

## **Digital – a values-driven retail revolution**

**- Second EuroCommerce Digital Lecture -**

The retail and wholesale sector is the largest private employer, giving worthwhile jobs to 29 million Europeans, delivering vital services to business, and daily essentials to 500 million Europeans. Retailers and wholesalers are already embracing digital technology in all its different forms to provide services and goods that people want in the way - and when - they need them.

But this revolution brings with it major challenges: to prosper, companies need not only to react to, but anticipate, accelerating changes in technology and consumer demand. In the second of EuroCommerce's digital lectures, Nabeela Ixtabalan, Digital Transformation Manager at Ingka Group, a strategic partner in the IKEA franchise system operating IKEA Retail in 30 countries. Ms Ixtabalan will present her company's values-driven approach to the digitalisation of their business model, and its wider relevance for the future of retail and wholesale.

Nabeela Ixtabalan, Digital Transformation Manager at Ingka Group, the keynote speaker at the lecture commented:

*"The world is changing, fast. Urbanisation, technology and digitalisation, as well as an increasing awareness of the impact of consumption on people and planet, are changing customer's needs, expectations and reasons to shop. We believe this is a business opportunity. We are testing new IKEA formats, from city centre stores to furniture leasing offers. We are in a quest to provide a seamless omni-channel shopping experience to meet the many people in the digital and physical space. We are building a digital IKEA where trust is at the core of our personalised relationships with our customers, and where digitalisation embraces sustainability and diversity. We do our part but we count on policy makers to secure a truly competitive online and offline retail sector in the European Union."*

Christian Verschueren, EuroCommerce Director-General, added:

*"If there is anything that the fierce competition in our sector can teach business as a whole, it is that you need to keep ahead of the game to stay in it. Digital technology makes that lesson even more urgent. If Europe is to succeed in meeting major challenges in digital – not least from China and from the US – it needs to speed up its adoption of technology, and be able to develop the next generation of technology. As a new European Parliament is starting its work, and the new Commission prepares to take up office this autumn, EuroCommerce will continue to press policy-makers to act on crucial elements for our future success as a continent. Europe needs to address the massive deficit in people with the skills needed to operate in a digital world, help to give SMEs the resources they lack to go digital, help to equip our 29 million employees to deal with these changes. We also need a regulatory regime which guarantees that data and AI are managed ethically, while not holding Europe back in a global race to be a key player in this revolution."*

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