

Retail and wholesale take centre stage in European Parliament with first-ever dedicated European week

Europe's retail and wholesale sector is stepping into the heart of EU policymaking with the launch of the first European Retail & Wholesale Week inside the European Parliament.

Hosted with the support of MEPs Lídia Pereira, Christel Schaldemose and Jeannette Baljeu, the three-day exhibition and round table discussions bring the realities of retail and wholesale to where European decisions are made. Its aim is to help policymakers better understand how EU legislation affects companies, workers, consumers and local communities across Europe.

"Retail and wholesale are present in every city, town and village. They provide local jobs, create value in Europe and support the many industries and agri-food suppliers they work with. They connect European policies with everyday life. By bringing our sector into the European Parliament, we are helping policymakers see the concrete impact of legislation on those who implement it daily, businesses, employees and consumers," said Juan Manuel Morales, President of EuroCommerce, the European association of retail and wholesale.

The exhibition showcases products, services and supply chains, alongside innovation demonstrations, which includes robotics developed by the Amsterdam University.

With 26 million direct jobs, over 5 million companies, mostly SMEs, and a 10% contribution to EU GDP, retail and wholesale are an essential pillar of Europe's economy. Crucially, the sector is deeply rooted locally and, unlike manufacturing, cannot relocate. It sustains communities, provides first employment opportunities and connects producers with consumers every day.

The Week takes place against a climate of growing uncertainty. International instability and geopolitical tensions risk disrupting global supply chains and increasing costs for energy, transport and basic goods. These pressures affect retailers and wholesalers directly, and ultimately consumers. At the same time, the sector is undergoing rapid transformation. By 2030, retail and wholesale will need to invest around €600 billion in sustainability, digitalisation and skills.

Organised inside the European Parliament, the European Retail & Wholesale Week underlines the importance of open dialogue between policymakers and businesses operating on the ground. *"Transformation works best when policy ambition and economic reality move in the same direction. When institutions and sectors work together, policies become more effective, implementable and resilient"*. Concluded Christel Delberghe, Director General of EuroCommerce, the European Association of Retail and Wholesale.

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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.