



TRANSATLANTIC CONSUMER DIALOGUE

Activity Report 2023-2024

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OPENING WORDS

Together Across the Atlantic

Welcome to the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) 2023-2024 Activity Report. This year, which marks a quarter-century of our network, has seen important landmarks in our push for stronger digital and consumer rights. Both sides of the Atlantic face rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), ever-expanding online privacy challenges, and catastrophic climate change effects. And despite the recent fall in inflation, prices for everyday goods and services remain high and continue to increase.

In response, our network of consumer and digital rights organisations has redoubled its efforts to ensure that considerations of impacts on people remain at the heart of policy discussions on emerging technologies and cross-border digital trade. This, inter-alia, means that we need to continue to investigate and denounce manipulative design practices that lock people into expensive services or nudge them into buying more stuff than they need; it also means that we insist on the right of people to be able to repair rather than discard, for example because their connected devices are no longer updated.

Equally important, we continue to play a key role in convening and fostering cooperation and mutual learning between a diverse and expert community in the EU and the U.S. This has enabled us to leverage important research into harmful business practices in the EU for investigation and enforcement in the US; or it has enabled experience in the U.S. to advance policy exchanges on the right to repair and address the growing risks and opportunities posed by generative AI.

We are proud to reflect on another year of achievements. None would be possible without the dedication and voluntary contributions of our members, whose commitment drives our shared impact.

We invite you to explore the highlights of our work in this report and thank the Chairs of policy committees, our members and supporters for making these achievements possible.

Isabelle Buscke, EU Co-Chair

Susan Weinstock, U.S. Co-Chair

Anna Fielder, Senior Policy Advisor and Head of Secretariat

OUR MISSION

The Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) champions the consumer and citizen perspective in transatlantic decision making. It is our mission to ensure that EU-U.S. policy dialogue promotes consumer welfare on both sides of the Atlantic and is well informed about the implications of policy decisions on consumers.

In the current digital age, we focus on the intersection of technology, consumer protection, and sustainability. Our mission is to influence EU-U.S. policymaking and ensure that emerging technologies respect privacy, promote fairness, and enhance consumer autonomy.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

01 SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL ECONOMY

We push for a digital economy that protects fundamental rights, balances innovation with privacy, and promotes environmentally responsible practices.

02 STRENGTHENING CONSUMER RIGHTS

Our advocacy has focused on key areas such as data privacy, impacts of artificial intelligence, alerting authorities to serious infringements by corporations, and investigating manipulative design practices online.

03 EU-U.S. COOPERATION

TACD fosters transatlantic collaboration to shape consumer and digital rights policies on both sides of the Atlantic. We work with government agencies, civil society, and international organizations to influence policy and amplify public voices.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023-2024

Advocating for Privacy in Digital Trade

In October 2023, TACD successfully influenced the U.S. administration to withdraw its support for certain provisions in the World Trade Organization's Joint Statement Initiative on e-commerce, which would have limited consumer control over their personal data, and the regulation of, and independent oversight over algorithms. Our advo-

cacy, in collaboration with partners, led the European Parliament to call on the European Commission to follow this positive shift. This was a major success for digital rights, ensuring that consumers' privacy remains central to trade negotiations and policies.

Addressing the Rise of Generative AI

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and challenges for consumers.

In May 2023, TACD published a joint resolution on AI, outlining critical consumer protection measures for the development and deployment of AI technologies. The resolution emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and fairness in AI systems. TACD has called on policymakers in both the EU and U.S. to ensure that AI development prioritizes consumer rights, mitigates potential harms such as bias and discrimination, and promotes sustainable, ethical innovation. This resolution continues to guide our advocacy in the AI space as we work to influence policy discussions.

In June 2023, TACD launched a joint action to address the threats posed by

Generative AI to consumer rights. Our public statement warned that Generative AI could undermine privacy, contribute to misinformation, and exploit personal data without adequate safeguards. We urged both EU and U.S. regulators to implement robust protections to safeguard consumer interests as these technologies continue to evolve.

In June 2024, TACD held a high-level roundtable in Washington, D.C., with key policymakers, civil society leaders, and academic experts to discuss the regulatory frameworks needed to protect consumers from the risks of AI. The discussion focused on privacy, bias, and the energy consumption of AI systems, helping set the agenda for future transatlantic cooperation on AI governance.

Promoting the Right to Repair

At our Annual Meetings in June 2023 and 2024 as well as at the 2024 Washington D.C. Stakeholder Engagement workshop for the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council, TACD advanced the debate on sustainable digital policies by promoting the Right to Repair. Our roundtables explored the importance of empowering consumers

with the tools and information needed to repair their electronic devices, reducing e-waste, and promoting a circular economy. These discussions also linked sustainability to broader consumer rights, reinforcing the need for transparent and consumer-friendly policies.

Strengthening Rights Online

As a result of TACD members research and complaint about deceptive and unlawful online practices by Amazon, in 2021, the FTC investigated and issued in October 2024 its final “click-to-cancel” rulemaking to make it easy for people to cancel recurring subscriptions and memberships. TACD has also remained at the forefront of strengthening data protection laws. In No-

vember 2023, we provided input to the EU Commission’s review of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), focusing on improving enforcement mechanisms and addressing delays in Data Protection Authority procedures. Our contributions underscored the need to better protect consumer data in light of the growing use of AI.



TACD members at the 2024 Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., United States

SHAPING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION: KEY EVENTS AND MILESTONES

Trade and Technology Council Stakeholder Session

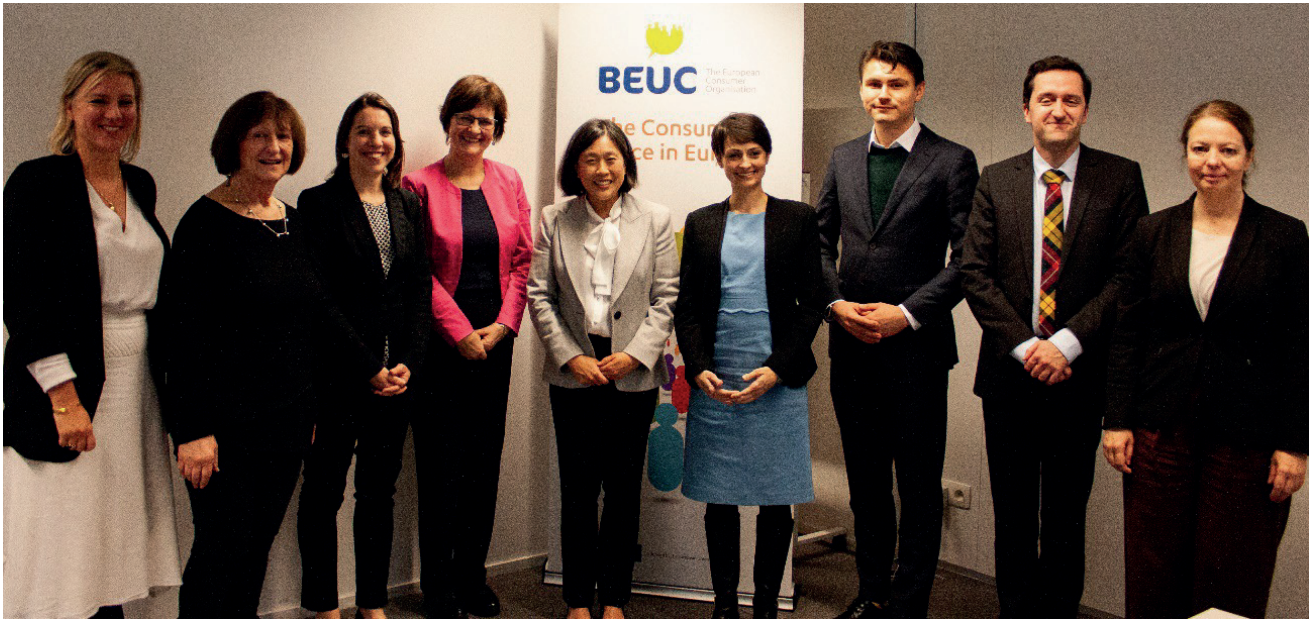
In January 2024, TACD organized a session during the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) ministerial in Washington, D.C., to discuss how consumer rights can align with sustainability in the green transition. This session brought together stake-

holders from civil society, government, and academia, emphasizing the importance of transparency in product lifespan and repairability. The event was a key milestone in advancing the intersection of sustainability and consumer rights.

Decoding Adtech: Privacy in AI-Driven Advertising

In March 2024, TACD hosted an online event titled “Decoding AdTech: Navigating the Crossroads of Privacy, Policy, and AI in Commercial Surveillance.” The event brought together over 90 participants from across civil society, academia, and government to discuss the critical intersection of

AI, AdTech, and privacy rights. Key takeaways included the need for stronger regulations to protect consumers from the harms of commercial surveillance and invasive data practices by AI-driven advertising systems. The full event is available to watch at <https://tacd.org/watch-adtech-ai-event/>



From left to right:
Els Bruggeman (Test Achats/Test Aankoop), Anna Fielder (TACD), Léa Auffret (BEUC), Monique Goyens (BEUC), Ambassador Katherine Tai (USTR), Isabelle Buscke (vzbv), Mykyta Sobko (BEUC), Laurens Rutten (BEUC), Judith Vorbach (Arbeiterkammer)

BEUC Office, March 2024, Brussels, BELGIUM

Meeting with U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai

February 2024 TACD met with U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai in Brussels. This meeting, which was the result of our ongoing advocacy on digital trade, covered multiple issues linked to trade policies and consumer protection,

and governments' right to regulate in the interest of their people. USTR's decision to exclude EU digital rights laws, such as the GDPR and Digital Services Act, from the U.S. annual report on trade barriers, was a direct outcome of TACD's efforts.

Policy Roundtables on AI and Sustainability

In June 2024, TACD held policy two roundtables with over 60 participants, including policymakers and civil society representatives, to discuss the impact of generative AI and the Right to Repair. These roundtables

provided actionable insights into how digital policy can better serve consumers, ensuring that innovation does not come at the expense of privacy or sustainability.

Briefing for the U.S. Congress

In June 2024, TACD organised a briefing on digital trade and sustainability for staffers of the U.S. Congress. It was attended by more than 40 participants. European consumer groups presented recent digital and competition laws of the EU and made the link between trade agreements

and measures such as the right to repair. Staffers welcomed the opportunity to ask technical questions to consumer advocates and better understand the situation on the ground.

LOOKING AHEAD: FUTURE PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Scaling AI and Digital Rights Advocacy

As AI technologies continue to evolve, TACD will prioritize policies that ensure consumer privacy and fairness, while mitigating the environmental impacts of AI systems.

Protecting Consumers Against Dangerous Products

TACD will gather evidence of illegal and dangerous products sold online in the EU and in the US by major online marketplaces and reach out to decision makers to address this e-commerce phenomenon.

Advancing Sustainability in Digital Policy

TACD will expand its work on sustainability, advocating for the Right to Repair and policies that reduce e-waste, while promoting transparent, sustainable digital practices.

Deepening EU-U.S. NGO Collaboration

We aim to strengthen our transatlantic network and partnership with the NGO community, to ensure existing rights are respected and do not get eroded and that consumers on both sides of the Atlantic can benefit from policies, laws and practices that protect their rights in the digital space.

ABOUT TACD

THE STEERING COMMITTEE



Isabelle Buscke
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Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (The
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TACD's EU Co-chair



Susan Weinstock
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Tomaso Falchetta
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Ira Rheingold
Executive Director, National Association of
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Agustín Reyna
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Robert Weissman
President, Public Citizen

POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Finn Lützwow-Holm Myrstad
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(Norwegian Consumer Council, NCC)

EU Co-Chair



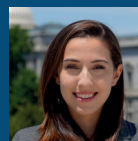
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