



**verbraucherzentrale**

*Bundesverband*

# THE VOICE OF CONSUMERS

In support of strong consumer rights,  
fair markets, safe products and  
services

# WHO WE ARE

...❖ The Federation of German Consumer Organisations (vzbv) represents the interests of more than 80 million consumers in Germany. The vzbv acts as the umbrella organisation for 41 German consumer associations: the consumer centres of each of Germany's 16 federal states and 25 consumer policy organisations. Individuals and nine further organisations support our work as sustaining members.

## Our goals

- true freedom of choice in transparent markets
- safe products and services that are not harmful to health
- clear consumer information
- reliable consumer rights, enforceable in practice
- protecting consumers from being misled by companies
- promoting sustainable consumption



**Consumer policy should target the everyday worries of citizens.**

*Klaus Müller, vzbv Executive Director*



# HOW WE WORK

...❖ **Bearing in mind that more than 80% of consumer legislation comes out of Brussels, the vzbv operates at both European and international levels.** The vzbv is a member of the umbrella organisation of European consumer associations, the Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC), and of Consumers International (CI), an international federation of consumer organisations. With an office in Brussels, the vzbv keeps a close eye on what is happening in Europe.

...❖ **The vzbv is a non-profit association not affiliated to any political party.** It was established in 2000 as the result of the merger of three federal consumer organisations.



**THE VZBV'S SOLE PURPOSE IS TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF MORE THAN 80 MILLION CONSUMERS IN GERMANY.**

...❖ **It gets its core funding from the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, as well as from project budgets and membership dues.**

...❖ **In association with the consumer centres, the vzbv conducts projects aimed at improving consumer information.** Energy advice, a project targeting food transparency, as well as our market watch projects, constitute key elements of our work.

# OUR TOPICS

## DIGITAL SERVICES AND THE MEDIA

Consumers view personal data as worthy of protection\*, for example

<i>Data on users' Internet behaviour**</i>	<b>87 %</b>
<i>Telephone number</i>	<b>84 %</b>
<i>Videos showing family and friends</i>	<b>82 %</b>
<i>Photos on which they can be seen</i>	<b>78 %</b>
<i>Date of birth</i>	<b>77 %</b>

\* The values shown in the chart represent the sum of the answers "very much worthy of protection" and "rather worthy of protection" to the question "How worthy of protection are the following data?"

Source: Representative survey (n = 1,022) TNS Emnid on behalf of the vzbv, October 2014, differences are possible due to rounding

\*\* n=786 Internet users

## FINANCIAL SECTOR



63 %

of consumers suspect that there are products and vendors in the financial field potentially able to deceive and harm consumers.

## LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL MATTERS



43 %

of consumers are confident that companies will take off the market products that can harm consumers, while only one third are confident that the government will do so.



## HEALTHCARE

**83 per cent** of consumers consider it important that those privately insured should be treated the same way as those with compulsory state health insurance.

Source: TNS Emnid survey on behalf of the vzbv, August 2013



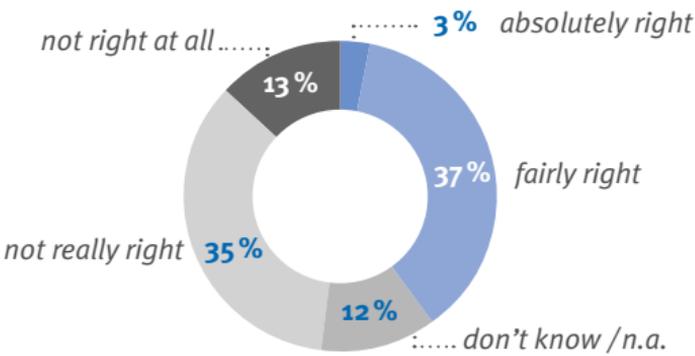
## ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER RIGHTS

The vzbv and the consumer centres help strengthen consumer rights via some **1,000 court cases each year**.

## ENERGY AND MOBILITY

**82 %** of consumers back the goals of the *Energiewende*, Germany's transition to renewable energy.

*But only 40% are satisfied with how this is being done:*



Source: Forsa survey of 1,200 consumers on behalf of the vzbv, June 2013

## FOOD

**72 per cent** of consumers want producers to be forced to include exact declaration of origin on food packaging.



Source: Zühlsdorf, Anke; Spiller, Achim (2014): Herkunftsangaben auf Lebensmittelverpackungen. Representative survey of consumers on behalf of the vzbv

# MEDIA INFORMATION

...✚ The vzbv provides studies on consumer affairs, provides the latest information on consumer policy topics, finds interview partners and ensures that the voice of consumers is being heard.

## Services for journalists

- Current positions and assessments on consumer policy topics
- Consumer protection experts
- Newsletter subscription for the latest vzbv press releases
- Podcasts: broadcast quality sound bites and sound files for use by journalists
- ePresseschau: an e-mailed daily overview of online newspaper articles on consumer topics
- vpk – verbraucher politik kompakt: the vzbv's digital magazine
- Dokumentenservice: studies, statements and positions
- Newsletter subscription for the latest court rulings on consumer matters
- Database of court rulings
- Verbraucherpolitik EU aktuell: overview of the latest news on EU consumer policy topics
- Verbraucherforschung aktuell: the latest news from the academic world

Find the latest news and background information, and subscribe to the vzbv newsletters on [www.vzbv.de](http://www.vzbv.de) (all information in German). Information provided in English on <http://en.vzbv.de>



## PRESS OFFICE

Phone +49 30 258 00-525



[presse@vzbv.de](mailto:presse@vzbv.de)

Twitter: [@vzbv](https://twitter.com/vzbv)

[www.vzbv.de](http://www.vzbv.de)

# WHAT WE DO

...❖ The vzbv represents the interests of consumers in discussions with politicians, companies and other stakeholders.

- We expose structural deficits in consumer markets, identify consumer problems, present solutions and fight for their implementation.
- We act as advocates for consumers.
- In our discussions with politicians, we argue for legal regulation for transparent markets.
- We enforce consumer rights, when necessary in court.
- We support the consumer centres, providing them with information and training.
- We are committed to improving consumer education.



**THE VZBV FIGHTS  
FOR FAIR MARKETS, SAFE PRODUCTS  
AND CLEAR INFORMATION.**



## CONSUMER SERVICES

The consumer centres in the individual federal states provide personal counselling and information for consumers.



[www.verbraucherzentrale.de](http://www.verbraucherzentrale.de)

## Contact:

Verbraucherzentrale  
Bundesverband e.V. –  
Federation of German  
Consumer Organisations  
Markgrafenstraße 66  
10969 Berlin – Germany  
Phone +49 30 25800-0  
Fax +49 30 258 00-518  
info@vzbv.de - www.vzbv.de

Supported by:



on the basis of a decision  
by the German Bundestag

Visitors' entrance: Rudi-Dutschke-Straße 17



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### Responsible for the content:

Klaus Müller, vzbv Executive Director

**Editor:** Wiebke Moritz

**Design:** MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH

**Title collage:** MediaCompany, using the following photo:

Rawpixel – Fotolia.com

**Portrait:** vzbv/Urban

**Printer:** Druckerei Girzig + Gottschalk GmbH

**Version:** November 2015