

THE CONSUMER CHECKLIST FOR THE EU - NEW ZEALAND TRADE AGREEMENT



CONSUMERS AT THE HEART OF THE AGREEMENT

The EU-New Zealand deal must involve and protect consumers, and bring them real benefits. The best way to achieve these objectives would be to include a chapter dedicated to consumers. This will ensure negotiators do not forget consumers, as is often the case. The chapter should set consumer objectives which both trade partners must adhere to but not create substantial rules by itself ([see model chapter](#))



REDUCED PRICES AND WIDER CHOICES

Trade benefits are not generally passed on to consumers, contrary to popular belief. Many factors come into play. Both sides must ensure consumers see the difference when they are shopping. There should be a commitment that their relevant authorities will supervise the competitiveness of markets affected by the trade agreement. This could ensure that the reduction of costs for companies will be fairly shared with consumers.



TANGIBLE BENEFITS

Further than price reduction and increased choices, this agreement should set a precedent and bring tangible benefits to consumers, such as easy access to redress if something goes wrong with a purchase, reducing telecommunications costs and geo-blocking.



HIGH LEVELS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

Trade must benefit and protect all. The EU-New Zealand trade agreement must uphold consumer protection levels on both sides. Existing consumer protection on food, product, health safety standards, cosmetics, financial services or access to medicines should not be used as a bargaining chip.



SECURED DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY RIGHTS

The EU and New Zealand already have an adequacy agreement regarding their data protection laws. Therefore, data flows should not be discussed further in these trade negotiations. If the EU and New Zealand would decide otherwise, then they would only include the recent EU horizontal approach on data protection and trade. And not the data flow provisions of the recently agreed Pacific trade deal (CPTPP).



CONSUMER PROTECTION PRESERVED FROM FOREIGN INVESTORS ATTACKS

An EU-New Zealand agreement that contains an ISDS or ICS regime would put consumers at risk, even in a parallel investment agreement. Foreign investors could attack a consumer protection measure at arbitration panels which would be unacceptable to consumers.



POSITIVE AND VOLUNTARY REGULATORY DIALOGUES TO PROTECT CONSUMERS

Dialogue between EU and New Zealand regulators should aim to enhance consumer welfare and must remain voluntary. A trade agreement is not the place to create or manage such dialogues, they should be handled in a parallel process. The deal should not be used to define a checklist for good regulatory practices.



TRANSPARENT NEGOTIATIONS

Transparency during the negotiations must be very high. We expect negotiating texts of both sides to be made available to the public, as well as consolidated texts.

