



## Project

### Environmental and Social Responsibility in Manufacturing and Retail

The non-profit organisation VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE (registered association) offers a company check at [www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de](http://www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de). The website provides information about the ecological and social commitment (Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR) of retailers and, in future, manufacturers.

The results of the company check are based on nationwide surveys on environmental and social standards of the entire supply chain.

After an initial survey of companies of the six retail sectors with the highest turnover in 2009, three further retail sectors were surveyed in 2010. The ambitious sector-specific

questionnaires were developed by the Öko-Institut (Institute for Applied Ecology) and include approximately 350 sustainability criteria.

In 2011, the VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE will continue their work. Supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency, the association will conduct a third company survey.

In the project "Environmental and Social Responsibility in Manufacturing and Retail", the six retail sectors with the highest turnover will be reinspected. In addition, manufacturers in these sectors will also be examined.

## VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE

The German consumer organisation VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE is a federal association of critical consumers, founded in 1985. The non-profit organisation focuses on ecological, health-related and social consumer work.

The association provides consumer information and offers several websites on various topics as well as around 85 brochures on specific issues.

Consumers have power. With their purchases consumers are able to influence markets, determine which products will be offered and which will be excluded. In order to use this power, consumers need reliable and practical information. VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE, with its philosophy of (self-)responsible

consumers, provides consumer information in various ways.

The retail surveys are conducted within the framework of the "Initiative for Sustainable Action", which started in 2006. The "Initiative for Sustainable Action" aims at providing transparency on ecological and social activities of companies and enabling consumers in order to support sustainable consumption. The initiative helps to promote sustainable products on the market, and connects sustainable consumers and responsible companies.

To support VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE you can join us as a member or contribute with a donation. Your financial contribution is tax-deductible in either case.

## Contact

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# Sustainable consumption

## Company check and product information



Bundesverband

Die Verbraucher Initiative e.V.

## Sustainable products and companies

The benefits of responsibility



Dear readers,

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) shall become an economic advantage for Germany, stated the Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ursula von der Leyen, on the occasion of the publication of the German CSR Action Plan. This can only succeed under the premise of companies' engagement, which is recognized and rewarded by consumers.

The survey of the VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE is set in this context. The project is supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency. By investigating the social and ecological activities of companies in the German retail sectors with the highest turnover, the non-profit organisation creates transparency for consumers and supports the development of sustainability activities in firms and production companies. The questionnaire also serves as a sustainability-checklist and gives strategic support for companies.

In times of decreasing and faltering markets, companies are able to gain significant competitive advantage by taking part in this independent survey, hence companies, that pursue a credible sustainability strategy, will be rewarded by their customers. The website [www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de](http://www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de) shows those retail companies that have already been reviewed and certified as sustainable companies by VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE.

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[www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de](http://www.nachhaltig-einkaufen.de)

## Along the supply chain

Commitment to sustainability pays off

Media regularly report on companies that fail to take on their ecological and social responsibilities. Whether in case of spying on employees, exploitative child labour or toxins in products – consumers expect companies to offer environmentally friendly products and to pay fair wages, within the company and along the supply chain.

A sustainable company takes its responsibilities along the entire supply chain seriously. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contains the voluntary commitment of companies to consider social and ecological

factors beyond mandatory statutory requirements in all corporate sectors.

Consumers reward sustainable businesses, and prefer products from companies that act in a socially and ecologically responsible way. From the company's point of view, a commitment to sustainability pays off in many ways: energy efficiency, climate protection, opportunities of professional development for staff and improvement of social and health insurance schemes improve the image of the company, motivate employees and induce economic benefits.

## Company Check 2011

VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE starts new survey

In 2011, manufacturers and retail companies get the chance to participate in a cost-free, standardised sustainability-check.

The sector-specific questionnaires developed by the Öko-Institut (Institute for Applied Ecology) are designed as a sustainability-checklist. With the help of the questionnaires companies are able to reveal deficits in the field of sustainability. The sustainability-check supports companies to improve their sustainability standards. The questionnaires are processed anonymously. In

case of positive results, manufacturers and retail companies receive an award which can be applied in their external communications.

VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE invites manufacturers and retail companies of the following sectors to take part in the survey:

- Food & Groceries
- Health and body care
- Textiles and shoes
- DIY and construction materials
- Furniture
- IT and telecommunications.

