



Ευρωπαϊκό Κέντρο Καταναλωτή Ελλάδας



Ανεξάρτητη Αρχή



European Consumer Centres Network



Press Release

World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March: Best sustainable practices from all over Europe

Becoming the first climate neutral continent: This is the goal Europe has set itself and wants to achieve by 2050 with the help of the European Green Deal. Notably in consumer protection, the ambition is reflected in concrete initiatives.

But there are also numerous national and local actions for more environmental protection and sustainability. Some of them go beyond EU legislation or pursue particularly innovative approaches.

For World Consumer Rights Day on 15th of March, the ECC-Net puts the spotlight on these sustainable best practices from all over the continent.

In **Greece** the recycling of old large household appliances (washing machines, refrigerators, etc.) is encouraged, when consumers buy new ones, through provision from the retailers with either a discount on the new product or a credit note to be redeemed in future purchases. Also, the so-called "green marketing" which is quite popular, aims to encourage consumers to buy products, for which companies return part of their revenue to environmental protection measures. Utility providers in the energy, water and telecommunications markets also offer a small reduction in monthly charges if consumers opt for the electronic instead of a printed bill version.

Austria

The country is fighting tons of electronic waste with repair vouchers. These vouchers cover half of the repair costs for consumers up to a maximum of 200 €, encouraging citizens to invest money into repairs instead of throwing away broken electronic devices and buying new ones. The programme has been a great success in the capital Vienna since 2020 and was expanded to the whole country in 2022

Belgium

In Belgium you can find **second hand shops** called "De Kringwinkel" or "Les Petits Riens" with locations all over the country. Anyone can drop off furniture, kitchen utensils and similar items they no longer need. Or acquire them at a bargain price.

Denmark

“**Too Good To Go**” is a mobile app developed in Denmark in 2015 to fight food waste. Restaurants or shops post unsold leftover food or meals they would otherwise throw away. Customers can check the app to see what's available in their area and pick up the food at mostly very reasonable prices. A win-win situation for consumers, restaurants and the environment at the same time.

Italy

The Italian **platform NeXt-Nuova Economia per tutti** provides an overview of sustainable best practices across the country. Whether these are carried out by companies, schools, municipalities or start-ups. With the tool "Vote for your Wallet", they encourage consumers to take responsibility and make informed conscious purchase choices.

Latvia

Several Latvian fuel stations encourage consumers to **bring their own reusable coffee cups**. One of the largest retail chains with hundreds of retailing places also follows this practice. Customers who bring their cup get a 10 to 15 per cent discount on their coffee. This is to reduce the amount of waste cups in the country.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg is the first country in the world to offer **free public transport**. Since 2020, both residents and tourists can simply hop on the train, tram or bus without having to buy a ticket. The aim is to raise awareness for environmentally friendly mobility.

Netherlands

Rotterdam-based “Pieter Pot” is the first **package free, circular online supermarket** of the Netherlands. Consumers buy their products in bulk and will get them delivered in deposit glass jars. Used jars can be returned to the delivery driver, so they can be washed and filled again. Forbes reports that package free supermarkets could save up to 20 kg of plastic per person per year.

Portugal

The Portuguese government has launched a **programme to fight energy poverty**. It subsidises work on houses to make them more energy efficient. For example, building insulation, sustainable heating or improvements to windows and doors.

Sweden

Sweden has **reduced its VAT rate of 25% to 12%** when it comes to repair services for bicycles, shoes, leather goods, clothing and household linen. Craftsmen are allowed to offer repairs on large electric appliances at prices up to 50% less expensive than the actual cost – the difference is paid by the state.