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VETting Green: Fighting Misleading Green Claims

Last week, the Council of the European Union adopted its position on the “Green Claims directive”, which aims to address greenwashing and help consumers make better-informed decisions when buying a product or using a service. While waiting for the final discussions with the European Parliament in September and its consequent entry into force, companies should start preparing for the new legislation, which will oblige those wishing to commercialise their products using empty green marketing claims, to substantiate them with a minimum of requirements.

Within the “EU Circular Economy Action Plan”, the already adopted “Directive on Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition” and the future “Directive on New Rules on Substantiating Green Claims”, addressing consumers and manufacturers respectively, intend to fight misleading green claims. If companies do not take the necessary measures to comply with such legislations, they can expect penalties ranging from the exclusions from procurements to fines of at least 4% of their annual turnover. To support textile and footwear companies to respect this new scenario, a group of consumers and industry associations in Europe is working under the Erasmus+ VETting Green project.

The project consortium is currently assessing the companies’ knowledge and preparing the necessary educational material and digital tools for students and professionals. On the 5th and 6th of June, footwear producers, vocational training providers, and consumer representatives from Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain met in Porto, Portugal, to present the main topics identified as most relevant for companies following the first results of the survey, which showed that 45 out of the 63 companies who had responded, considered greenwashing to be a relevant issue.

Carmen Arias, Secretary General at the European Footwear Confederation (CEC), explained “It is essential to put an end to greenwashing and empty marketing practices and instead, recognise and compensate those companies that are making efforts in implementing authentic sustainable business practices. On the other side, consumers are more and more knowledgeable and request evidence and transparency on the products they buy, so the legislation is welcomed if the implementation does not carry unnecessary administrative burden.”

Project partners wish to make a **final call to textile and footwear companies** to participate in the **ongoing survey** that evaluates their awareness of sustainability initiatives and legislation to develop the necessary material and tools. Please contribute [HERE](#).

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