



The Consumer Voice in Europe

Ms Jessika Roswall
Commissioner for Environment,
Water Resilience and a
Competitive Circular Economy
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200

B-1049 Brussels

BEUC-X-2024-105

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Subject: The Consumer Mission Letter

Dear Commissioner Roswall,

On behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, I wish to congratulate you on your recent appointment as European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy. Created in 1962, we represent 44 national consumer groups from 31 European countries. Thanks to our members' markets watchdog role, their product testing and daily contacts with consumers from across Europe, we can support you with evidence-based recommendations to ensure the European economy delivers to consumers.

We fully support your mission to ensure the EU stays the course on the goals set out in the EU Green Deal and to take forward the EU zero-pollution ambition. We welcome that you will boost efforts to develop a Single Market for sustainable products and contribute the Vision for Agriculture and Food. We were pleased to learn during your European Parliament hearing that the Commission will focus efforts throughout its 2024-2029 term on ensuring that the ecological and economic transition go hand in hand and that the benefits of European policies are more visible to people. We found very positive your aim to champion clean sustainable production, bearing in mind that circularity works best when products are free from hazardous substances.

Consumer organisations can, and must be, part of this process. For you to be a true consumer champion, we believe that the below proposals should be part of your mission.

The current shortcomings

Most Europeans are concerned about environmental degradation and want the EU to do more to protect nature and ecosystems. While individual readiness to act is increasing, consumers face barriers when trying to adopt more sustainable lifestyles – from a lack of availability and affordability of greener products and services through to insufficiently available sustainable alternatives and widespread greenwashing. Consumers also continue to be exposed to harmful chemicals such as endocrine disruptors and PFAS in everyday products, putting their health at risk.

The EU agriculture and food system both suffers from and is a major driver of climate change and biodiversity loss, while consumers' food habits have major environmental footprint. The 'polluter pays' principle is not consistently applied, as those who pollute less often need to pay more.

Consumers' proposals for your mission

Make sustainable products the norm through an ambitious implementation of the new Ecodesign framework

During your hearing, you insisted that the implementation of the **Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation** would be a priority of your mandate. To deliver on the ambition to "make sustainable products the norm", a swift roll-out of sector-specific product policies, starting with the largely untapped textile sector, will be needed. For this, sufficient means and resources will need to be provided to the relevant Commission's services as the implementation of Ecodesign Working Plans have often been delayed due to the lack of resources in the past. The Commission should also ensure synergies between Ecodesign and the EU Ecolabel, as a signpost guiding consumers towards the most sustainable products. The EU voluntary scheme should be further reinforced through market incentives and a broader coverage of products and services

Crack down on greenwashing by finalising the adoption of the EU Green Claims Directive and making full use of it

Currently, consumers looking for more sustainable products and services often have to navigate a 'Great Green Maze' of misleading green claims and labels.¹ Under the last mandate, the Commission launched several initiatives to fight greenwashing. This is notably the case of the **Green Claims Directive**, currently at the final stage of negotiations. We call you to play an active role in bringing the upcoming trilogue over the finish line and ensuring that the new framework guarantees thorough and swift verification of green claims before entering the market.

¹ The [Great Green Maze](#), how environmental advertising confuses consumers, BEUC survey, November 2023.

Ensure the REACH revision prioritises the health and safety of consumers

We call on you to ensure that the **REACH revision** simplifies the authorisation and restriction procedures to enable faster, preventive action against harmful chemicals such as PFAS before their use becomes widespread in consumer products. This will not only improve consumer protection and drive innovation in safer alternatives, but also represents a practical and efficient solution to create market demand for safe and high quality secondary raw materials. In support, the REACH revision must ensure stronger controls on imports and on online sales to level the playing field for products produced in the EU and for those imported from abroad.

Promote sustainable agriculture and food systems

Working with the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food, we urge you to ensure that the Vision for Agriculture and Food prioritises environmental sustainability – alongside economic and social sustainability. The Common Agricultural Policy must better reward farmers who demonstrably engage in the sustainability transition. Market-based tools such as nature credits can bring new opportunities for farmers, but attention should be paid to the risk of greenwashing while ensuring the costs of the transition are equitably shared across the food value chain, and not borne solely by consumers.

The way forward

We are aware that you have a busy agenda but hope nonetheless that you will find the time to meet with us. We would be keen to hear your reaction to our proposals and would like to elaborate more about the expectations of European consumers towards European decision-makers.

Please count on our support if you need information about the consumer perspective in your policy area.

Please find enclosed our priorities for this new Commission.

I wish you a most successful mandate.

Yours sincerely,

Agustín Reyna
Director General