

---

Warsaw, 26.04.2024

## **Consumer Forum Manifesto regarding the upcoming elections to the European Parliament**

Consumers!

**As early as June 9, elections to the European Parliament will be held in Poland, and we still do not have information on the final lists of candidates, key issues and the issues they want to address on our behalf.** In addition to the lack of debates and discussions on important areas to address in the European discussion, we also have no communication on how EU regulations are already affecting the daily lives of consumers in Europe, including consumers in Poland: safety, transparency, competitiveness of products and services.

The European Parliament has significant influence in shaping laws that directly affect consumer protection. The Union's antitrust policy makes the market more competitive, leading to lower prices and more choice for consumers. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), on the other hand, provides of strong privacy and data protection rights for all EU citizens.

It was the European Union that introduced strict consumer protection regulations, including consumer rights directives that guarantee uniform rights in returns, complaints and warranties across the Union. Thanks to common standards, products available on the European market are safe and of high quality. These standards protect the health and safety of consumers. The European Union requires manufacturers to be fully transparent in their product labeling, allowing consumers to make an informed choice about the products they buy. However, this is an intermediate step in our opinion, because in the target model, **the consumer should not be burdened with excessive information about each product.** The consumer should be able to trust and be confident that a given product on the shelf meets all the requirements of the market.

As elections approach, **we call for strengthening consumer protection policies and effective enforcement of consumer rights**, developing sustainable consumerism, increasing transparency in the digital marketplace, fighting cybercrime, enhancing passenger rights in multimodal transportation, making labels for green products more consistent, and further countering greenwashing.

Above all, however, we draw attention to the great need to **inspire consumers to change attitudes and educate consumers so that they consciously exercise their rights**, but also take advantage of opportunities to shape the economy through their consumer choices and decisions to whom and for what they pay. We also point out that in caring for citizens and consumers in the European Union, we should consider the geopolitical conditions for building a competitive advantage in the European market. **Also of utmost importance are efforts to ensure that the regulations introduced over time are global, not local (EU)**. In a situation where for most consumers the main criterion for choosing products is price, the influx of cheap products from China, for example, is and will be huge. This often also floods the European market with counterfeit products with no guarantee of safety.

As an organization representing the interests of consumers, **we will always defend consumers' freedom of choice**, because orders and bans are not the best way to shape the market and value system. Along with the introduction of regulations, awareness-raising and education of the public must be carried out in parallel. Otherwise, we are creating regulations that are not understood and consequently arouse resistance. **We also oppose the excessive costs that consumers would have to bear because of over-regulation of certain areas of the market, e.g. the push for electric car production.**

Both current and future MEPs should present the true value of the European Union to their constituents and signal the issues they intend to address.

Consumers, by participating in the upcoming elections, could choose those candidates who most fully represent their interests and are most committed to improving consumers' lives. The involvement of consumers in the campaign for the European Parliament is another impulse to build a community of people who are not indifferent to how they live their lives, the range of products and services on the market and ultimately to whom they leave their money.

Consumer! In your daily purchasing decisions, **your wallet = your vote** (You decide every day what brands you strengthen with your wallet), which is also important in the context of the EP elections Your vote = your wallet. Why? Those who represent our interests influence the rules of the market. At the end of the day, these rules affect the development

of our economy, our wealth and the range of products and services and services on the market. **One is a citizen (once every 4 or 5 years depending on the type of election), one is a consumer every day.**

*Agnieszka Plencler*  
*President of the Consumes Forum Foundation*