

# Newsletter

Empowering youth against Greenwashing

## STATE OF ART Report

Greenwashing is no longer a niche issue – it affects how we shop, what we trust, and how we imagine a sustainable future. The Guardians of Truth – Empowering Youth Against Greenwashing project brings together young people, youth workers, and educators from across Europe to better understand misleading green claims and to build the skills needed to challenge them.

This newsletter shares key insights from the project’s research report, highlighting why greenwashing is so widespread, where young people struggle the most, and how youth can become powerful actors for honesty, transparency, and real sustainability.



### Readers Spotlight

Greenwashing is becoming harder to spot, even for motivated and environmentally conscious young people. The Guardians of Truth report shows that misleading green claims often rely on vague language, false labels, and emotional marketing. New practices, such as influencer-driven greenwashing or “net-zero by offset only” promises, add to the confusion. Although more than two-thirds of young people want to fight greenwashing, many lack confidence in how to do so. This gap between motivation and action highlights the need for better education and practical tools. The report calls for stronger support through youth work and non-formal education. Empowered youth can become a powerful force for transparency and accountability.



[www.greenwashing.watch](http://www.greenwashing.watch)



### Announcements



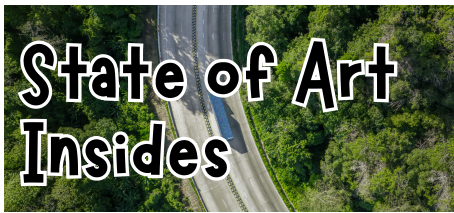
Empowering youth to spot and stop greenwashing



Green claims questioned by Europe’s young voices



From awareness to action against greenwashing



# What Is Greenwashing – and Why Young People Should Care

Greenwashing happens when companies present themselves as environmentally friendly without real proof behind their claims. Words like “eco”, “natural”, or “sustainable” are often used vaguely, creating the illusion of responsibility while hiding real environmental harm.

According to the Guardians of Truth report, greenwashing doesn't just mislead consumers – it creates frustration, fuels eco-anxiety, and undermines trust in genuinely sustainable brands. For young people especially, this can lead to disappointment and disengagement from sustainability efforts. Recognizing greenwashing is the first step toward making informed choices and protecting both people and the planet.



## The “Six Sins” of Greenwashing – Plus New Tricks

The report builds on the well-known “Six Sins of Greenwashing”, which include hidden trade-offs, vague language, fake labels, and claims without proof. These misleading practices are still widely used today.

Newer forms of greenwashing are also emerging, such as “net-zero by offset only” promises or influencers promoting green products without evidence. These tactics can confuse even highly motivated audiences and show why “green literacy” is becoming an essential skill for young people navigating today’s media and marketing landscape



The report is built on a strong research foundation combining desk research, surveys, and focus group interviews. Over 114 sources were reviewed, and 148 young people aged 16–35 from Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, and additional countries participated in the survey.

The findings show that while most young people believe greenwashing is harmful, many feel they lack the knowledge and tools to challenge it effectively. This gap between motivation and action highlights why targeted youth education and practical tools are so important in the fight against misleading green claims.

## Youth Power – How Young People Can Counter Greenwashing

The good news? More than two-thirds of respondents are motivated to fight greenwashing. The report outlines practical ways young people can become “Guardians of Truth” – from checking labels and questioning vague claims to reporting misleading advertisements and supporting transparent brands.

Young people are encouraged to use their digital skills, social media presence, and collective voice to challenge false narratives. Whether through awareness campaigns, boycotts, or creative content, youth action plays a crucial role in pushing companies toward honesty and accountability



## The Future Role of Youth as Guardians of Truth

The report concludes with a strong message: young people are not just consumers – they are agents of change. Their environmental awareness, creativity, and ability to influence others make them central to building a future where sustainability is real, not just a marketing slogan. Instead of blindly trusting green claims, youth are encouraged to stay curious, ask questions, demand proof, and use available tools. By doing so, they help ensure that “green” stands for genuine commitment, transparency, and a livable future for all.



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