# TotalEnergies advertisement banned for misleading green claims



An advertisement for the French oil and gas company TotalEnergies has been prohibited in the UK following a ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for its misleading nature regarding the company's environmental impact. The complaint, filed by the campaign group Adfree Cities, centred on a paid X post made in May, which emphasised TotalEnergies' renewable wind energy projects but neglected to mention that the majority of its operations still revolve around fossil fuels.

TotalEnergies defended its advertisement, stating that the medium's constraints prevented a more thorough description of its business practices. However, the company pointed out that its website provides comprehensive information regarding its involvement in the oil and gas sector.

The ASA's decision highlighted that the advertisement, which focused on one of TotalEnergies' lower-carbon initiatives, improperly suggested that this initiative was representative of the company's overall business activity. According to TotalEnergies' Sustainability and Climate 2024 report, 90% of its sales in 2023 stemmed from petroleum and gas products, with the company responsible for 1.5% of global oil production. The report also indicated that approximately 68.3% of TotalEnergies' capital expenditure was directed towards fossil fuel energies, while only 31.7% was invested in lower-carbon activities.

The ASA ruled that the lack of information regarding the proportion of TotalEnergies' business model based on lower-carbon energy products was likely to mislead consumers.

In an interesting turn of events, the ASA also addressed complaints regarding advertisements for Shell and Barclays bank. The authority decided not to uphold 76 complaints against Shell's advert, which showcased an engineer passing by various energy-related scenes, including electric vehicle charging points and an offshore gas rig, while explicitly detailing the energy giant's investment proportions in both fossil fuels and lower-carbon technologies. The ASA stated that the advert clearly communicated to consumers that the majority of Shell’s investments were still in oil and gas, and thus did not create a misleading overall impression of the company's environmental impact.

Furthermore, a complaint regarding a Barclays bank advertisement, which allegedly omitted crucial information about its contributions to carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, was also dismissed.

The ASA's rulings are part of its ongoing Climate Change and Environment project, aimed at increasing regulatory scrutiny on green claims in advertising. In response to the decisions, Adfree Cities expressed their dissatisfaction, particularly regarding the Shell advertisement. Veronica Wignall, co-director at Adfree Cities, commented, “Any advert that portrays Shell as prioritising the environment in any way is categorically misleading while the oil major continues to expand its fossil fuel operations, directly undermining a clean energy transition.” She further added that the ASA's stance amounts to an endorsement of "greenwash" and represents a persistent failure to protect consumers from misinformation associated with fossil fuels.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/natural-gas/uk-bans-misleading-green-ads-by-shell-petronas-and-repsol/38287> - This article discusses the Advertising Standards Authority's (ASA) decision to ban misleading advertisements from major oil companies, including TotalEnergies, which corroborates the ruling mentioned in the original article.
* <https://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/asa-ruling-on-shell-uk-ltd-following-a-complaint-by-adfree-cities/> - The ruling from the ASA on Shell's advertisements reinforces the claim regarding misleading environmental messages and provides context on how these advertisements were scrutinized.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/shells-ads-misleading-asa-rules-after-complaints-about-green-claims-2023-06-07/> - This article outlines the ASA's ruling against Shell, further emphasizing the authority's stance on misleading environmental claims, which aligns with TotalEnergies' advertisement issues as stated in the original article.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/jun/07/asa-bans-shell-petronas-repsol-green-ads-misleading> - The Guardian's coverage of the ASA's ruling on misleading advertisements provides additional details about the context of the ruling against TotalEnergies and similar companies, supporting the claims made in the original article.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-65511121> - BBC News highlights the implications of the ASA's rulings on advertisements from Shell and other companies, corroborating the claims of misleading environmental representations made by TotalEnergies.