

Green claims – what consumers want!



ANEC-PR-2023-PRL-002
Contact person: Michela VUERICH
anec@anec.eu

ANEC has high expectations for the Commission proposal on the substantiation of green claims to be published on Wednesday 22 March.

ANEC Director-General, Stephen Russell, commented:

“ANEC welcomes the intention of the Green Deal to tackle misleading claims. Consumers need to have reliable, comparable, and verifiable information on the environmental performance of products and services. Nevertheless, we urge the EU institutions to complement Life-Cycle Analysis (LCA) by other tools if consumers' ambitions are to be delivered”.

ANEC acknowledges that the adoption of a methodology to substantiate environmental claims is important. We also stress the EU policy on "greenwashing" should start with a focus on the environmental impacts that must be reduced and reflect what is important for consumers.

No one-size-fits-all method

LCA, including the Environmental Footprint approach preferred by the Commission, may be a useful element for orientation in the initial phase of a comprehensive assessment of environmental performance. However, due to its inherent shortcomings, LCA needs to be complemented by other assessment tools.

In addition to the factors that an appropriate LCA can capture – such as water or energy use, or the use of secondary raw materials - **there are other crucial factors that are not taken into account by LCA**, examples being chemical safety and biodiversity protection. Compared with the LCA impact assessment categories, we believe it more important and urgent to address overconsumption, land use, chemical pollution, particle pollution, noise, and biodiversity loss.

Such information should be displayed in reliable and credible formats that clearly show the environmental impacts of one product when compared with another. Only then can consumers be guided towards purchases with less environmental impact.

We call on the Commission to consider the concerns raised by ANEC and others on the shortcomings of the **Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)** and we support the choice of not putting it forward as the sole instrument.

Nevertheless, companies must not have too much flexibility, while allowing them to choose the right methods for the right products:

- Common rules are required on the substantiation, communication and verification of green claims. Reference to the ISO 14020 standards could support this.

- Environmental statements need to address the environmental aspect(s) that are relevant for the product.
- Evidence to support claims must be available to market surveillance authorities.

Learning from successful tools

ANEC calls for the **Ecolabel** to be promoted as a label of environmental excellence. It should serve as a benchmark for other policies and continue inspiring improvements to products on the market:

- Existing and recognised national and European **ecolabels** should be a benchmark.
- Products containing **hazardous substances** must not be eligible for communicating environmental claims.
- In addition to LCA-based information, **additional environmental information** from other sources should be taken into account in the assessment of products. These could include impact on health, risk assessment, eco-label criteria and declaration of chemicals.

For more information on the ANEC recommendations for tackling greenwashing, please visit our [website](#)¹.

ENDS.



ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and the use of standards, as well as related legislation and public policies.

ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and is open to the representation of national consumer organisations in 34 countries.

ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

¹ <https://www.anec.eu/priorities/sustainability#labelling>