

The EU prides itself on its high standards of consumer protection, both in terms of consumer health and product safety but also in the transactional areas of consumer affairs.

The retail and FMCG sectors are key intermediary services in the modern economy acting as the conduit between thousands of product suppliers and consumers but face an increasing number of pressures and challenges from a policy and commercial perspective.

Amidst a number of supply chain and product safety issues, it is critical that future legislation supports a dynamic industry while ensuring high standards of consumer protection.



### CONSUMER PROTECTION

Developments over the last years confirm moves towards a restrictive policy approach to consumer protection against dangerous substances and ingredients, against unhealthy lifestyles, in the digital sphere, in transactions and services.



### SCRUTINY ON B2B PRACTICES



Under the banner of 'Unfair Trading Practices', the European Commission is focusing on 'abuses of power' which result in market distortion. The debate has begun to focus specifically on the balance of power between producers and buyers such as food companies and retailers and the effect this has on prices and competition.

### TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED EUROPEAN CONSUMER MARKET



Remaining barriers to the full functioning of the internal market hinder further growth and the smooth flowing of cross-border goods and services. Will the new rules make it easier for companies to trade to consumers across borders while ensuring consumer protection from unfair practices?



### THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGING POPULATION

An aging population is a trend that will continue and increase rather than disappear. The new senior generation is one of 'silver surfers' who can use the internet to read the press, buy products and communicate on political issues but also face the result of the excesses of their youth (NCDs, chronic diseases).

### CALLS FOR INCREASED CONSUMER INFORMATION

Given recent challenges regarding traceability in the food chain combined with increased scrutiny on the safety of food ingredients and substances, "negative" labelling could become the norm. Will "too much information" mislead consumers instead of informing them?



### SUSTAINABILITY HIGH ON THE AGENDA

The rise of a culture of CSR has pushed the retail and FMCG sectors to proactively go beyond measures. It is thus critical that these self-regulatory efforts are acknowledged by legislators to prevent mandatory measures such as 'water-foot printing' or introducing rules or quotas on food waste.



## Case studies

### MARKS & SPENCER

FleishmanHillard was involved in the successful roll out of Plan A, Marks & Spencer's five year sustainability plan to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing their business and the world. The plan allows M&S to work with its customers and suppliers to combat climate change, reduce waste, safeguard natural resources and trade ethically.

### ERRT

FleishmanHillard has supported the European Retail Round Table's (ERRT) annual CEO panel event for several years. The event, which brings together CEOs from some of Europe's largest companies, helps to foster constructive discussions and create an understanding of the sector with key policymakers.

### HASBRO

FleishmanHillard provides Hasbro with strategic advice on key policy issues for the toy industry such as consumer safety and data protection and also assisted Hasbro in their relationship and interaction with NGOs and other stakeholders. In addition, FH has supported Hasbro on their CSR strategy and assisted in the preparation of their 2012 CSR report.



### MEET THE NEW CONSUMER

Modern digital-savvy consumers want to consume products that they can trust, which convey values they share; in other words, which represent a continuation of who they are and what they stand for.

# Top Trends in the EU

# The FH Approach

- a conversation we have with our clients

What is your goal for the year?	DEFEND	MAINTAIN	GROW
Product	I need to defend my product	I need to maintain my license to operate	I need to introduce a new product on the market
Organisation or Country	I need to defend my reputation	I need to communicate and align internally	I need to raise my profile
Marketplace	I need to defend my commercial freedom	I need to shape a business-friendly environment	I need to access new markets

## For more information, contact:



Michelle Gibbons

SVP, Senior Partner  
& Deputy Managing Director  
FleishmanHillard Brussels  
35 Square de Meeûs  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
+32 (0)2 282 09 70  
Michelle.Gibbons@fleishmaneuropa.com

## Our Brussels clients past and present:



# Consumer & Retail

FH Food and Health Team



While seeking to achieve the highest standards of consumer protection should always be the norm, future EU legislation will need to strike a balance across stimulating innovation and supporting an integrated European economy whilst providing more choice to informed consumers.