

Critical importance of the retail and wholesale sector – Learnings from the electricity blackout in Spain and Portugal

The recent electricity blackouts that affected Spain and Portugal underscored the critical importance of the retail and wholesale sector in providing an essential service.

Despite the strong reliance on electricity for operations, and the challenge posed by the outage of telecommunications in coordinating a response, our sector demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, ensuring that essential goods remained accessible to citizens.

Stores equipped with uninterruptible power supply systems or generators were able to remain operational, while others reopened promptly following the restoration of the electrical grid. Just one day after the blackout, nearly all operations returned to normal and logistics centres were functioning at full capacity, ensuring timely deliveries to points of sale.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the employees in stores and distribution centres who have shown exceptional dedication and responsibility. Their efforts have ensured that citizens have not lacked essential food and hygiene products at any time. We extend our thanks to customers for their exemplary behaviour and their patience with employees in difficult circumstances.

This dramatic event illustrated again retail and wholesale's unwavering commitment to serving society and its everyday needs. At times when our sector is challenged by geopolitical uncertainty, market disruption and the need to invest in its transformation, such events clearly underline the importance of policies and infrastructure that support our sector's long-term competitiveness and resilience.

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Background documents

- [Beyond Manufacturing: A New Competitiveness Agenda for the EU in partnership with retail and wholesale - EuroCommerce](#)
- [Transition pathway for a more resilient, digital and green retail ecosystem](#)