

Goods Package is good for consumers and traders

Retailers and wholesalers in Europe welcome the European Commission's Goods Package, which was published today. The two legislative proposals, aimed at a more effective market surveillance and at mutual recognition of so-called non-harmonised products, should strengthen the Single Market, increase cross-border trade, and improve consumer choice.

Speaking today on the launch of the [European Commission's Goods Package](#), Christian Verschueren, Director-General of EuroCommerce said:

"Member States persist in demanding unjustified and unnecessary information and changes from retailers and wholesalers about products already found to be safe and sold legally in another Member State. In some cases, competent authorities are unaware of this, or simply choose to impose their own different national rules. The principle of mutual recognition goes back to the 1979 Cassis de Dijon case, yet these practices persist. The Commission's proposal for improving problem solving, reinforcing product contact points and enhancing mutual trust, exchange and awareness, are promising. It will improve cross-border trade, enabling businesses to compete, and offer their customers more choice for better prices."

EuroCommerce has for many years asked for improvement in the application of the principle of mutual recognition, enabling smooth cross-border trade in non-harmonised products. However, Member States' authorities often ask for additional testing, relabelling and adjusting the composition of products. This should not be necessary if a product is already lawfully marketed elsewhere in the Single Market.

In addition, market surveillance is still too much nationally organised, and even scattered within Member States. EuroCommerce supports better coordination and collaboration between national market surveillance authorities, and especially with the customs authorities. This should reduce the number of non-compliant products sold in the Single Market. It will make it more difficult for rogue traders and increase consumer safety. Verschueren added:

"National market surveillance authorities need urgently to start working together more closely. Rogue traders who deliberately bring non-compliant products into the Single Market should be punished. Enforcement, instead of introducing new rules that lead to additional costs for genuine traders, is the way to protect consumers best."

We are also pleased to see that the Commission proposes to extend the concept of 'responsible person' to become mandatory for all manufacturers making products available on the EU market. Verschueren concluded:

"Too often product responsibilities and liabilities fell on the shoulders of the retailers and wholesalers. We are pleased that the Commission has now clarified the respective roles of manufacturers and retailers and wholesalers."

Contact:

Kinga Timaru-Kast - +32 2 894 64 83 - timaru@eurocommerce.eu

Neil McMillan - +32 2 737 05 99 - mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu

www.eurocommerce.eu

EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 31 countries and 5.4 million companies, both leading multinational retailers such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small family operations. Retail and wholesale provide a link between producers and 500 million European consumers over a billion times a day. It generates 1 in 7 jobs, providing a varied career for 29 million Europeans, many of them young people. It also supports millions of further jobs throughout the supply chain, from small local suppliers to international businesses. EuroCommerce is the recognised European social partner for the retail and wholesale sector.