# Ireland’s CCPC cracks down on unsubstantiated sustainability claims in fashion



Ireland's Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) has issued a stern warning to the fashion industry regarding the use of unverified claims about sustainability. The announcement underscores concerns that many companies are misleading consumers by labelling their products as “green” or “sustainable” without sufficient evidence, a practice that the CCPC considers “unlikely to be true.”

In a joint communication with regulatory bodies from other jurisdictions, the CCPC has advised retailers to steer clear of imprecise and broad claims, urging them instead to provide clear, truthful representations of their environmental initiatives. An estimated 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions and 20% of global wastewater are attributed to the textile industry, highlighting the significant impact of fashion on environmental issues.

The CCPC stated, “Giving consumers greater confidence to identify those fashion retailers that they consider to be making the greatest effort to reduce emissions will help to drive innovation and investment in more sustainable technology within the sector.” This highlights the regulatory body’s aim not only to protect consumers but also to encourage a more responsible approach to sustainability claims.

The commission has specifically instructed fashion brands to ensure that any declarations regarding environmental impact are substantiated by rigorous evidence. It cautioned against the use of suggestive imagery associated with environmental benefits, such as rainforest photos or green graphics, as they do not accurately reflect the environmental credentials of products. The CCPC stated, “Refrain from using vague and general terms to describe filters or groups of products in online stores, such as ‘filter by sustainability’ or ‘sustainable product range’.”

Additionally, the letter emphasised that marketing claims must adhere to consumer protection and marketing laws, placing the responsibility on companies to avoid misleading consumers. Vague assertions about a garment being “green” or “sustainable” pose significant challenges for proof, with the CCPC noting that the evidential bar is set high, and brands are unlikely to meet this standard.

The commission also suggested that marketing efforts should highlight specific, measurable actions taken by companies rather than making broad aspirational claims. For instance, a detailed disclosure about a particular fabric’s sustainability is less likely to mislead consumers than a general promise such as “we are committed to a better world.”

Concerns about “greenwashing” in the fashion sector have been raised previously. A recent report from Greenpeace found that nearly 40% of sustainability claims within the textile and garment industry could be false or misleading. The organisation remarked that clothing is often marketed as “recycled” without proper evidence supporting a truly circular system for those products. Furthermore, Greenpeace asserted that “fast fashion will never be sustainable,” reinforcing the challenges facing consumers in navigating sustainability claims in the industry.

The CCPC's directive constitutes a significant step toward greater accountability in the fashion industry, aimed at bolstering consumer confidence and fostering genuine efforts towards sustainability in an arena often plagued by deceptive marketing practices.

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

## Bibliography

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