.

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¹ The delegation was led by BEUC President Paolo Martinello and included Fryni Michael, President of the Cyprus Consumers' Association and its Honorary President Markou Petros, Breda Kutin, Vice-President of BEUC, Jan Bertoft, Swedish Consumers' Association, Luisa Crisigiovanni, Altroconsumo, Italy, Gilles de Halleux, Test-Achats/Test-Aankoop, Belgium, Louise Hanson, Which?, United Kingdom, Vagn Jelsøe, Forbrugerrådet, Denmark, David Ortega, OCU, Spain, Cornelia Tausch, VZBV, Germany, Alain Bazot, UFC Que Choisir, France, Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General and Ursula Pachi, BEUC Deputy Director General.

² BEUC's Memorandum for the Cypriot Presidency and detailed BEUC positions on all these priorities can be consulted on our website: www.beuc.eu. Follow direct link: <http://bit.ly/LTByav>