

## **Retail and wholesale transforming fast to serve consumers' changing needs**

Speaking today in Athens at the Future of Retail conference attended by 700 Greek retailers and organised by the Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship, ESEE, a leading member of EuroCommerce, Director-General Christian Verschueren identified the key trends set to shape European Retail now and in the future.

These were

- The Digital Transformation and changing face of retail and wholesale
- A “difficult Europe”, marked by slow economic recovery and growing protectionism in and outside Europe
- Global imperatives on healthy living, sustainability and shifts in jobs and skills.

Verschueren underlined the need for retail and wholesale to adapt and respond quickly to these trends:

*“Retail and wholesale have a history of changing rapidly to meet new demands from their customers and adopting new technology. Consumers are looking to buy healthy, sustainable products, and expecting to have them delivered where and when they want them. The circular economy is changing the way people consume, and particularly young consumers are choosing to own less and access products which meet their expectations and wishes to live sustainably and buy ethically. And they want the information necessary to make such choices. Our sector needs to transform itself - and be ready to transform itself constantly - if it wants to stay relevant to what consumers expect.”*

The new Commission in Brussels is hitting the ground running with an ambitious agenda for the coming years focused on a clear and deep commitment to reducing humans' impact on the planet under the Green Deal, making Europe globally competitive in digital technology while protecting European citizens' interests and values. EuroCommerce and its members, including ESEE are working hard to support this agenda and ensure that it addresses the most important factor in all of these policies – Europe's 500 million people, who are both consumers and citizens.

**Contact:**

Neil McMillan - +32 2 737 05 99 - [mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu)

Vincent Yhuello - +32 2 738 06 48 - [yhuello@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:yhuello@eurocommerce.eu)

[www.eurocommerce.eu](http://www.eurocommerce.eu)

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*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 global players such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small businesses. 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.*