



**verbraucherzentrale**  
*Bundesverband*

# THE VOICE OF CONSUMERS

Fighting for strong consumer rights,  
fair markets, and safe products  
and services

# WHO WE ARE

**The Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband – vzbv) is the strong voice of all consumers in Germany – independent of their origin or living conditions. vzbv is advocating for a just and sustainable society and economy, where policy-making focuses on people’s needs.** As the umbrella organisation for the 16 German consumer associations, one in each of Germany’s federal states, and for 27 other member organisations, vzbv channels the strengths of its members to promote strong consumer protection. Our work is backed by a number of individuals and nine organisations who are supporting members.

## Our goals

- A better position for consumers in the social market economy
- Clear and uniform rules for all market players
- Effective competition on price and quality that provides true freedom of choice in transparent markets
- Safe products and services
- Clear consumer information
- Reliable, enforceable consumer rights
- Promotion of sustainable consumption
- Upholding the precautionary principle, including in international free trade agreements

## A young association with a long history

vzbv was established in 2000 as the result of the merger of three federal consumer organisations. One of its predecessors, AgV, was established already in 1953 by welfare organisations, women’s organisations and consumer cooperatives. In the same year, the first regional consumer association (Verbraucherzentrale) was founded.

**Anniversary:** Together with its members, vzbv has been active for 20 years.



# WHAT WE DO

...❖ vzbv represents the interests of consumers vis-à-vis policymakers, companies and other stakeholders.

...❖ vzbv detects structural shortcomings in consumer policy, identifies consumer problems, proposes solutions and fights for their implementation. Consumers should be able to trust that the product they acquire is the best and safest fit for them.

...❖ vzbv advocates for the use of a nuanced “average consumer” model in policy-making and as a basis for court rulings.

## vzbv acts on five levels

- We advocate for legally binding rules to achieve transparent markets.
- We enforce consumer rights, when necessary in court.
- Our market monitoring serves as an early-warning mechanism for consumer problems in Germany.
- We support the German consumer associations with information and training.
- We are committed to improving consumer education and support teachers with our widely recognised “Materialkompass”.



**Particularly  
in times of crisis,  
strong consumer rights  
are needed to ensure that  
our everyday lives are  
secure and sustainable.**

*Ramona Pop, vzbv Executive Director*



# HOW WE WORK

...✧ vzbv is a not-for-profit organisation, politically impartial, and solely committed to representing the interests of consumers.

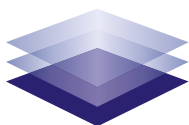
...✧ vzbv recognises that the needs of consumers are diverse. Hence, in its work for consumers, vzbv does not exclude specific types or groups of consumers.

...✧ Our “Empowering Consumers in Urban Areas” project, the Food Transparency project and the provision of energy advice through German consumer associations are key elements of our work.

...✧ vzbv is funded by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, through project funding and member subscriptions.

...✧ vzbv operates both at European and international level and has an office in Brussels. vzbv is a member of the umbrella organisation of European consumer organisations, Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC), and of Consumers International (CI), an international federation of consumer organisations.

...✧ vzbv is a member of “Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (ITZ)”. In this context, vzbv is obliged to inform the public about what goals it tries to achieve, where the funding comes from, how the money is spent and who the decision-makers are that vzbv targets.



Initiative  
Transparente  
Zivilgesellschaft

# OUR TOPICS

MARKET MONITORING



MOBILITY AND TRAVEL



DIGITAL AND MEDIA



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



FINANCIAL MARKETS



ENERGY AND CONSTRUCTION



LEGAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE



HEALTH CARE



CONSUMER EDUCATION



FOOD



LITIGATION



90 % of consumers say:

**“I consider consumer protection to be important for my peace of mind.”**

Source: 2020 consumer report, representative survey carried out by forsa on behalf of vzbv, August 2020



# MEDIA SERVICE

- Current positions on and assessments of consumer policy
- Experts in consumer policy
- Fact sheets on key topics
- Newsletter subscription for vzbv press releases
- ePresseschau: a daily overview of online newspaper articles on consumer topics by email
- Verbraucherpolitik kompakt: vzbv's newsletter
- Document service: studies, statements and positions
- Newsletter subscription for the latest court rulings on consumer matters
- Database of court rulings
- Verbraucherpolitik EU aktuell: newsletter featuring an overview of the latest news on EU consumer policy
- High-resolution infographics for use by journalists

For the latest news and background information, and to subscribe to our newsletter, visit [www.vzbv.de](http://www.vzbv.de)



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[www.youtube.com/vzbv](https://www.youtube.com/vzbv)

## CONSUMER SERVICES

The German consumer associations in the respective federal states provide personalised advice and information to consumers.

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

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