

State of the Union 2026: the Single Market now requires practical delivery

Reacting to President Ursula von der Leyen's State of the Union address, Christel Delberghe, Director General of EuroCommerce representing Europe's retail and wholesale sector, said:

"President Von der Leyen has given a clear answer to one of business's most urgent concerns: Europe must simplify, and Member States must stop adding multiple layers to EU rules. We particularly welcome her proposal for a pact against gold-plating. This urgently needs to translate into concrete measures."

"She also addressed completing the Single Market by the end of 2027. For us, this must mean [removing the barriers](#) companies and consumers face today. One immediate [test is territorial supply constraints](#), which prevent retailers and wholesalers from sourcing freely across Europe and leave consumers with higher prices and less choice. The Commission should deliver effective legislation with no further delay!"

EuroCommerce strongly supports the recognition that structurally high energy prices are a major barrier to competitiveness. Retail and wholesale urgently needs faster grid connections, greater energy capacity and more predictable costs to invest in cleaner stores, warehouses, logistics and transport to contribute to meeting climate targets.

Being "the greatest trading power" requires open trade, diversified supply routes and a level playing field is critical. The retail and wholesale sector is strongly embedded in global value chains and creates value and jobs in Europe. Fair competition must extend to services. Products sold to European consumers should meet the same safety, consumer and environmental requirements, regardless of where the trader is established.

On the forthcoming climate resilience, and employment initiatives, EuroCommerce calls for coherence with existing rules, as well as proportionate and workable rules for companies aligned with the simplification objective.

Christel Delberghe added: "Europe's five million retail and wholesale companies serve consumers and businesses in every community, support 26 million jobs and they contribute to the Right to Stay. There is some sense of urgency: our sector must invest in technology, resilience, sustainability and innovation. Political ambition must result in simpler rules, affordable energy and a Single Market that works in practice!"

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Contact:

Daniela Haiduc | Director 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 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.