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**Euroconsumers announces inaugural BeXt Award Winners at its International Forum
Bridging the Gap between Consumers and Businesses in the Digital Age**

Euroconsumers' new BeXt Awards were presented at its First International Forum, held today, 12 November, at The Claridge in Brussels.

Powering a pragmatic modern dialogue, the Forum - **Bridging the Gap between Consumers and Businesses in the Digital Age** - brought together more than 40 speakers, all high-level representatives of European institutions, leading global companies, consumer organisations and academia from around the world. An innovative format saw them interacting with a public of more than 120 people from the same sectors, with simultaneous activities on 3 different stages, all interconnected through a multiscreen transmission system using microphone headsets for active participation.

From the opening address by the Director of the European Commission's Directorate General for Competition, the forum focused on today's 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.

Central to the debates was a recognition that the role of the consumer has changed. As **Ivo Mechels**, CEO of Euroconsumers, explained:

"The role of the consumer has changed in the digital era. Of course, consumers still need to be informed and protected. But they have now become drivers of development and of the new digital markets in which they disclose their personal data. That means consumers have economic power. Their data is no longer just to be protected as a fundamental right. It is also an economic interest for consumer organisations to defend. And when national consumer organisations cluster into a Group like Euroconsumers, they acquire critical mass which is a game-changer."

With the International Forum, Euroconsumers has therefore done more than host a dialogue. It has launched an initiative to place consumers and their data at the centre of the market, recognising their economic value and expanding the focus of rights protection to include rights management.

The new Euroconsumers BeXt Awards play an important role in this dialogue, recognising the brands that have made significant contributions to improving the global marketplace. The winners were selected following a rigorous procedure based on Euroconsumers' comparative reviews (eXpertise) and consumer feedback (eXperience) to identify the brands achieving the highest standards for both eXpertise and eXperience. Euroconsumers analysed the past two years' reviews of some 2,000 products, together with

the related consumer feedback (over 90,000 experiences), to identify the brands with outstanding performance in meeting consumer expectations in 5 categories, each with its own award:

- **Euroconsumers BeXt Award for Quality in Large Household Appliances** (washing machines and tumble dryers this year). **Winner: Miele.** Shortlisted companies: *Samsung, Siemens.*
- **Euroconsumers BeXt Award for Quality In Hi Tech** (smartphones and tablets for 2019). **Winner: Apple.** Shortlisted companies: *Huawei and Samsung.*
- **Euroconsumers BeXt Award for Eco-Friendly Large Household Appliances** (electricity and water consumption of washing machines, tumble dryers, dishwashers and cold appliances this year). **Winner: Bosch.** Shortlisted companies: *Samsung, Siemens.*
- **Euroconsumers BeXt Award For Reliability In Large Household Appliances** (washing machines, tumble dryers, dishwashers and cold appliances for 2019). **Winner: Miele, Siemens (tied).** Shortlisted companies: *Beko.*
- **Euroconsumers BeXt Award for Value for Money in Hi Tech** (mobile phones and tablets this year). **Winner: Samsung.** Shortlisted companies: *Huawei, Lenovo-Motorola.*

A final and ground-breaking BeXt award has been created in honour of the European Data Protection Supervisor Giovanni Buttarelli, who passed away on 20 August 2019. His achievements included overseeing the transition to the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in May last year – a piece of legislation that has shone a global spotlight on the EU’s approach to privacy and is being increasingly emulated around the world.

The **BeXt Award in Memory of Giovanni Buttarelli** brings a third strand to Euroconsumers’ initiative to promote dialogue between all parties in the digital ecosystem, being fittingly conceived to recognise emerging original thinking around questions of data privacy in Europe. Euroconsumers will be inviting essay submissions of up to 3,000 words from researchers and writers aged between 18 and 35, presenting the award to the entrant whose essay is considered to have excelled for originality, cogency and relevance to European consumers by a panel of senior consumer representatives and data privacy experts. The deadline for submissions is 30 April 2020.

“In launching these interlinked initiatives, Euroconsumers is sending out a clear message to all players in the digital ecosystem: an invitation to dialogue which acknowledges the innovation/competition trade-off has become stuck in a loop, while offering a route to solutions to rebalance it.” **Marco Pierani**, Public Affairs and Media Relations Director at Euroconsumers.

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, personalized services and defense of consumer’s rights. Our organisations work closely together and with the BEUC and Consumers International to ensure safe, fair and honest relations between consumers and businesses or authorities.