



THE EESC AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection is an integral part of the European Union and lies at the heart of the European Single Market. It ensures that European consumers can make informed choices, are protected when purchasing goods and services, and are treated fairly in the contracts they enter into and the transactions they carry out. For these reasons, the European Commission has presented the Consumer Agenda 2030, a strategic plan for the EU's consumer protection policy for the next five years. With 450 million people making purchases in the Single Market – and whose spending accounts for over half of the European Union's GDP – consumers are a driving force behind the European economy. The Agenda aims to strengthen consumer confidence, make the rules clearer, improve enforcement and reduce administrative burdens on businesses. The objective is to enhance consumer protection without hindering innovation, fostering a fairer, more competitive and sustainable economic ecosystem. Although European consumers already enjoy some of the most advanced protections in the world, the system needs to keep pace with today's rapidly changing reality: rising living costs, new market trends and the steady growth of e-commerce require targeted updates. An effective consumer policy not only protects shoppers, but also helps fair European businesses by shielding them from unfair competition. The 2030 Consumer Agenda therefore introduces a package of measures focusing on four strategic priorities: 1) building a genuine Single Market for consumers; 2) ensuring digital fairness, particularly on online platforms; 3) promoting sustainable consumption patterns; 4) strengthening the effectiveness of enforcement and redress systems. In this context, the EESC, during the recent meeting of the Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT), approved the Opinion on the 2030

Consumer Agenda, considering it an excellent framework text for consumer protection in the coming years, both in formal and substantive terms. In particular, Councillor Ulgiati emphasised «the importance of European standards on consumer safety and protection, as

well as the need for consumers to participate in standardisation. To this end - he concluded - adequate funding must be provided, and Member States must be encouraged to support consumer participation in standardisation processes».



EU, INFORMAL EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN CYPRUS

The informal European Council Summit in Cyprus, the first to be hosted by the island – the only EU Member State still under occupation – has just concluded in the heart of the Mediterranean. The Middle East, the energy crisis, Ukraine, EU mutual defence and the multiannual financial framework were the main topics discussed during the two-day meeting. However, answers will have to wait until June, when these issues will return to the table at the formal summit scheduled in Brussels. After all, the very nature of the meeting did not envisage formal decisions, and furthermore, the issues on the Agenda did not offer easy answers or solutions. However, there have been developments regarding the release of the €90 billion loan to Ukraine and the twentieth package of sanctions against Russia, whilst on the issue of Ukraine's accession to the EU, President Zelensky did not secure a promise of rapid entry into the European Union. Furthermore, a political success that also gave meaning to the Summit itself was achieved with the signing of the inter-institutional agreement between the European

Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, aimed at working together on the "One Europe, One Market" competitiveness Agenda, which had already been drawn up in February by the President of the European Commission. This is a joint declaration in which representatives of the three European Institutions have committed to achieving all the objectives set out in the programme, in accordance with clear and tight deadlines: between June 2026 and March 2027, the European Union must have approved all the legislative proposals covered by the commitment, in order to strengthen the long-term competitiveness and prosperity of Europe.

