INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“CONSUMER PROTECTION IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY”

Date: Friday 4 May 2018

Venue: Leuven, Collegium Falconis, Zeger van Hee Auditorium

Concept of the conference:

In 2015, Pope Francis observed in his Laudatio si that “our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. A serious consideration of this issue would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet, but it must be said that only limited progress has been made in this regard.” (para. 22).

Yet, in recent years, policy makers at various levels are discovering the concept of “circular economy” and are increasingly proposing strategies and legal instruments to support the transition from a linear economy towards a more circular economy. Against this background, the aims of this conference are: first, to explore the “circular economy” concept and strategies from an interdisciplinary perspective (economics, engineering, ethics, law), and, second, to identify and critically assess “circular economy” legal instruments in various steps of the value chain. In doing so, the focus will be primarily on production, consumption, repair and remanufacturing and on the most pressing consumer protection issues at these stages. As innovative business and consumption models – like the “functional economy” (consuming services rather than buying products) - can also contribute to the transition towards a more circular economy, attention will also be paid to the legal challenges these new economic models entail.

Programme:

8.30 Registration
9.00 Welcome

Bert Keirsbilck and Evelyne Terryn, KU Leuven, CCM
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Towards a circular economy in Europe - An overview of EU initiatives

Hugo Maria Schally, Head of Unit - ENV.B1 - Sustainable Production, Products & Consumption, European Commission, DG Environment

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

9.25  Engineering

Karel Van Acker, Professor of Sustainable Metals Processing and Recycling, Faculty of Engineering Science, KU Leuven

9.45  Economics

Johan Eyckmans, Professor of Corporate Sustainability, Faculty of Economics, KU Leuven, Brussels Campus

10.05  Ethics

Toon Vandevelde, Professor of Ethics and Economics, Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven

COFFEE BREAK (10.20-10.45)

PANEL DEBATE (10.45– 11.40)

- Luc Alaerts, Circular Flanders
- Catherine Vanderstichelen, Environment Brussel, “Economy in transition”
- Thomas Opsomer, iFixit
- Jules Stuyck, KU Leuven

11.40 KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Consumer protection in the circular economy in China – Legal initiatives and challenges

Lei Chen, City University of Hong Kong

SANDWICH LUNCH (12.00-13.00)
AFTERNOON SESSION: CONSUMER PROTECTION IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY – LEGAL INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES
Chair: Jules Stuyck

13.00  The design and production stage: ecodesign requirements
Anaïs Michel, KU Leuven

13.20  The information and marketing stage: information requirements, labelling and green claims
Bert Keirsbilck, KU Leuven

13.40  The contracting stage: legal and commercial guarantees and the right to repair in Europe and the US
Evelyne Terryn and Sanne Vandemaele, KU Leuven

14.00  Functional economy (from products to services): legal challenges
Fryderyk Zoll, University of Krakau

BREAK OUT SESSIONS: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES (14.10– 15.30)

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<td>Session reporter: Klaus Tonner, University of Rostock</td>
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<td>NL: Vanessa Mak, University of Tilburg</td>
<td>ES: Francisco De Elizalde, IE University Madrid</td>
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<td>SI: Petra Weingerl and Janja Hojnik, University of Maribor</td>
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<td>SE: Eleonore Maitre Ekern, University of Oslo</td>
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<td>B: Annick De Boeck, KU Leuven</td>
<td>B: Benjamin Verheye, KU Leuven</td>
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15.30-16.20 REPORT FROM THE BREAK-OUT SESSIONS AND PANEL DEBATE
- Session reporters Klaus Tonner and Christian Twigg-Flesner
- Patrick Van den Bossche, head Center of expertise Environment, Agoria
- Ursula Pachl, BEUC

16.20  CLOSING REMARKS
Hans Micklitz, EUI

16.40 KEYNOTE CLOSING ADDRESS: Consumer protection in the circular economy in Europe – Legal initiatives and challenges – The Commission’s view
Renatas Mazeika, Head of Unit responsible for consumer policy, European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers

17.00  END OF CONFERENCE