

Competitiveness compass: concrete Single Market commitments by Member States needed

EuroCommerce is calling for concrete actions, following today's release of the EU's much-anticipated Competitiveness Compass and the 2025 Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report.

Today's communications reveal that Single Market integration, in particular for services, is at a standstill and EU Competitiveness is not increasing fast enough. Services, which account for 70% of the EU's GDP, only represent 7.6% of intra-EU trade. Christel Delberghe, Director General, urged for fast action implementation: "Don't forget the basics! The strength of the EU is its Single Market. We need real harmonisation, more coherent and proportionate rules and a real commitment by Member States and the European institutions to overcome market fragmentation."

With global challenges ahead, Christel Delberghe added, "EU institutions and Member States must turn words into concrete actions to remove barriers and enhance overall EU competitiveness. Supporting the diverse range of market players, not just the perceived front-runners will ensure that Europe can thrive on the global stage." She added, "A competitiveness strategy must look beyond manufacturing and include other sectors that can support their deployment at scale"

President Von der Leyen promised at [the start of the current mandate](#) to prioritise investments, simplification and skills to deliver the three pillars of the Competitiveness Compass. While retail and wholesale is adapting to the digital and sustainability transition, investment and skills remain major issues. Delberghe stressed that retailers and wholesalers are uniquely positioned to support the deployment of technologies at scale in Europe, but to do so, they require rules that foster their global competitiveness. She concluded, "Regulatory burden, Single Market fragmentation and lack of enforcement of EU regulation including on online players selling directly to consumers are key barriers."

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Note to the editor

The retail and wholesale sector represents 1 out of 5 businesses, and 1 out of 4 SMEs in the Europe. Retailers and wholesalers are present across every community throughout the EU, with many at the forefront of deploying innovation or clean energy in their operations and in their interactions with EU

customers who now take this for granted. They provide solutions in e-commerce, more sustainably produced foods, consumer electronics and clothing and greener construction and electrical equipment. As key partners, at the end of the value chain, retail and wholesale are ideally placed to lead by example and to encourage consumers to make more sustainable choices. Not least, retailers and wholesalers have proven to adapt quickly when global supply chains were disrupted. All of which contributes to the EU's overall competitiveness and ability to achieve its climate, jobs and skills goals.¹

Retailers compete fiercely for consumers' favour every day, making them well-aware of what consumers expect and need. To maintain and grow that relationship consumers need to trust that the products they buy are safe and compliant, that their rights are respected, and that they have access to redress, no matter where, from whom, and how they purchase products and services. This trust is the foundation for growth and innovation, enabling small, new and unknown traders to market their products and services to consumers. To earn trust, enforcement of EU regulation is required. Enforcement authorities need to improve cooperation and coordination at EU and national levels with their peers and across policy domains. They cannot solve it alone. They need to break down the silos. #Compliance4All

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 28 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.

¹ EuroCommerce made [recommendations](#) on the new competitiveness agenda, based on our analysis of the Draghi report, and suggested a Better Regulation Checklist to support the EU's strategic direction.