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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: *Competitiveness Council (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)
on 26-27 February 2026*
Conclusions on the 2030 Consumer Agenda
- Approval

1. On 19 November 2025, the Commission adopted its Communication on the 2030 Consumer Agenda and action plan for consumers in the Single Market – ‘A new impulse for consumer protection, competitiveness and sustainable growth’¹ (the “Agenda”), which presents a strategic framework for EU consumer policy for the next five years. The Agenda sets out concrete priorities and actions across the following four key priority areas: a) Completing the Single Market: an action plan for consumers; b) Digital fairness and consumer protection online; c) Sustainable consumption; and d) Effective enforcement and redress; with two horizontal priorities spanning over these areas: i. protection of vulnerable consumers and ii. simplification and administrative burden reduction.

¹ Doc. 15772/25.

2. On 10 December 2025, the Commission presented the Agenda in the Working Party on Consumer Protection and Information, and a first exchange of views took place.
 3. On this basis, the Presidency tabled a proposal² for a set of Council conclusions, with the objective to provide political guidance on the actions foreseen by the Commission on consumer protection.
 4. The Presidency text and its subsequent revised versions³ were discussed by the Working Party on Consumer Protection and Information at its meetings on 7 January, 23 January and 10 February 2026. Based on the discussion in the last Working Party meeting, the text of the draft conclusions was slightly adapted. This text was subject to an informal written consultation. However, a number of delegations suggested changes in paragraphs 4 and 6.
 5. At its meeting of 18 February 2026, the Permanent Representatives Committee agreed to the draft Council conclusions, after further incorporating changes made to paragraphs 4 and 6.
 6. In the light of the above, the Council (Competitiveness – Internal Market and Industry) is invited to approve the text set out in the annex to this note at its meeting of 26 February 2026.
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² Doc. 16932/25.

³ Doc. 5251/26 + REV1-2.

DRAFT

Council conclusions on the 2030 Consumer Agenda

RECALLING

- the Council conclusions adopted on 22 February 2021¹ on the ‘New Consumer Agenda’² and
- the conclusions of the European Council at its meeting on 23 October 2025³, stressing, among other matters, the importance of protecting minors;

TAKING NOTE of the report on the future of the Single Market presented by Enrico Letta⁴, which highlights the need to strengthen the Single Market to support competitiveness and resilience, recognising that consumer protection and competitiveness are mutually reinforcing and that consumer trust underpins the proper functioning of the Single Market, also highlighting the need for simplification and that enhancing consumer protection rules is crucial for building a Single Market that works for all;

RECALLING the Commission’s Communications on:

- ‘A competitiveness compass for the EU’⁵
- ‘A comprehensive EU toolbox for safe and sustainable e-commerce’⁶
- ‘The Single Market: our European home market in an uncertain world’⁷

RECALLING the Jutland Declaration: Shaping a safe online world for minors;

1 OJ 2021/C 154/05.

2 COM(2020) 696 final.

3 EUCO 18/25.

4 Enrico Letta: [“Much more than a market”](#).

5 COM(2025) 30 final.

6 COM(2025) 37 final.

7 COM(2025) 500 final.

HIGHLIGHTING the current geopolitical developments and their considerable impact on consumers across the Union, in particular in the most affected Member States;

HIGHLIGHTING the challenges related to international cooperation linked to third-country operators and global supply chains, as a result of the current geopolitical developments, which also have a considerable impact on consumers;

RECALLING the benefits the digital economy has brought to consumers, and the increasingly omnichannel nature of business-to-consumer relationships, the rapid evolution and increasing use of new digital technologies and tools, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) across sectors;

HIGHLIGHTING the need to ensure that EU consumer law continues to provide a high level of consumer protection and empowerment in the digital environment in the light of technological developments and rapidly evolving business models and consumption patterns;

RECOGNISING the need to ensure the effective protection of consumers, who are exposed to harmful practices and severe risks, especially in the online world, and EMPHASISING that specific attention should be given to the protection of vulnerable consumers, in particular minors;

RECOGNISING that while certain consumers, such as minors, persons with disabilities and older persons, are considered vulnerable, consumer vulnerability is also dynamic and context-dependent;

RECALLING the exponential growth in e-commerce, which profoundly changes the way consumers and businesses interact; HIGHLIGHTING the surge of unsafe and otherwise non-compliant consumer products circulating in the Single Market, mostly originating from outside the EU and often marketed using misleading and aggressive techniques, particularly through online platforms; RECOGNISING that this endangers consumers and the environment, increases resource consumption and exposes compliant European businesses to unfair competition;

EMPHASISING the importance of exploiting the full potential of digital tools, such as Digital Product Passports and AI, for enforcing product safety and consumer protection rules, streamlining procedures and reducing burdens for businesses and authorities, while addressing disparities in enforcement capacities taking technological neutrality into account;

HIGHLIGHTING that strengthening consumer protection and education, as well as promoting a level playing field for businesses, should help achieve key EU objectives: a more integrated Single Market, promoting a fair transition to a green and digital economy and boosting competitiveness and economic growth with social cohesion;

HIGHLIGHTING that private consumption represents more than half of EU GDP, making consumer expenditure its single largest component; UNDERLINING that consumer purchasing decisions have a major impact on the economy and jobs;

RECOGNISING that certain commercial practices, such as offering consumer products without clear and prominent consumer information, may negatively affect price transparency and informed consumer decision-making;

HIGHLIGHTING that the availability and affordability of sustainable goods and services are central not only to consumer well-being and environmental protection, but also to the Union's long-term competitiveness, strategic autonomy and increased resilience, and therefore should be stimulated, helping to build resilient and sustainable value chains;

REITERATING the need for a horizontal approach to consumer protection policy, which is integrated and considered when defining and implementing other EU policies, in the light of the provisions of the Treaties regarding consumer protection;

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. WELCOMES the adoption on 19 November 2025 of the Commission’s Communication on a ‘2030 Consumer Agenda and action plan for consumers in the Single Market: ‘A new impulse for consumer protection, competitiveness and sustainable growth’⁸, which presents a vision for EU consumer policy from 2025 to 2030;
2. UNDERLINES the importance of consumers as economic actors driving competition, innovation and sustainable progress with their consumer decisions; UNDERScores the importance of a strong and fair consumer protection framework, including consumer education, to maintain and augment consumer trust and to support informed consumer decisions, which is essential for a thriving economy. RECOGNISES furthermore the intrinsic social, protective and stabilising dimension of consumer policy;
3. SUPPORTS the four key priority areas of the 2030 Consumer Agenda – completing the Single Market: an action plan for consumers, digital fairness and consumer protection online; sustainable consumption, and more effective enforcement and redress in consumer and product safety rules; SUPPORTS the two overarching priorities of the 2030 Consumer Agenda – protecting consumers in situations of vulnerability, simplification and reducing the administrative burden, as well as the accompanying actions intended to ensure and enhance the high level of consumer protection in the EU, to foster competitiveness, social fairness and sustainable growth;

⁸ COM(2025) 848 final.

4. RECOGNISES that there are unjustified barriers in the Single Market, such as difficulties when purchasing cross-border mobility services, unjustified Territorial Supply Constraints and obstacles to accessing financial services in another Member State, which prevent consumers from taking full advantage of the benefits the Single Market has to offer, and WELCOMES the Commission's intention to address those barriers; CALLS on the Commission to take into consideration, in its evaluation of the Geo-Blocking Regulation, that some consumers, particularly those living in the outermost regions of the Union, continue to face specific obstacles when purchasing goods; CALLS on the Commission to also take into consideration that inhabitants in some areas subject to significant seasonal population fluctuations face specific challenges, without prejudice to the competitiveness of the Tourism sector and the Treaties, and taking into account the principle of non-discrimination and the existing Union legal framework;
5. RECALLS that consumer protection requirements shall be taken into account when defining and implementing other Union policies and activities; STRESSES the need to ensure coherence, synergy and complementarity between EU consumer protection laws, especially the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive⁹ and the EU Digital Rulebook, including the Digital Services Act¹⁰, the AI Act¹¹, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive¹² and the Digital Markets Act¹³, in order to safeguard a high level of consumer protection and a level- playing field across the board in the digital environment;

⁹ Directive 2005/29/EC.

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2024/1689.

¹² Directive 2010/13/EU.

¹³ Regulation (EU) 2022/1925.

6. RECOGNISES the need to address existing regulatory gaps, including with regard to enforcement and potential legal uncertainty, building on the findings of the Fitness Check of EU Consumer Law on Digital Fairness¹⁴ in order to further strengthen the protection of consumers in the digital environment against practices such as deceptive or manipulative interface design (dark patterns), addictive design features, problematic practices by influencers, unfair personalisation that exploits consumers' vulnerabilities, non-transparent dynamic pricing practices and other problematic features in digital products; WELCOMES the Commission's intention to propose a Digital Fairness Act (DFA) to achieve these objectives building on and in synergy with the existing EU legal framework; WELCOMES that the DFA will also aim at simplifying rules for businesses; UNDERLINES the importance that all measures avoid undue new bureaucracy;
7. RECOGNISES that while characteristics such as age or disability render some consumers vulnerable, consumer vulnerability is a dynamic concept, which may also arise from adverse personal circumstances which, if subject to unfair commercial exploitation, intensify information asymmetries and structural imbalances in business-to-consumer-relationships, and may materially affect consumer behaviour; UNDERLINES that the high cost of living, which is a concern for many consumers, as well as the lack of digital skills or limited digital literacy, could also result in consumer vulnerability; STRESSES the need to prevent and address non-transparent pricing practices affecting essential goods and services, in particular during declared emergencies;
8. EMPHASISES the need to ensure a high level of protection for all consumers, with particular attention to those most vulnerable, especially minors, who require enhanced safeguards in the digital environment; CALLS on the Commission to pay particular attention to the protection of minors online in preparation of the DFA;

¹⁴ SWD(2024) 230 final

9. ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue its work on enabling consumers to play a more active role in the shift towards a circular economy, by promoting safe, sustainable, affordable and trusted circular offers, including second-hand, repaired, refurbished and remanufactured goods and product-as-a-service models, by addressing social and behavioural barriers to their uptake, by addressing business models that encourage overconsumption and raise concerns regarding sustainability, by fostering ‘green by design’ e-commerce solutions and by enabling easy access to relevant product information through Digital Product Passports and other durable media; RECALLS that misleading environmental claims are considered unfair commercial practices and are already prohibited under the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive; STRESSES, inter alia, the importance of the implementation of the Directive on Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition¹⁵, which introduces specific rules to ensure that environmental claims and sustainability labels are clear, fair, understandable and reliable, and thereby allow traders to operate on a level playing field and enable consumers to take informed decisions and contribute to the EU's green transition to a circular and clean economy;
10. AGREES with the aim and EMPHASISES the importance of strengthening the consistent and effective implementation, application and enforcement of EU consumer and product safety rules, CALLS for close cooperation among EU institutions and Member States’ administrative and judicial authorities including through strengthening synergies between market surveillance tools, and promoting the active involvement of consumer organisations and all relevant market actors across the value chain, where applicable and ENCOURAGES Member States to actively use the Safety Gate system set up by the General Product Safety Regulation¹⁶ to report unsafe products;

¹⁵ Directive (EU) 2024/825

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2023/988.

11. UNDERLINES the potential of AI in consumer protection and product safety enforcement, including market surveillance activities, and the need for authorities to be able to deploy AI to its full potential and build stronger enforcement capacities; ENCOURAGES the Commission to strengthen the digital capacities for the development and operation of modern investigation tools for enforcement and market surveillance authorities, as well as tools aimed at safeguarding minors in the digital environment;
12. RECOGNISES the need to strengthen enforcement of consumer law and ensure a level playing field for businesses, including through improved coordination among national authorities, as well as between national authorities and the Commission, while ACKNOWLEDGING the different enforcement systems in the Member States; STRESSES the need to take action to strengthen enforcement, especially in relation to widespread infringements and WELCOMES the Commission's intention to propose a revision of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation¹⁷ and to assess different options for improving the effectiveness of enforcement, including the possibility of centralised investigation and enforcement powers at EU level in specific cases;
13. CALLS on the Commission to expand cooperation with third countries in bilateral or multilateral contacts, strengthening joint work on a wide range of consumer protection issues, including ensuring that only safe products are placed on the Single Market and that consumers have access to safe products sold online and offline, with particular attention to the growing volume of low-value consignments originating from third countries and sold online, particularly through online platforms, and posing specific challenges for market surveillance, customs controls and fair competition;

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) 2017/2394.

14. CALLS on the Commission to ensure that, when preparing new initiatives, the horizontal nature of consumer law is preserved, coherence and complementarity with existing legislative acts is ensured by avoiding overlaps, the need for legislative proposals is assessed carefully and proposals are underpinned by appropriate impact assessments in accordance with the principles of better regulation, including assessment of enforceability;
15. CALLS on the Commission to ensure that, while maintaining a high level of consumer protection, new initiatives are aligned with the Union's overarching objective of simplification and do not result in unnecessary administrative burden, particularly for SMEs, while ensuring that digital solutions designed to achieve this purpose do not result in the exclusion of consumers and that appropriate non-digital alternatives remain available, when necessary;
16. UNDERLINES the importance of easy, affordable and effective access to redress for consumers in the event of a dispute through a modernised out-of-court dispute resolution mechanism for consumers that is also fit for the digital markets as provided for by the revised Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive¹⁸ and through mechanisms for collective actions for redress as provided for in the Representative Actions Directive¹⁹;

¹⁸ Directive (EU) 2025/2647.

¹⁹ Directive (EU) 2020/1828.

17. UNDERLINES the active role of consumer organisations and the European Consumer Centres Network as important actors in enforcement, where applicable, and awareness-raising, in defending the interests of consumers, and providing information, education and support to consumers; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of consumer education, including financial literacy and raising awareness in purchasing choices, as a key tool to empower consumers, enhance inclusion and resilience, and to support informed decision-making, particularly in digital and financial markets; WELCOMES the intention of the Commission to further support the consumer movement as an integral part of democratic societies, and STRESSES the importance of the adequate involvement of civil society and independent entities in promoting consumer interests;
18. ENDORSES the cross-sectoral, holistic approach taken in the 2030 Consumer Agenda, which is particularly important for strengthening the Single Market and addressing e-commerce challenges and UNDERLINES the importance of taking consumer interests and empowerment into account in all relevant policymaking;

19. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to ensure an active governance framework for the implementation of the 2030 Consumer Agenda, by cooperating with Member States, as well as civil society and all other stakeholders; EMPHASISES the usefulness of such a governance framework to adapt and respond to emerging issues in an agile manner;
20. ACKNOWLEDGES the importance of comprehensive national consumer policies that align with the priorities and support the implementation of the 2030 Consumer Agenda, forming part of a common and reinforced approach to consumer protection across the Union, also preventing regulatory fragmentation; STRESSES that the well-functioning of the Single Market increasingly depends on the convergence of enforcement practices, the sharing of tools, data and expertise and the collective ability to address cross-border and systemic challenges; INVITES the Commission to take a proactive role in supporting this approach by fostering structured and long-term cooperation, promoting the pooling of capacities and resources, and ensuring that consumer protection is given adequate priority across the Union, while respecting national competences.
