



Euroconsumers joins Consumers International in tackling Plastic Pollution

This World Consumer Rights Day (15 March 2021), consumer organisations around the world are calling for global change to tackle plastic pollution.

World Consumer Rights Day, co-ordinated by Consumers International, the membership organisation for consumer groups around the world, takes place every year to highlight the importance of consumer protection and empowerment. In 2021 we highlight the role of consumers and consumer advocacy in tackling plastic pollution and demonstrate that consumers everywhere demand change for our environment and our health.

Plastic can be highly useful material in everyday life, but our consumption and production of plastics, especially single-use plastic, are now unsustainable – leading to a global plastic pollution crisis. This is impacting our ecosystems and our health. This is particularly important as we continue to see the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic on plastic pollution, with an increased use of single-use products including plastic face masks, gloves and food packaging.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about plastic pollution and already taking action. A global study in 2019 found that there is a strong consumer response to plastic waste (with 82% of respondents using reusable cleaning utensils instead of single-use plastic alternatives, 72% bringing reusable bags when shopping and 62% using refillable drinking bottles) – and despite the increased use of single-use plastic during the pandemic, 55% of consumers globally have now become more concerned about the environment as a result of COVID-19 and nearly 74% of consumers (in Europe, the US and South America) are willing to spend more on sustainable packaging.

Systemic marketplace change is required at all levels from governments, businesses and standard setters to make tackling plastic pollution and sustainable consumption the easy choice for consumers. To achieve impact at the scale required, we need a path so that unsustainable options are no longer viable choices. Making more sustainable alternatives available, accessible and affordable, building effective recycling infrastructure, and ensuring that consumers have the information they need to make informed choices are only some of the ways that this can be achieved.

The 2021 World Consumer Rights Day campaign will focus on 7Rs: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair and Replace. We will show how consumers everywhere are taking action on every one of the 7Rs and demanding that government and business should support them to do more. Consumers can re-evaluate their consumption habits to minimise plastic use, refuse unnecessary plastic where possible and demand more sustainable alternatives from businesses and governments, reduce the amount of plastic they purchase and dispose of, extend the lifetime of plastic products by reusing them, dispose of plastic waste appropriately by following local recycling guidelines, repair items and appliances where possible, and replace plastic products or packaging with more sustainable alternatives.

Ivo Mechels, CEO Euroconsumers: *“Consumers want to tackle plastic pollution and together they have the power to do so. As Euroconsumers it is our duty to empower consumers to*

become a real driver for more sustainability. By ensuring they have access to trustworthy information and to sustainable alternatives. And by reaching out and teaming up with responsible business players to work on concrete solutions to tackle plastics. That is [Approved by Tomorrow](#).”

Helena Leurent, Director General, Consumers International, said: *“Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing issues facing our planet. Consumer awareness of the plastics crisis is growing around the world. Consumers have a crucial role to shape the marketplace, and we must support them to mobilise businesses and governments, to ensure sustainable consumption is accessible to all.”*

To find out more about World Consumer Rights Day, learn more about sustainable consumption and find out what Euroconsumers’ members are doing in Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Brazil, visit Consumers International’s website, or follow the #SustainableConsumer and #NoPlasticPollution hashtags on Twitter and Facebook.

*Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, **Euroconsumers** is the world’s leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer’s rights. We work closely together with Consumers International to ensure consumers are safe, that markets are fair and benefit from honest relations with businesses and authorities. Our European member groups are also part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives*

Consumers International is the membership organisation for consumer groups around the world. It brings together over 200 member organisations in more than 100 countries to empower and champion the rights of consumers everywhere. They are their voice in international policy-making forums and the global marketplace to ensure they are treated safely, fairly and honestly. World Consumer Rights Day is globally coordinated by Consumers International and has been celebrated annually on 15 March since 1983.