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GSCF Launches Global Self-Care Industry Sustainability Charter

by [David Ridley](#)

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Published today (25 November), the “[Charter for Environmentally Sustainable Self-Care](#)” aims to reduce the impact of self-care products on the environment, GSCF said, while ensuring better health outcomes, product safety and access to effective treatment options.

“Voluntary and proactive action across the consumer health industry is essential to find urgent, sustainable solutions to address the sector’s environmental impact,” commented GSCF director general Judy Stenmark.

“That’s why I am very pleased to see the Charter come to fruition at a time when we are truly seeing a collective global movement from business to address sustainability, both through making tangible commitments and delivering on them,” Stenmark said. “The Charter provides an ambitious platform for all our members globally to drive innovation in sustainability.”

The charter represents the sustainability commitments of GSCF members, including consumer health manufacturers and associations and focuses on three priority areas where the industry has the greatest impact and influence: plastics and packaging, pharmaceuticals in the environment and CO2 footprint, GSCF explained.

Company Actions

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GSCF members have pledged to reduce plastics and packaging wherever possible, GSCF said, “striving for circular design in self-care products, from design to end-of-life.”

The global self-care industry also continues to take measures to reduce the presence of pharmaceuticals in the environment, it continued, which include “promoting the safe disposal of unused medication for example via take-back schemes.”

And with respect to carbon emissions, GSCF said its members are “adopting emissions reduction targets that accelerate the transition to the low carbon economy, in line with the Paris Agreement” (to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius).

The GSCF was also keen to stress that sustainability and human health and well-being are “inextricably linked.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that environmental stressors are responsible for 12–18% of all deaths in the 53 countries of the WHO Europe Region, the association reported.

Environmental pollutants are linked to respiratory illnesses, cancer, mental health conditions and minor ailments such as headaches and coughs, it explained.

“Minimising the impact of self-care products on the environment while safeguarding access to effective treatment and well-being options for people is a critical issue for the consumer health industry,” insisted Jurate Svarcaite, director general of European industry association and GSCF member, the AESGP.

“Member companies have already embarked on the sustainability journey individually,” she added. “With the Charter we establish a platform for good practice sharing and collaboration with an objective to create collective actions and move the needle forward.”

Sustainability In Consumer Health: How The Major European Players Are Tackling The Climate Crisis

By [Tom Gallen](#) and [David Ridley](#)

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INFOGRAPHIC: What are the leading European consumer health firms doing to tackle climate change? This infographic explores the sustainability strategies of four leading players – GSK, Reckitt, Sanofi and Bayer – highlighting the internal targets they have set and reviewing the progress made so far.

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