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Which? Chief Executive is new BEUC president

Peter Vicary-Smith, Chief Executive of UK consumer group Which? was today elected President of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) for the next four years. Jan Bertoft, Secretary General of the Swedish Consumers' Association, was elected Vice-President.

The European Consumer Organisation brings together 40 leading, independent consumer organisations from 30 European countries. BEUC represents its members to the European Union institutions and defends the interests of all Europe's consumers.

Peter Vicary-Smith said:

"This is an exciting and important time for me to become President of BEUC. The next four years are critical for the European Union, both politically and economically. Promoting consumer confidence is key to improving the current economic climate. My priority is to see BEUC continue to increase its influence in making the interest of consumers central to EU policy. I want to be closely involved in helping build an even more effective BEUC to deliver positive change for consumers across Europe."

For four years, from November 2008 until November 2012, BEUC was led by Paolo Martinello from Italy's Altroconsumo. At its Stockholm General Assembly, BEUC thanked its parting President for his leadership in strengthening BEUC's position as the consumer voice in Europe. BEUC's new leadership team is completed by the appointment of 8 Executive members.

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About Peter Vicary-Smith: Peter Vicary-Smith has been Chief Executive of Which? since August 2004. Before joining Which?, he worked in both the commercial and charitable sectors.

In 1991 he became head of appeals at Oxfam where he was responsible for all of the central fundraising. Five years later he joined the Imperial Cancer Research Fund as the director of fundraising and communications.

Peter also played a major role in the merger with the Cancer Research Campaign – the largest merger in the voluntary sector. In 2002, Peter became the commercial director at Cancer Research UK.

Peter has worked at Procter and Gamble, Mars and was a management consultant at McKinsey for three years.

About Jan Bertoft: Jan Bertoft is Secretary General at Swedish Consumers' Association since 2004. During that period, the organisation has developed rapidly, e.g. by taking over the test magazine Råd & Rön and starting a consumer advice service. Jan Bertoft has been a member of the BEUC Executive since 2008. After graduation as a Bachelor of Science and Journalism from the University of Gothenburg, he has been working with consumer issues for the past 25 years – as a consumer journalist at a daily newspaper, Press Officer at the Swedish Consumer Agency, Editor-in-Chief for test magazine Råd & Rön and CEO for a website for consumers' rankings. Bertoft is born in 1957.