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EU Parliament votes to help consumers make greener choices

Today the European Parliament has voted to help consumers make more sustainable choices, improving products' information and expected lifetime. The legislative initiative, dubbed 'Empowering Consumers for the green transition', is a major step forward to contribute to Europe's efforts towards a circular economy. BEUC applauds the Parliament's strong position - which strengthens the original Commission proposal - and calls on Member States to adopt a similar approach in the upcoming negotiations to finalise the text.

The Parliament position adopted today brings about the following changes:

- Misleading claims such as 'CO₂ neutral' or 'carbon neutral' will be banned, as demanded by consumer groups.
- The European Commission will have to come forward with a label stating how long goods are protected by a guarantee.¹
- Certain commercial practices shortening products' lifetime will be banned, such as marketing a product in breach of EU Ecodesign requirements or a product with a known design flaw.

Ursula Pachi, BEUC's Deputy Director General, commented:

"Consumers have a crucial role to play in the green transition, so it is about time they are equipped with the right tools to make sustainable choices. It is great news that consumers across Europe will be informed when shopping how long their products will be covered by a guarantee. This will give them a clear idea of how long they can expect a washing machine or a TV set to last. It can also make more durable products more competitive and incentivise producers to invest in quality. This will truly steer consumers towards more sustainable choices.

"Crucially, the Parliament has voted to put an end to carbon neutral claims currently popping up on everything from food to textiles or any other good. Such claims don't match reality. It is pure greenwashing which leaves consumers astray, so we are thrilled that the Parliament has taken a strong stance against 'CO₂ neutral' claims and the likes.

"Consumer groups from across Europe report too many everyday products that break too soon and are impossible to fix. So, the Parliament's approach to ban some practices shortening the lifetime of products makes sense for both consumers' budgets and the planet's limited resources.

“As this text now needs to go the last mile to become law, it is crucial that the Parliament’s ambition remains untouched. We count on the institutional negotiators to make sure that the final legislation lives up to its name and really empowers consumers in the green transition.”

Background:

[BEUC position](#) on the ‘Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition’ proposal, October 2022
[‘Better design and testing for more durable products’](#), main takeaways from EU project ‘PROMPT’, March 2023

¹ This means both the mandatory two-year guarantee and its voluntary expansion, where relevant. The former lies with the seller, while the latter is in most cases given by the producer.

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