

EU Competitiveness: EuroCommerce urges focus on the Single Market

Ahead of the Alden Biesen summit where EU leaders will gather to discuss the EU's competitiveness, EuroCommerce, representing Europe's retail and wholesale sector, urges the European Commission to place the Single Market, effective enforcement and regulatory simplification at the heart of its competitiveness agenda.

EuroCommerce Director General, Christel Delberghe, commented: *"A deeper, better-enforced Single Market is the EU's greatest competitive asset, but fragmentation, the weight of regulatory obligations and inconsistent enforcement threaten to weaken it. A renewed focus on services and making the Single Market work for retail and wholesale will strengthen the EU's competitiveness, and the jobs and innovation it generates."*

Retail and wholesale is an economic engine for Europe, drives inclusion and innovation. Yet, the strength of the sector remains in the shadows despite its presence across the EU - in every village and region - and its importance as a ready-market for innovation, provider of local jobs and reliant partner in times of crisis.

EuroCommerce hopes that the leaders' discussions will place the Single Market for services at its heart, building on the direction of the [2026 Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report](#). A strong Single Market strengthens the contribution of retail and wholesale and supports EU's competitiveness. It needs:

- both national and EU legislators to exercise restraint and avoid new and unnecessary rules.
- challenges to national rules that break [Single Market freedoms](#)
- rules that are enforceable from the start to [stop unfair competition from non-EU platforms](#) that gain advantages through non-compliance.
- legislation to stop large manufacturers deliberately fragmenting the Single Market using [territorial supply constraints](#), which deny retailers and consumers its benefits, while they benefit themselves.
- a harmonised approach to ensure the circular economy takes off, creating a functioning market for secondary raw materials and a single market for waste
- rapid conclusion of trade agreements to ensure diversification of trade and maintain strong global value chains.
- tackling of the long list of [Single Market barriers](#) identified by retailers and wholesalers in Europe.

"Companies have struggled to implement the volume of legislation that has confronted them. We need to see a European Commission truly dedicated to proportionate, easy to implement legislation, so companies can use the EU's best asset, the Single Market", concluded Delberghe, referring to the guiding principles proposed by EuroCommerce in its [Better Regulation Checklist](#).

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Background information

Retail and wholesale generates 10% of EU GDP, provides 26 million jobs in the EU, and supports millions more in the value chains they serve.

Every day, the sector provides a wide choice of goods and services to citizens and businesses at competitive prices.

Retailers and wholesalers have been at the forefront of innovations that EU customers now take for granted, from e-commerce to better food for the planet, consumer electronics and more sustainable clothing.

Retailers and wholesalers bring life to cities and villages. They are part of the urban infrastructure contributing to communities and social inclusion.

The sector is working under challenging conditions, arising from higher competition, operating costs, changing consumer behaviour and increased regulatory compliance. To remain competitive, the sector also needs to invest in its digital, sustainability and skills transformation ([OECD report, January 2026](#)).

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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.