

A New Era of Sustainability Claims: How Companies Can Communicate Safely under the EU's Green Transition Rules

The new European regulatory landscape for sustainability claims is rapidly transforming how companies must communicate their environmental performance. Market and legal expectations now go beyond merely avoiding catchy but vague green messages; companies are required to present the environmental impact of their products and processes in a credible, substantiated, and verifiable manner. In this context, three concepts have become particularly decisive: the centralisation of data, the prior professional review of claims, and technology-supported transparency through QR codes.

Data centralisation means that a company collects and manages environmental information relating to its entire supply chain within a single, auditable, and maintainable system. Authorities and consumer organisations no longer accept claims based on fragmented or incomplete datasets. The evidentiary basis of green claims lies in a comprehensive, life-cycle-wide, interconnected, and up-to-date data structure. In practice, this means that a company can successfully withstand regulatory scrutiny only if the environmental impacts of its manufacturing processes, suppliers, logistics, and product use are all traceable and can be presented in a coherent manner.

The prior professional approval of claims—increasingly referred to in international practice as a pre-clearance mechanism—has become one of the most important elements of corporate risk management. Its essence is that, before communications are made public, the company has the planned environmental claims reviewed under independent professional or legal control. This practice now goes beyond mere risk mitigation: it functions as an internal quality assurance mechanism that enhances the credibility of communications and reduces the likelihood of subsequent disputes or regulatory proceedings. Experience at both EU and national competition authorities shows that companies most often breach rules on green claims not because they intend to mislead consumers, but because their internal processes lack a checkpoint at which claims are examined from both legal and scientific perspectives.

The third pillar of transparent communication is the use of QR codes or other digital access solutions. One clear objective of EU legislation is to ensure that consumers and authorities can easily and quickly access the documentation substantiating environmental claims. QR codes enable companies to avoid attempting to summarise life-cycle analysis details on packaging or in short marketing messages, and instead make this information available on a centrally managed, dynamically updatable data page. This not only increases transparency, but also offers regulatory advantages, as companies can clearly demonstrate which data were available at the time the claim was made.

For companies, all of this means that sustainability communication is no longer a marketing issue, but a matter of compliance and corporate governance. Green claims now require the same level of legal and technical substantiation as any other corporate process subject to regulatory oversight. Companies that transition in time to centralised data management, establish pre-review mechanisms, and implement digital transparency will not only avoid greenwashing risks but also gain a competitive advantage. Credible, proven, and easily verifiable sustainability performance has become a value reinforced both by the EU's normative framework and by evolving consumer behaviour.