

11 March 2019

World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March 2019

## FOR A CONSUMER-FRIENDLY DIGITAL WORLD

World Consumer Rights Day: focus on digital technology in the everyday lives of consumers.

- vzbv supports international campaign to improve consumer rights relating to digital products and services.
- vzbv is calling for more security and transparency in the digital world, particularly in view of the upcoming European elections.
- Consumer associations in Germany's federal states are running various initiatives on 15 March to provide consumers with information on digital products and services in their everyday lives.

**On this year's World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March, the Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband – vzbv) is working alongside Consumers International (CI) to campaign for better rights for consumers in the purchase and use of digital products and services. vzbv is calling for measures that will give consumers across Europe greater transparency and security. To mark World Consumer Rights Day, many consumer associations are organising initiatives and providing information on a range of consumer topics.**

### CONSUMER PROTECTION NEEDS EUROPE

This year's World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March reminds us once again of the importance of consumer protection. Positive examples, such as the introduction of the German collective redress law last year, clearly show what can be done to improve the rights of consumers in their everyday lives. But there are still challenges in consumer policy. "Digital technology is making the world more complex – and this means that consumer protection is more important than ever," says Klaus Müller, vzbv's Executive Director. "Data security and transparency, particularly in the context of digital and connected devices, is just one area of focus."

That said, digital challenges cannot be addressed at national level alone. "Consumers find themselves in an increasingly digital world that transcends national borders," says Müller. "For consumers to be able to

#### Press office

Verbraucherzentrale  
Bundesverband e.V.

Markgrafenstrasse 66  
10969 Berlin Germany

Tel: +49 (0)30 2580 0525

Fax: +49 (0)30 2580 0522

presse@vzbv.de

www.vzbv.de

navigate around the web confidently and safely, the European Commission has to create an appropriate framework.” With the European elections coming up in May, demands for digital consumer rights must address Europe as a whole.

### **FOCUS ON DIGITAL CONSUMER RIGHTS**

Together with Consumers International (CI), vzbv is promoting the importance of digital rights for consumers on this year’s World Consumer Rights Day.

The EU has already instigated a number of changes for the better, following pressure from consumer organisations. Under the Directive on the sale of goods, which was recently agreed by the Council and Parliament of the EU, providers of electronic equipment are now required to make software updates available to consumers for as long as consumers can reasonably expect them. This means that consumers are better protected if, for example, a refrigerator or washing machine with digital components can no longer be used even though it still actually works. Nonetheless, the outdated European product liability legislation is still in need of reform. This is necessary to ensure that consumers receive compensation for financial loss and damages for pain and suffering if they suffer harm as a result of a defective digital application or algorithm.

### **CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS ARE PLANNING INITIATIVES ALL OVER GERMANY**

To mark World Consumer Rights Day, Germany’s regional consumer associations are running initiatives on various aspects of digital technology in the everyday lives of consumers. The consumer association in Rhineland Palatinate is giving advice on issues such as passwords and digital legacy, while the Hessen branch is providing information on untrustworthy streaming services. The association in Thuringia is hosting a telephone forum where experts will answer questions relating to internet security.

Information on the initiatives being run by the consumer associations is available on their websites.

Background information on the CI campaign can be found under the hashtag *#betterdigitalworld*.

### **Further information**

*Franka Kühn | Team Leader Communications | Spokesperson*

*Tel: +49 (0)30 25800 525*

*presse@vzbv.de*