

## EU Organic Day - Retailers and wholesalers linking supply with demand

Marking the first annual EU Organic Day, EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschueren said today:

*“We have seen consumers increasingly choosing organic foods over the past 20 years and this trend continues, with a double digit annual growth in the sales of organic products. Retailers and wholesalers have been active in promoting organic, both in fresh produce and in their own brands. They have worked to forge close long-term supply relationships with farmers, including helping them to make the transition to organic. They have also helped make this economically attractive by providing a market for increased volumes.*

*We see this as an important element in building sustainable food systems. We are therefore pleased to see Commissioner Wojciechowski’s initiative in launching the EU Organic Day today as the UN general assembly discusses sustainable food. The EU Organic Day will, we hope, each year help the growth of successful organic production in Europe, and underline the other prerequisite for success in doing so: further building consumer demand for and appreciation of the benefits of, organically produced food.”*

EuroCommerce and its members have shown their commitment to sustainable food, being both closely involved in the drafting of the EU Code of Conduct and one of its first signatories when it was launched in July. We have also shown how our sector has been proactive in adopting best practice in sustainability and promoting healthy lifestyles in our dedicated website [#sustainablecommerce](https://www.eurocommerce.eu/#sustainablecommerce).

It is therefore natural that we also support this new Commission initiative, which fits closely with the objectives of the Farm-to-Fork strategy. A recent [EuroCommerce/McKinsey report](#) showed that over half of consumers want to buy more sustainable products, but that many also need to look at the price. Affordability will be important if organic products are to be available not just to the better off, but to everyone. Helping consumers to understand the benefits of organic production can also help to overcome this barrier.

An important factor in boosting the market for organic is ensuring that the right level of supply. Consumers will turn to organic if they see more on the shelves; and demand is therefore likely to increase with adequate supply from within the EU or from outside where there is a need. Retailers and wholesalers have already helped by providing scope for increasing volumes for organic and thus the viability of producers. This will allow them to sell at a price which is both attractive to consumers and adequately rewards their efforts. It is important that EU and national policy helps the market develop in this positive way.

All in the supply chain have found the long-term relationships which our companies have built up with farmers and the food industry helpful in driving the move to organic and in meeting growing consumer demand. Uptake of organic is uneven, with most production, processing and sales focused in Western Europe, and still low in Central and Eastern Europe. All these efforts could be reinforced by more activity at national level to promote organic products with producers and consumers, particularly in those countries where uptake is still slow.

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*EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 28 countries and 5 million companies, both leading global players such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small businesses. Retail and wholesale is the link between producers and consumers. Over a billion times a day, retailers and wholesalers distribute goods and provide an essential service to millions of business and individual customers. The sector generates 1 in 7 jobs, offering a varied career to 26 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.*