

Sustainable consumption: promoting an energy-efficient economy to move from awareness to action

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Faced with the imperative of the environmental transition, the Prime Minister asked the EESC what changes need to be made in our consumption patterns, how to reconcile them with the objectives of reindustrialisation and the role of advertising.

For the EESC, despite growing environmental awareness, our lifestyles are unsustainable with respect to "planetary limits". Paradoxically, marketing and advertising encourage consumption, if not over-consumption. Sustainable consumption requires a sustainable and affordable offer. Faced with the ecological emergency and the need for social justice, only a more energy-efficient economy, which puts the environment and people at the heart of the production system, can enable us to meet the commitments in the Paris Agreement on climate change.



Three
planets

It would take nearly three planets for all of humanity to live like our country's population.

Source:
Global Footprint
Network/
WWF France

QUESTION

HOW CAN WE CONSUME LESS AND BETTER?

The EESC has considered actions involving all stakeholders (businesses - the supply side - consumers - demand/purchasing act, decision-makers, producers of the standard) at European, national and local levels. The tools used will need to strike the right balance between information, incentives, regulation, technical and financial support,

taxation and redistribution mechanisms, training and education. The EESC proposes a gradual approach to measures, using various levers:
→ Better information and consumer incentives;
→ Independent regulation of advertising and the harnessing of its skills to promote a society of well-being that respects planetary limits;

→ Support for the transformation of production models towards the circular economy, with an emphasis on repair and re-use. In the EESC's view, these changes must become systemic, as part of a planning process and democratic debate on the model of society we should be moving towards.

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OPINION

1 THE CONDITIONS FOR CONSUMING LESS AND BETTER

- **Replace a society of goods with a society of links:** integrate indicators on the state of ecosystems, social inclusion, solidarity, well-being and health into public policies
- **Empower consumers to consume better**
 - Extend the environmental labelling experiment to new types of consumer products as soon as possible and take account of their impact on biodiversity.
 - Promote product durability by studying the extension of the legal guarantee period
 - Clarify and regulate the "Made in France" label to eliminate vague, ambiguous or misleading claims
 - Introduce tax and pricing incentives for the most sustainable goods and services
 - Debate the introduction of quotas on imports of products with a large environmental footprint and on measuring the environmental footprint of consumers
- **Regulate advertising better and make it a lever for the ecological transition**
 - Introduce stronger, independent content regulation by extending ARCOM's remit
 - Extend and strengthen the climate contract system

- Create a fund, financed by a levy on advertising budgets, for awareness-raising campaigns on the impact of over-consumption
- Ban advertising for certain products with the lowest environmental and health ratings
- Protect consumers from online advertising (cookie management, ad blockers, etc.)

2 PROMOTE A CONNECTED AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT ECONOMY

- **Back the transformation of production models:** support industrial and commercial relocation to turn the imperative of better production/better consumption into an opportunity
- **Make France an "energy-efficient economy" champion:** invest in eco-design, re-use, repair, recycling and the circular economy as a priority. Support grassroots organisations and local businesses and use public procurement as a lever
- **Rely on local areas to move towards a collaboration and regeneration economy:** bring Regional Strategies for the Circular Economy into widespread use, make territorial economic cooperation clusters permanent and encourage the deployment of third places and other spaces dedicated to "doing".

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