



European Consumer Day 2025

Europe for sale? How global marketplaces are changing our society – and what must be done right now

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1 December 2025 | 15:00 - 18:00 | EESC - Jacques Delors building - Room JDE 62

Journalists' brief – “Europe for Sale: How Marketplaces Are Changing Our Society?”

At the closing session of the conference entitled “*Europe for Sale: How Marketplaces Are Changing Our Society?*”, European stakeholders delivered a stark warning: **the EU is facing an unprecedented surge of illegal and unsafe products entering its territory through non-EU major online marketplaces**, and urgent coordinated action is needed.

Unprecedented urgency and mobilisation

Speakers highlighted a “moment of urgency”, noting that mobilisation had reached levels never seen before. In France, not only had the government taken strong action, but **more than 12 industry federations and over 100 brands** had initiated legal proceedings against certain platforms.

At the CESE, representatives of labour groups, businesses, consumers and environmental organisations are jointly calling for **immediate measures** to halt illegal imports and restore a **level playing field**.

An explosion in volume

The scale of the problem has become overwhelming. **Six billion products** from non-EU marketplaces are expected to enter the EU next year. In Finland, **98% of small parcels** originate from China. Compliance levels are alarming: in France, checks revealed that **80% of Shein products** tested over a 24-hour period were non-compliant, while in Denmark **half of the tested items** were deemed dangerous.

A shared European challenge

Participants agreed: this was not a national issue, but a **common European challenge**. All Member States faced the same systemic risks and were converging on similar proposals. There was no single fix – but a **toolbox of measures** already existed and could be expanded.

Short-term solutions: customs reform first

The main short-term actions identified focus on **EU customs reform**, including:

- **Eliminating the de minimis threshold**, which currently allows millions of low-value parcels to bypass controls.
- Introducing an **EU-wide handling fee** to fund inspections.

Speakers stressed the need to strengthen the **external borders of the EU**, not those of individual Member States, to avoid **forum shopping** and regulatory loopholes.

Medium-term solutions: Enforcement, cooperation, responsibility

Longer-term measures emphasised the need for stronger enforcement and better coordination:

- Increased resources and cooperation between customs and market-surveillance authorities across the EU.
- Engagement with **Chinese authorities**, including working towards pre-export compliance checks, despite the practical challenges entailed.
- Establishing a **responsible economic operator in the EU** for every product sold on the European market.
- Strengthening marketplace obligations regarding **seller verification, traceability and monitoring**.
- Addressing the **systemic risk** posed by hyperscale platforms through **centralised investigations** by the European Commission and potential new sanctioning powers by revising the **Digital Services Act (DSA)** and/or the **Consumer protection cooperation (CPC) Regulation**.

A clear message

The conference concluded with a unified call: **Europe must act now** to protect consumers, safeguard fair competition, and prevent the internal market from being undermined by unregulated global platforms operating at massive scale.
