

## Retail and wholesale depend on competitive markets in Europe

EuroCommerce was proud to welcome Commission Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager to the latest of its online Policy Talks today. The audience heard the Executive Vice President speak and answer questions on recovery after COVID, the digital and sustainability transformation of the EU economy and how competition policy can be aligned with the demands of the digital era to ensure a competitive EU market. On the challenges facing the retail and wholesale ecosystem during and after the COVID pandemic, Ms. Vestager said:

*"During the crisis, Europe's retail and wholesale sectors showed a remarkable resilience, quickly adapting to changed working conditions, keeping employees and consumers safe, and ensuring security of supply. Our aim is to support these sectors by safeguarding strong and competitive markets and by promoting the necessary changes for businesses in the digital age."*

EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschueren said:

*"Ms. Vestager has often said something our sector believes passionately – that strong competition at home is the best means of achieving competitiveness globally, and delivering the best results for consumers. We compete every day for customers and need competitive supply chains and a properly-functioning single market to be able to serve them with a wide choice of the best products and services at a competitive price. A competition framework fit for the digital age, which, through effective enforcement, supports resilience and the digital and sustainability transition, will be vital for the future of our sector."*

The retail and wholesale sector needs competition legislation and the EU recovery funding to work together to support the resilience of the sector and the digital and sustainability transition. The rapidly-changing digital environment has created increased transparency for consumers, but also opened up completely new sales channels for manufacturers to sell direct to EU consumers online, and increased competition from outside the EU. We see a real need for competition rules to reflect these fundamental changes. Europe also needs a vibrant and competitive agri-food supply chain and to address the problems surrounding the fragmentation of the single market by major brand manufacturers, and competition rules and their enforcement can help achieve this important objective.

A full recording of the session is available [here](#).

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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.*