



**Euroconsumers announces eminent discussion leaders for its
First International Forum:**

Bridging the Gap between Consumers and Businesses in the Digital Age

Euroconsumers is set to launch an ambitious new challenge in the consumer ecosystem with its first International Forum – **Bridging the Gap between Consumers and Businesses in the Digital Age** – to be held on **12 November** at The Claridge in Brussels. Powering a pragmatic modern dialogue, the event will bring together **leading market players, academia, high-level EU decision makers, Members of the European Parliament, digital thinkers, researchers and key consumer representatives.**

The International Forum will host **Sean Pillot de Chenecey** and **Carlo Alberto Carnevale Maffè**, two experts in the fields of marketing, tech and public affairs. Together, they will lead the discussions on today's most burning issues, from data security and fake news to Artificial Intelligence, human rights and empowerment, technological sovereignty, greening technology, smart transport solutions, digital platforms and the fairer sharing of the economic benefits of digital technology between all stakeholders, including consumers.

Carlo Alberto Carnevale Maffè is Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at the SDA Bocconi School of Management, where he teaches executive and MBA programmes with leading international business schools. He also conducts research projects and executive education programmes for many international corporations. He serves as an independent director in venture capital funds, technology, media and industrial corporations, and is a regular commentator and editorial contributor for international news outlets (Bloomberg, Reuters and The Guardian).

Carnevale Maffè:

“Digital markets began with the promise they would take customers to a heaven of unlimited choice and convenience. For all their objective merits in terms of user experience and access to new channels and new opportunities, they risk transforming into a hell of monopolistic power and central control by unaccountable corporations and political powers alike, especially after the vast deployment of such sophisticated and powerful tools as artificial intelligence and big data analytics.”

For those who stand to support the demand side, the challenge is now to evolve from consumer protection to “consumer aggregation” using the same technological tools (AI/ML, Open Ledgers, Big Data, Digital Platforms, etc.) as a deterrent of organised defence by citizens/customers. Digital sectors where the demand side becomes proactively aggregated and organised, within the context of effective ecosystems, will become, if not an improbable paradise, at least a fair, transparent and sustainable marketplace.”

Sean Pillot de Chenecey is a marketing expert, who for over twenty years has combined brand consultancy with ethnographic activity and trend research around the world. His clients have included Unilever, Swatch, Heineken, Diageo, General Motors, Beiersdorf, AXA, Vodafone, Comptoir des Cotonniers, Muller, GlaxoSmithKline, Visa, Granarolo and Starwood; and he has collaborated with numerous advertising, branding, design, media and PR agencies. He is a university lecturer and has written for Admap, Brand Strategy, Contagious, Dazed and Marketing.

Pillot de Chenecey:

“Businesses want to have strong and long-lasting relationships with their consumers. That relationship is built on trust, but in a post-truth world brands face a serious challenge: so much of modern life is defined by mistrust. I believe that for brands, trust and truth are the most important games in town. Corporations can and should endeavour to make the world a better place, contributing to society and engaging with it. In a post-truth era, we want, and need, to believe in something. And increasingly, brands that really do ‘live it like they say it’ are some of the few things which we can actually believe in and rely on.”

Marco Pierani, Euroconsumers’ Director of Public Affairs & Media Relations, is pleased to welcome Carlo Alberto Carnevale Maffè and Sean Pillot de Chenecey to the Forum:

“The digital ecosystem is currently unbalanced. A significant reduction in competition has considerably weakened the added value that the major Internet players transfer to consumers, despite exponential technological development. But at the same time, consumers are increasingly becoming protagonists of the new digital markets in which they disclose their personal data. Consequently, protecting consumers’ economic interests in the market now opens new prospects for consumerism as an engine for development.

*While Euroconsumers intends to keep on strengthening its private enforcement activities and intervene whenever there are clear and unacceptable violations - as in the class actions against Facebook lodged in all the EU countries of our Group - as modern and pragmatic Consumer Organisations, we always look beyond the protection of the status quo for our members and consumers in general, interpreting our mission in a dynamic perspective: **We want to strengthen our ability to engage collaboratively with major global brands to deliver added value for consumers, trying to overcome the sometimes sterile and fruitless opposition of consumer rights and entrepreneurial freedom.**”*

Registration for the Forum is free on the website <https://consumerpower2019.com> but places are limited and fast disappearing for the opportunity to take part in and influence this historic occasion.

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, Euroconsumers is the world’s leading consumer cluster in terms of innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer’s rights. Its organisations work closely together and with the BEUC and Consumers International to ensure safe, fair and honest relations between consumers and businesses or authorities.