

FORBRUGERRÅDET

TÆNK

Consumers and scientific independence in EFSA

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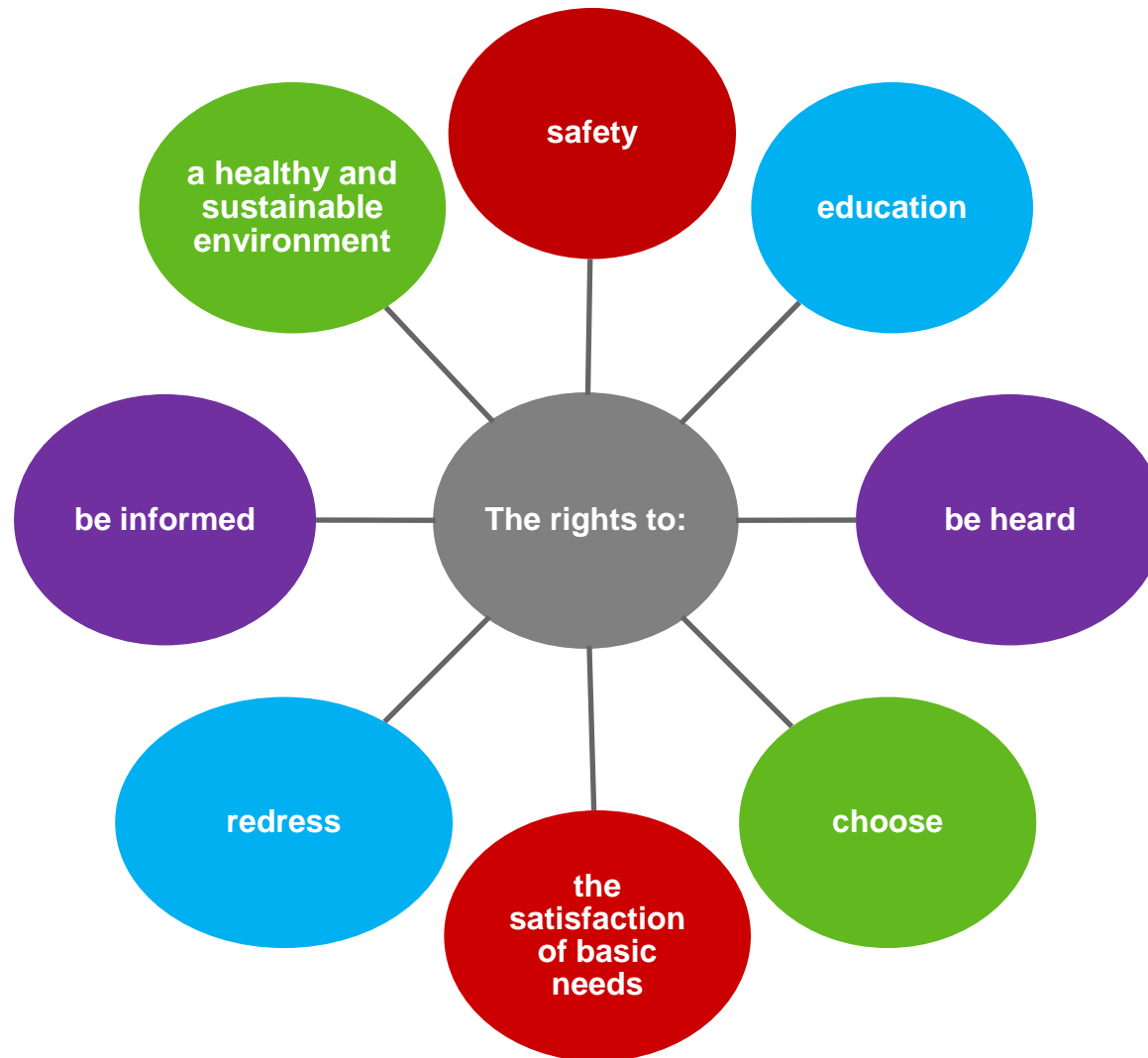
The Danish Consumer Council

Member of the BEUC food headline team

43 members in 31 countries



Global consumer demands



Consumers need advocates

Phthalates

Eco-labels

Climate

Healthy food

Endocrine disruptors

SAR value

Nano

APRC

File sharing

Guarantee



We are trusted

Which of the following organisations, which deal with the ethical aspects of consumption, do you consider most credible?

	Percentage
Active Consumers	2 %
Danish Initiative on Ethical Trade	1 %
Co-op Denmark	14 %
The Danish Consumer Council	49 %
Greenpeace	17 %
Max Havelaar	39 %
Info. Centre for Env. and Health	4 %
NOAH	6 %
WWF	38 %
Organic Denmark	14 %
None of those mentioned	2 %
Others	0 %
Don't know	11 %
Total	197 %

Capacent Epinion for the Federation of Retail Grocers in Denmark (June 2008)

Consumers do care about scientific independence

- 73% has a high level of trust in scientists
- 64% has a high level of trust in European food safety agencies
- 47% think that scientific advice on food-related risk is independent
- 58% have little confidence in scientists and scientific research because of collaboration with industry
- Source: Eurobarometer, 2010

Consumer confidence in EFSA is essential

- Moving risk assessment from national agencies to EFSA increased the distance to the single consumer and national debates
- Science is not definitive
- Information overload
- Single studies overexposed in media giving the expression that science is changing all the time
- The world is small
- No one is completely independent, extensive collaboration between universities and industry
- Big money involved

EFSA policy on independence

- In general, EFSA is doing a large effort to ensure transparency and independence
- Most concerns are reflected in the policy paper

What could be better?

- **Even more transparency: Open meetings**
 - More balanced output than consensus opinions
 - Insight in which studies are considered and which are not
- **Consumer trust requires confidence that all concerns have been addressed**

The questions that are not asked and therefore not answered

- EFSA panels answer the specific questions only, giving much power to the actual wording of questions
- The scientific discussion is closed after EFSA opinions are published
- Miss the scientific assessment in the 'real life' context, i.e. implications for consumer situation at point of purchase
- Giving consumers organisations the right to raise questions as in France?

Looking forward

- Continuous focus
- Listen to criticism
- Adjust policy if necessary