Reliable green claims and consumer information: keys to sustainable consumption

Parallel session
14:00 – 15:00

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Why do we talk about green claims?

- No of ecolabels worldwide:
  - 430 → 458
  - ~232 in the EU (2013 → 2020)

- Businesses use more than two methods to measure environmental performance: 74%

- Cost of methods/initiatives used: €5,000 - €2 million

- Leading initiatives on GHG reporting: 80

- Consumers wanted to make more sustainable choices at the beginning of the COVID pandemic: 54%

- Percentage of consumers who would pay more for products with better environmental performance: 40-60%

- Growth of assets under green funds in last three years (ref. yr 2018): 68%

- Consumers find it difficult to understand which products are environmentally friendly: 61%

- Consumers do not trust environmental information: 44%

- 56% of consultation respondents encountered misleading claims

- 4% filed a complaint
Policy response

**GREEN CLAIMS (DG ENV)**
- Proliferation of inconsistent methods and initiatives
- Too many misleading environmental claims
- Substantiation on impacts covered by the EF methods
- More methodological coherence

**CONSUMER LAW (DG JUST)**
- Consumers lack information to contribute to the green transition
- Consumers face untrustworthy information or practices preventing them from contributing to the green transition
- Strong safety net for sustainability claims
  - Specific measures (early obsolescence, repair)

European Green Deal
Circular Economy action plan
Main policy options – consumer empowerment

- **Baseline**: use of existing legislation, COM guidance, case-by-case assessment

- **Targeted amendments of existing legislation**:
  - Clarify definitions, blacklisting of documented greenwashing and obsolescence practices

- **New stand-alone legislative instrument**:
  - Scope exceeding the current EU consumer protection instruments and going beyond the current principles-based approach to prescriptive provisions
  - Detailed specification of required information on products’ sustainability
  - Definitions/prohibitions not suitable for UCPD’s character, blacklist
  - New instrument takes precedence over general consumer law (e.g. UCPD and CRD), but other specific community law (e.g. Ecodesign) could take precedence over the new instrument
Options landscape – green claims

- **Baseline**: No modification to the Recommendation and no further action.

- **Updating** the EC Recommendation with results from 2013-18 pilot phase; include recommendations on how to communicate results, how to develop PEFCRs/ OEFSRs…

- **Voluntary Environmental Footprint scheme**: legislation establishing a voluntary framework based on the PEF and OEF methods – existing methods/initiatives are not affected
Options landscape – green claims

• **Legislation on green claims:**
  requiring companies making green claims to substantiate them based on the Product and Organisation Environmental Footprint methods (PEF/ OEF). Substantiation via PEF category rules/ OEF sector rules (if existing) or the PEF/ OEF method (if no product- or sector-specific rules)

• Only claims covered by the method or product-/ sector-specific rules (e.g. claims on climate change covered, repairability not covered)
Consultation activities

Green claims initiative (DG ENV)

- Public and targeted consultations in 2018-19 following up on pilot phase
- Feedback on the roadmap (20 July – 31 August, 193 responses)
- Open public consultation – ends 3 December
  - Questions for the general public
  - Questions for experts
  - Stakeholder workshop: 16-17 and 24 November

Empowering the consumers for the green transition (DG JUST)

- Feedback on the roadmap (June-September 2020)
- Open public consultation – ended 6 October
  - Targeted consultations and interviews
  - Stakeholder workshop: 6 October
Go to
https://www.sli.do/

Event code
#greenclaims