



PRESS RELEASE

BAM, EASA, FEDMA and ICC Belgium organise first Pre-Summit European Consumer Day

April 17, 2024. BAM, EASA, FEDMA and ICC Belgium capitalized on the annual European Consumer Summit to reflect on the state of consumer protection and trust of those consumers during their joint event on *Elevating Trust: Innovative Approaches to Consumer Protection*. "Studies show 85% of Internet users read online reviews before making their purchase decision. So trust is crucial."

In today's landscape of digital commerce, the importance of consumer trust cannot be overemphasized. According to data shared by digital marketing expert Cédric Cauderlier during his keynote at the Pre-Summit European Consumer Day on digital strategy, an overwhelming 85% of Internet users trust online reviews before making a purchase decision (source: Bright local - Local Consumer Review Survey 2020 worldwide data). Marketing has the important task of increasing consumer trust.

Secretary of State for Consumer Affairs Alexia Bertrand highlighted this trend in her keynote and pointed out the need for marketing strategies that not only generate engagement, but also build trust. This is essential to maintaining consumer trust and loyalty in an era of targeted ads and influencer marketing. "We are at a crucial point within the dynamic world of marketing," she said. "With the rise of targeted ads and strategic collaborations with influencers, there is a need for clear information for consumers. This is why I am also treating this topic as one of the priorities during the Belgian EU Council Presidency. Today I see the marketing sector embracing the challenges and actively participating in solutions that benefit both industry and consumers by striving for ethical and transparent marketing."

An opportunity to grasp

"The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union gave us the unique opportunity to develop a common project just before the European Consumer Summit," said Fleur Parnet, CEO of BAM. "Protecting consumers within a framework that allows companies to engage in marketing is thereby our common goal."

"And so we immediately took this opportunity to show that Europe is not theoretical, but just very tangible," adds Lucas Boudet, Director General of EASA. "We wanted to bring together national and European stakeholders as well as industry and policymakers to showcase how European principles are put into practice at the local level."

Innovative approaches to consumer protection

Next to Cédric Cauderlier's keynote, the event's program featured several presentations and debates, with consumer protection in the digital age as a common thread. These included the importance of prevention and training to conduct responsible influencer marketing. Fleur Parnet: *"This is a topic that continues to gain importance, but around which relatively few industry-wide initiatives are being taken in Belgium."* In addition to a keynote by Secretary of State for Consumer Affairs Alexia Bertrand, there was further focus on Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PETs). These are technologies that start from the principle of 'privacy by default'.

"With this debate, we are highlighting the existence of these technologies so that companies start to use them more and respect citizens' privacy as much as possible," echoed Robin De Wouters, Director of FEDMA. *"PETs anticipate stricter regulations, which moreover can be implemented differently in each member state of the European Union. This can be done, for example, by applying data anonymization or pseudonymization. By highlighting this, we are also showing regulators self-regulatory solutions in parallel with regulation."*

Self-regulation and legislation belong together

Closing theme was a panel discussion on ethical and cross-sector marketing partnerships. *"We wanted to show the complementary of all initiatives in ensuring a high level of consumer protection,"* said Lucas Boudet. *"Without prejudice to responsible actions companies are taking by themselves, collective advertising self-regulation effectively complements regulation because it is quick and nimble. It can rapidly adapt to new marketing practices drawing up of relevant rules and training. Moreover, its industry-wide codes of conduct are independently enforced by self-regulatory bodies which provide swift complaint handling."*

"This Pre-Summit Consumer Day allowed us to highlight a number of hot topics within the marketing industry. This was important for companies as well as for regulators and policy makers," concludes Julie Deré, Secretary General of ICC Belgium. *"The ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code is primarily aimed at companies and marketers, but indirectly affects consumer protection by promoting fairness, transparency and respect for consumer rights in advertising and marketing. This joint project is therefore fully in line with our objectives, and we are delighted to have been able to host this meeting together with BAM, EASA and FEDMA."*

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This joint event took place under the auspices of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

About BAM

BAM, short for the Belgian Association of Marketing, is the premier trade association for marketing in Belgium. BAM's mission is to create value and build lasting relationships. That belief in meaningful marketing is what the association wants to pass on to everyone who crosses its path. A focus on sustainability, inclusion & diversity, technology and privacy & ethics gives additional substance to this belief.

Only in this way is BAM able to give meaning to marketing. Only in this way does BAM help professionals put marketing at the heart of their organizations.

To fulfill this mission, BAM is an open community and actively seeks partnerships. In the BAM network, professionals can find inspiration, knowledge and cross-pollination.

Learn more at www.marketing.be.

About EASA

EASA's role is to set high operational standards for advertising self-regulatory systems, as outlined in the EASA [Best Practice Model](#) and [Charter](#). EASA also provides space for the advertising ecosystem to work together at the European and international levels to address common challenges and ensure that advertising standards are future-proofed.

EASA has a network of 41 organizations representing 27 self-regulatory advertising organizations (also called "standards bodies") from Europe and 13 organizations representing the advertising ecosystem (the advertisers, agencies, the media) and 1 digital pure-play company.

Learn more at <https://www.easa-alliance.org>.

About FEDMA

Based in Brussels, the Federation of European Data and Marketing (FEDMA) represents the interests of the data and marketing industry from across Europe. Its members use data for effective marketing and improved customer experience across all communication channels. As the European umbrella organization, FEDMA works primarily through its network of national Data & Marketing Associations (DMAs) across Europe and key companies with an interest in influencing legislation.

Learn more at <https://www.fedma.org>.

About ICC Belgium

ICC Belgium is the Brussels-based office of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) since 1920. ICC is the world's largest business organization representing more than 45 million companies in more than 100 countries.

Through a unique blend of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, ICC Belgium promotes international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing leading dispute resolution services. Members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

Learn more at <https://iccwbo.be>.

For more information on the contents of this press release, contact sarah.vyverman@marketing.be - -.
02/234 54 08