

EU Safe Hearts Plan: Retail and wholesale essential to provide consumer choice for healthy diets

EuroCommerce, the European retail and wholesale association, has voiced support for the need to address cardiovascular disease. Retailers and wholesalers are essential partners in promoting healthy and sustainable diets due to their unique position in the food supply chain. They are committed to working with public authorities, civil society and their partners in the supply chain supporting meaningful improvements in public health across the EU, all while supporting consumers in their pursuit of healthier lifestyles.

According to EuroCommerce, the sector leads by example by offering diverse and accessible solutions every day. Key initiatives include:

- **Prominent display of fresh fruit and vegetables:** Stores across Europe are prioritising fresh fruits and vegetables, offering the widest possible choice to encourage balanced and varied diets.
- **Product reformulation:** Significant investment is being made to reduce saturated fats, sugars, and salt across all ranges of their private brand products, actively improving nutritional profiles without compromising taste or consumer acceptance.
- **Enhanced consumer information:** Retailers are developing innovative digital tools and tailored communication strategies to ensure consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions.

EuroCommerce advocates for an approach centred on public private sector cooperation, increased education, overall dietary patterns, positive incentives, such as reduced VAT on foods rich in fibre, vitamins, and minerals, and lifestyle factors like physical activity.

The association supports action on empowering consumers with transparent and science-based information but cautions against classifying foods solely by their level of processing. “Certain processing methods can enhance nutritional value or help prevent food waste,” notes Els Bedert, EuroCommerce Director for Environment and Products, stressing that its potential impact on a healthy and sustainable diet deserve to be better understood”.

“Our sector is dedicated to work with the Commission and other stakeholders to support healthier consumer choices,” concludes Bedert. “Together, we can achieve the right health outcomes for Europeans.”

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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, 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 businesses 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.