

Circularity by design – the best path to sustainable consumption

Noting the European Parliament’s adoption today of the own initiative report drafted by Jan Huitema MEP (Renew, NL) on the Circular Economy Action Plan, EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschuere underlined the retail and wholesale sector’s commitment to the circular economy and the important role which Eco-design can play in this:

“Our sector has already shown its readiness to undertake a wide range of measures to reduce the environmental impact of how it does business and of the products it sells. The report from Jan Huitema makes an important point – that we need to address circularity in a holistic manner. Research shows that 80% of the environmental performance of a product can be achieved at the design phase. The proposal to review the Eco-design directive is important in providing the right framework for sustainable consumption, and likely to be more effective than rather less well-defined and less easily achievable targets for reducing overall levels of consumption.”

Retailers and wholesalers have been active advocates and drivers of sustainability and circularity. We believe strongly that the transformation of Europe’s economy to become more circular needs a major change in the way all stakeholders think and act, and above all, how they work together, whether in industry, distribution, consumers or in governments. Our sector is more than ready to do its bit, but this will only work if it is in concert with the whole supply chain and within a regulatory framework which facilitates the steps needed to achieve a circular economy.

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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.