



New Consumer Agenda: European Commission to empower consumers to become the driver of transition

Brussels, 13 November 2020

Today, the European Commission launched the [New Consumer Agenda](#) to empower European consumers to play an active role in the green and digital transitions. The Agenda also addresses how to increase consumer protection and resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought significant challenges affecting the daily lives of consumers. More concretely, the Agenda puts forward priorities and key action points to be taken in the next 5 years together with Member States at European and national levels. This will, among other things, include a new legal proposal aiming to provide better information on sustainability to consumers, adapting existing legislation to the digital transformation as well as an action plan on product safety with China.

Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Věra **Jourová**, said: *"We want to empower consumers to play their role in the green and digital transitions. At the same time we must ensure that our rules to protect consumer rights remain up to speed with today's digital reality – especially through vigorous enforcement and increased responsibility of online platforms."*

Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, said: *"European consumers are at the core of a global change. Their actions can make a significant difference. Consumers need to be empowered to make sustainable choices and be reassured that their* rights will be protected in all circumstances. The new Agenda introduces measures that will promote a fair digital and green society, taking into account that consumer behaviour transcends borders of individual Member States."*

Consumer rights in COVID-19 crisis

Whether online scams or cancelled travel arrangements, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many areas of consumers' lives. The Commission will continue to tackle consumer scams, in cooperation with the [Consumer Protection Cooperation network](#) and in dialogue with the platforms and all relevant actors. In addition, the Commission will continue to ensure the protection of travellers and passengers EU rights in case of cancelled trips*. The Commission will analyse the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on the consumption patterns of Europeans, which will serve as a basis for future policy initiatives.

Empowering consumers and ensuring better protection

The New Consumer Agenda presents a vision for EU consumer policy from 2020 to 2025 focusing on five key priority areas:

1. **Green transition** - The Commission aims to ensure that sustainable products are available to consumers on the EU market and that consumers have better information to be able to make an informed choice. Next year, the Commission will present a proposal to equip consumers with better information on the sustainability of products and to fight practices, such as greenwashing or early obsolescence. The Commission will also promote repair and encourage more sustainable and "circular" products. The green transition cannot happen without companies - the Commission is determined to work with economic operators to encourage their pledges in support of sustainable consumption, beyond what is required by law.
2. **Digital transformation** - The digital transformation is radically changing consumers' lives offering new opportunities but also presenting them with challenges. The Commission aims to tackle online commercial practices that disregard consumers' right to make an informed choice, abuse their behavioural biases or distort their decision-making processes, such as dark patterns and hidden advertising. In addition, consumers' interests need to be duly taken into account when setting rules governing the digital economy and requirements for Artificial Intelligence (AI). To adapt current rules to the ongoing digitalisation and the increase of connected products, the Commission will also review the directive related to [product safety](#). As there is a need to reinforce consumer protection regarding digitalisation of retail financial services, the directives for [consumer credit](#) and [marketing of financial services](#) will be reviewed.

3. **Effective enforcement of consumer rights** – While enforcement of consumer rights is the responsibility of Member States, the Commission has a coordinating and supporting role. The Commission will assist Member States in the timely implementation and enforcement of consumer law, including through the Consumer Protection Cooperation network. The Commission will also support national authorities, such as by deploying a toolbox of innovative e-tools to strengthen national authorities' capacity to tackle illegal online commercial practices and identify unsafe products.
4. **Specific needs of certain consumer groups** – Certain groups of consumers in certain situations can be particularly vulnerable and need specific safeguards, for instance children, older people or those with disabilities. The Commission will look into requirements for childcare product standards. In relation to those with financial vulnerabilities, exacerbated by COVID-19 crisis, the Commission will increase funding for improved debt advice in Member States. The Commission will also support initiatives providing local advice on how to access information – online and offline.
5. **International cooperation** – In a globalised world in which online purchases transcend borders, cooperation with international partners has become crucial. The Commission will develop an Action Plan with China in 2021 to enhance the safety of products sold online. As of 2021, the Commission will also develop regulatory support, technical assistance and capacity building for EU partner regions including in Africa.

Next steps

The Commission will come forward with the initiatives announced in the agenda and looks forward to a wide-ranging dialogue with all interested parties on the priorities and actions as well as the cooperation methods to promote consumer protection together in the years ahead.

Background

The EU has a solid consumer protection framework developed over many years and recently enhanced through several legislative initiatives from which consumers in the EU will benefit in the years to come including the 2018 [New Deal for Consumers](#)

The New Consumer Agenda, builds on 2012 Consumer Agenda and is the product of intensive preparations and discussions with interested parties. In June 2020, the Commission launched an EU-wide [open public consultation on the new European consumer policy](#) for the next period. The public consultation has provided valuable input for setting up the new Consumer Agenda, and showed general support for its main priorities, including the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agenda complements other Commission initiatives such as the [Green Deal](#) and the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), and it will also ensure that the implementation of the [Multi-Annual Financial Framework](#) will take consumer priorities into account.

For More Information

[New Consumer Agenda: strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery](#)

[New Consumer Agenda – Factsheet](#)

[Consumer strategy](#)

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