

Retail and wholesale CEO Summit 2024 confirms commitment to sustainability

On 14 and 15 February, EuroCommerce’s President, Juan Manuel Morales, and Director General, Christel Delberghe, headed a summit of EuroCommerce’s CEOs in Brussels, holding discussions with Commission’s Executive Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, Member of the Executive Board of the ECB, Piero Cipollone and Chair of the Bruegel think-tank, Erkki Liikanen.

The summit highlighted how, with the right support, retail and wholesale can help deliver an EU that is increasingly competitive, empowered, sustainable, innovative and skilled.

Commenting on the discussions, President Morales said: *“We represent huge potential for delivering solutions on key objectives, such as the EU Green Deal and the successful uptake of a digital euro. To do this, however, we need a more inclusive, partnership approach towards policy making, involving all relevant stakeholders. In recent years, we have been submerged by a tsunami of regulation. With the Commission’s proposal for a [Late Payments Regulation](#), we now also face the threat of having our freedom to agree flexible payment terms drastically curtailed, with potentially catastrophic consequences. What’s clear to us is that we work better together and during our summit, we united to reconfirm our commitment to the EU’s crucial competitiveness agenda.”*

Retailers and wholesalers are Europe’s largest private employers, contributing 10% of GDP, and are present in every city and region. Delivering a 90% reduction in our emissions (known as Scope 1&2) by 2030 will require investments of up to € 300bn by 2030. 40% of Europe’s GHG emissions are in the retail and wholesale value chain. The sector controls less than 5% of these and is committed to reducing scope 3 emissions by working together with partners throughout the value chain. In this, and a multitude of other ways, the sector is uniquely well placed to join forces with policymakers to deliver on their ambitions, ultimately determining Europe’s overall relevance and leadership on a global stage.

There are, however, several important pre-requisites, that must be prioritised, to capture the EU’s competitive potential. These include ensuring a dynamic, fully functioning Single Market with resilient global supply chains and frictionless trade. In addition, EuroCommerce firmly believes that the starting point for any new policy initiative should always be to first ensure a sound understanding of the sector being regulated and of its role within the value chain. Finally, coherent, inclusive, proportionate and consistent policymaking, which incorporates appropriate transition periods, avoids unreasonable costs and aligns with existing practices and standards, is essential.

Director General, Christel Delberghe concluded: *“We are a sector with a lot to offer, amid a massive talent, sustainability and digital transformation. We support the EU’s objectives, but we also need a*

fully functioning Single Market and a practicable and coherent policy framework to maximise our contribution to the EU's competitiveness and sustainable growth agenda."

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Contact:

Daniela Haiduc | Head of Communications, haiduc@eurocommerce.eu

EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 27 countries and 5 million companies, including leading global players and many small businesses. 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.