

Rapidly changing retail wants to secure consumer trust

Today, EuroCommerce, the European association representing small, medium and larger retailers and wholesalers, [presented its consumer agenda for 2024–2029](#) at the EU Consumer Summit.

Christel Delberghe, Director-General of EuroCommerce, said: *“In recent years, we have seen significant consumer behavioural change. After two years of a severe cost-of-living crisis, we are seeing the first signs of recovery. [Consumer confidence is rising, while inflation drops and consumer purchasing power is recovering. Consumers appreciate more sustainable and healthy products but at affordable prices. Consumers increasingly see retailers as guardians of ethics and sustainability. This makes clear that looking ahead, both retailers and consumers need support and stability to navigate a rapidly changing environment.](#)”*

Consumer trust is the foundation for growth and innovation. Retailers compete fiercely for consumers’ favour every day, making them quite aware of what consumers expect and need. To maintain and grow that relationship, it is pivotal that consumers understand and trust that their rights are respected, and that they have access to redress, no matter where, from whom, and how they purchase products and services.

The key priorities of retail and wholesale are:

1. Supporting consumer trust, as this is essential to enable retail to deliver on consumer’s expectations of the digital transformation and green transition.
2. Effective and efficient enforcement, as this is fundamental to creating a competitive retail sector and a level playing field between EU and third-country traders.
3. Improving the quality of legislation to increase trust and compliance, consolidating and simplifying existing rules before making new ones, and striving for maximum harmonisation.

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Note to editors

For more information, please see our position paper [“Consumer trust is essential to enable green & digital transformation in retail”](#)

EuroCommerce's 12 recommendations for the future Consumer Policy:

1. *The Commission to map all existing consumer information requirements in all EU legislation, and based on that mapping discuss with stakeholders how to ensure consumer information remains meaningful, understandable and manageable.*
2. *The Commission to develop a coordinated and uniform EU-level approach to providing consumer information, including via digital tools, with all relevant stakeholders.*
3. *The Commission to explore together with stakeholders how Digital Product Passports can complement consumers' access to information.*
4. *EU institutions to be mindful of the differences between EU Product Law and Consumer Law, and to ensure legal consistency and simplicity to increase legal certainty and keep the compliance burden for businesses as limited as possible. Clear and consistent legislation is also in the interest of consumers.*
5. *Member States to refrain from introducing unnecessary, diverging and disproportionate national consumer information requirements, notify any draft rules according to the procedure set out in the Single Market Transparency Directive, and that as appropriate the Commission acts decisively in its role as 'Guardian of the Treaties'. We encourage EU level harmonisation where appropriate and possible and allow for a flexible approach elsewhere.*
6. *That the European Commission and Member States, with the support of other stakeholders, develop continuous awareness campaigns and tools for consumers and businesses regarding their rights, obligations and achieving relevant EU policy objectives.*
7. *The Commission and Member States to improve enforcement of existing rules and to test whether existing rules are fit for purpose against new unfair practices.*
8. *The Commission and Member States to consider in future assessments which traders are breaching EU consumer protection rules, to prevent unnecessary new rules on traders that are or strive to be compliant.*
9. *EU legislators to ensure that when reviewing or creating new rules they make sure that these are enforceable over all players targeting consumers in the EU to ensure a level playing field.*
10. *Setting up a structured dialogue between CPC authorities, traders and other stakeholders:*
 - *to identify areas of systemic infringements where overall stronger enforcement is needed;*
 - *to develop an EU enforcement and compliance priority agenda, where CPC members commit to focusing on a different priority area every six months, accompanied by compliance awareness campaigns for traders by CPC authorities and trade associations.*
11. *Member States to focus more on helping traders to be compliant and take a risk-based approach focussing on catching rogue traders.*
12. *EU institutions to make quality of legislation a priority, by taking into account (better):*
 - *Every EU initiative should be accompanied by an impact assessment and competitiveness check;¹*
 - *Preparation of an impact assessment of every amendment with a high impact;*
 - *Coherence and coordination between different policy fields and align legislative agendas;*
 - *The overall (new) regulatory burden in certain sectors and make the implementation and anticipation of new rules manageable;*
 - *Maximum harmonisation where appropriate and possible by default;*

¹ Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030, COM(2023) 168 final

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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.