

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001647/26
to the Commission
Nicola Procaccini (ECR)
(22 April 2026)**

Subject: Blue Flag programme and application of Directive (EU) 2024/825

Directive (EU) 2024/825 seeks to boost consumer protection against unfair commercial practices and misleading environmental claims. In particular, Recital 7 of that directive introduces restrictions on the use of generic environmental claims that are not supported by sufficient evidence.

However, in the EU, there are established environmental recognition programmes that are more than simply commercial statements — they are structured tools for local governance and advancing sustainability, including the Blue Flag programme, which has been running for more than 40 years and is very active in many Member States. Some 3 800 beaches and marinas have received blue flags. The programme uses public criteria and a multi-level evaluation process involving public authorities, environmental experts, and national and international juries.

If programmes of that kind were to be treated as part of the generic environmental claims addressed by the directive, it could create legal uncertainty and penalise recognised instruments that play a practical role in environmental protection and the sustainable development of European coastal areas.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Do established environmental recognition programmes, such as the Blue Flag programme, fall within the scope of Article 7 of Directive (EU) 2024/825 on generic environmental claims?
2. How should the directive be interpreted with regard to environmental programmes based on public criteria and independent evaluation processes involving public authorities?

Submitted: 22.4.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(27 May 2026)**

Directive (EU) 2024/825 on Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition (ECGT) introduces targeted amendments to the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (EU) 2005/29 (UCPD), without changing its scope or logic of intervention. It applies to business-to-consumer commercial practices by traders.

Environmental recognition programmes such as Blue Flag, where awarded to demonstrate the water and environmental quality and accessibility of public beaches managed by local public authorities, do not constitute commercial practices as such and are not automatically covered by the rules of the ECGT.

However, where a trader refers to Blue Flag in commercial communications to consumers, the ECGT/UCPD may become relevant depending on the circumstances of the case.

For example, a presentation that could mislead consumers into believing that the trader, its services or products are themselves covered by, or benefit from, a Blue Flag certification could be assessed under the ECGT/UCPD.

By contrast, a mere factual reference indicating that a trader, such as a hotel, accommodation provider or campsite, is located near a Blue Flag beach would not, as such, raise issues under those rules. The assessment remains case-specific and falls within the competence of national authorities.

The ECGT does not prevent environmental programmes to be based on public criteria and independent evaluation processes. It regulates the use of environmental claims and sustainability labels in business-to-consumers commercial communications.
