

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001854/24
to the Commission
Miriam Lexmann (PPE), Christine Singer (Renew), Pina Picierno (S&D), Engin Eroglu (Renew)
(27 September 2024)**

Subject: Allegations of ‘greenwashing’ concerning JBS

Earlier this year, the New York Attorney General filed a lawsuit against the American subsidiary of JBS, the world’s largest producer of beef products, for misleading the public about its environmental impact. JBS has claimed that it will achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, despite plans to increase production and thereby increase its carbon footprint.

JBS has a well-documented history of environmental degradation, deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices in the Amazon rainforest and other sensitive ecosystems. JBS has by far the highest emissions of any company in agriculture, and the company’s methane emissions exceed the combined total methane emissions of France, Germany, Canada and New Zealand.

On top of this, there have been a litany of abuses, price manipulation practices and what has been dubbed ‘the largest corruption inquiry in history’ linked with the Batista brothers, who de facto control JBS through a holding company.

Even while interinstitutional negotiations on the ‘green claims’ directive are still ongoing:

1. Can the Commission confirm whether it is aware of ‘greenwashing’ allegations against JBS, and the potential impact of this on EU consumers?
2. What concrete steps will the Commission take to protect EU consumers?

Submitted: 27.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(22 November 2024)**

The Commission is aware of allegations against JBS, as well as of the multiple negative impacts that misleading green claims have on consumers and on businesses making genuine efforts to improve their sustainability.

The Commission has already taken concrete steps to protect EU consumers and businesses from greenwashing and increase consumer trust.

The recent amendment of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ⁽¹⁾ forbids vague (i.e. ‘generic’) environmental claims. Companies will no longer be able to declare that they are ‘green’ or ‘environmentally friendly’ without having recognised excellent environmental performance.

The directive also sets rules on future environmental performance claims, such as claims on plans to reach climate neutrality, for which traders will need to present a detailed and realistic implementation plan. The new rules will become applicable from 27 September 2026.

Within this context, national consumer authorities, under the coordination of the Commission, monitor the market and initiate coordinated actions against traders who engage in misleading green claims, in order to bring their practices in line with EU consumer law ⁽²⁾.

In addition, the proposal for a Green Claims Directive ⁽³⁾ aims at complementing these requirements by setting clear rules on how to substantiate environmental claims and labels and requires the substantiation of claims to be verified before they are presented to consumers by an independent and accredited verifier.

Furthermore, the Deforestation Free Products Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ aims to ensure that a set of key commodities and derived products placed on the EU market, including cattle meat and leather, no longer contribute to deforestation and forest degradation.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/825 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2024 amending Directives 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU as regards empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and through better information, OJ L, 2024/825, 6.3.2024.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/live-work-travel-eu/consumer-rights-and-complaints/enforcement-consumer-protection/coordinated-actions/sustainable-consumption-actions_en

⁽³⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive), COM/2023/166 final.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010, OJ L 150, 9.6.2023.