

## German Economics Minister Peter Altmaier discusses priorities with EuroCommerce

The EuroCommerce Board today welcomed German Economics Minister Peter Altmaier to their (virtual) meeting. Mr Altmaier shared a number of important insights into the priorities for the German EU Presidency starting in a few weeks, and discussed how Germany and the EU can best address the revival of the economy after the COVID crisis.

EuroCommerce President Régis Degelcke commented:

*“It has been a great honour and pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss with Mr Altmaier the important tasks ahead of the EU under the German Presidency in the second half of this year. We need as a central part of this to rebuild the single market and address protectionism in and outside the EU. Companies in our sector, particularly in non-food retail and in various wholesale sectors, have been hit hard by the COVID crisis. These companies, 99% of which are SMEs, will need real help if we are to avoid a wave of bankruptcies, hitting the 29 million Europeans working in the sector, the communities which they serve, and the European economy as a whole.”*

EuroCommerce has supported the Commission proposals for a rescue package of €750 billion and an enhanced EU budget to drive recovery. EuroCommerce has underlined the need for retail and wholesale, as the largest private sector employer in all member states, and among those essential ecosystems worst hurt by the crisis, to be given priority support in EU and national recovery plans.

With over 50% of EU GDP made up of private consumption, recovery can happen if consumption is given a boost, and shops are given the freedom to be as wide open as possible, to sell the stock that they have, and to be supported in their digital and green transition.

Degelcke added:

*“We are looking forward, with our German members, to working with the German Presidency to help build and accelerate the EU recovery over the coming six months.”*

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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.*