2021

Greenwashing Crackdown

TIMELINE

January

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) co-ordinated global review of randomly selected websites finding 40% of green claims made online could be misleading consumers.

April

France introduces one of the world's first greenwashing laws that imposes legal sanctions on organisations accused of greenwashing which could be fined up to 80% of the cost of their promotional campaign.

May

CMA Competition & Markets Authority

CMA publishes draft guidance on environmental claims of goods and services.

June

Changing Markets FOUNDATION

Changing Markets Foundation (CMF) publishes *Synthetics Anonymous*, which includes an assessment of fashion brands' green claims, using the draft CMA guidance. The research find that 59% of claims could be misleading or unsubstantiated.

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September

CMA
Competition & Markets Authority

UK CMA publishes the official Green Claims Code.

adidas

French regulators rule that an Adidas advert for its Stan Smith sneakers broke advertising rules and misled consumers.

allbirds

Allbirds face a lawsuit alleging that the company's carbon footprint claims are misleading.

December

EVERLANE

Everlane's sustainability claims on the benefits of recycled plastic bottles and the 'safer' chemicals falls under investigation by US authorities.

2022

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January

UK CMA rolls out investigation of the fashion industry.

February

An advert by Coca-Cola owned Innocent smoothies is banned by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ad claimed buying Innocent's drinks could help "fix up the world".

CMF launches greenwash.com to expose greenwashing within the fashion industry.

March

The EU Textiles Strategy is published promising a clamp down on false green claims.

The European Commission publishes the Empowering Consumer for the Green Transition.

CMF launches a new investigation *Licence to Greenwash: How certification schemes and voluntary initiatives are fuelling fossil fashion.*

June

Using Higg Materials Sustainability Index (Higg MSI) data on labels is declared illegal by the Norwegian Consumer Protection Authority (NCPA).

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) pauses the consumer-facing portion of their transparency programme in the Higg Index.

A Quartz investigation into the Higg Index sustainability profile scorecards on H&M's website reveals that over half were making misleading claims.

Greenwash.com updated to include plastics.

July

H&M faces its first lawsuit in the US for greenwashing its Conscious Collection.

Investigation of ASOS, Boohoo and George at ASDA by the CMA is announced.

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September

Dutch authorities say H&M ads include unsubstantiated claims that need to be rectified.

H&M Group removes the Conscious Collection.

Dutch authorities reprimand Decathlon, which then removes unsubstantiated sustainability claims.

October

Norwegian and Dutch authorities issue guidance to the SAC to avoid misleading consumers and falling foul of greenwashing laws.

Zalando removes sustainability tag from products online after receiving greenwashing award from the Norwegian Consumer Council.

November

H&M faces a second lawsuit for green claims about recycled polyester

International Standards Organisation (ISO) launches Net Zero Guidelines at COP27 to help businesses avoid greenwashed climate targets .

2023

January

The CMA announces it will examine the accuracy of 'green' claims made about household essentials such as food, drink, and toiletries.

France introduces the Climate and Resilience Law which requires all companies that highlight the carbon neutrality of a product or service to produce a report on all the greenhouse gas emissions of the said product or service.

March

The EU is set to announce official rules on how companies can substantiate their green claims.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission launched an investigation into 247 companies for misleading environmental claims, and found that the packaging and fashion sectors had the highest proportion of concerning claims.