



Greenwashing Under Fire: claims regarding PET Bottles Investigated by Hungarian Authority

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Following a BEUC complaint, on 12 August 2024 the Hungarian Competition Authority (HCA) opened an investigation which led to proceedings against Fonte Viva Kft., Szentkirályi Magyarország Kft., Coca-Cola HBC Magyarország Kft., Coca-Cola Magyarország Szolgáltató Kft. and The Coca Cola Company for making misleading claims regarding their respective soft drink and mineral water bottles. The claims under scrutiny by the HCA included, among others, advertising slogans such as *"I am a 100% recyclable PET bottle"*, *"from bottle to bottle"*, *"Get into the circulation"*. The aforementioned advertising claims are likely to be unsubstantiated and their factual correctness cannot be backed up by the companies. It remains to be seen what sanctions, if any, will be applied in these proceedings.

In the previous years it has attracted attention that large water bottle retailers such as Nestlé Waters/Nestlé Coca-Cola and Danone have advertised their products as *"100% recyclable"* and used images that

suggest that the bottles are environment friendly. On 7 November 2023, BEUC and its member associations in 13 countries reported to the EU authorities that this was likely to mislead consumers.

Green washing is the phenomenon whereby a company's marketing strategy includes using images, colours and text to present itself as environmentally friendly, despite the fact that this is not backed up by real facts, thereby exploiting consumers' environmental awareness for the benefit of the company. The composition and manufacture of the products so advertised does not necessarily correspond to the company's green claims.

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