

Commissioner Hansen visits German retailer to discuss sustainable and competitive food supply chains

European Commissioner Christophe Hansen today visited REWE Group headquarters in Cologne, to discuss how retailers engage with suppliers including farmers and in particular to hear how their [agricultural competence centre](#) supports farmers.

The visit highlighted practical examples of cooperation across the agri-food chain, from supporting local producers and sustainable sourcing to helping consumers make more sustainable choices.

“Retailers and wholesalers are an essential link between producers and consumers,” said Christel Delberghe, Director General of EuroCommerce, the European association representing retailers and wholesalers in Brussels. “[Strong partnerships across the food chain](#) help deliver sustainability, strengthen resilience and ensure consumers continue to have access to affordable, high-quality food.”

During the visit, REWE Group presented how they engage with diverse supplier networks from global players to small very local suppliers. They shared initiatives that demonstrated how collaboration delivers concrete results on the ground. As a cooperative deeply rooted in local communities, REWE works with regional producers and SMEs, helping strengthen local food systems while responding to changing consumer demand.

Discussions also covered the [ongoing review of the EU’s Unfair Trading Practices \(UTP\) Directive](#). EuroCommerce stressed the importance of keeping the focus on protecting small and medium-sized farmers and processors, while avoiding measures that strengthen large multinational manufacturers at the expense of competition, consumer choice and the Single Market. Explaining how robust negotiations between large trading partners is an essential part of a healthy, competitive food system.

EuroCommerce underlined that farmers’ main challenges, including climate change, managing risk and water shortages, rising costs, investment needs and administrative burden, require practical solutions that go beyond regulation of commercial relations.

“The agri-food chain is facing huge challenges and needs to attract investment. We need energy focused on collaboration in the chain, innovation and investment, not polarisation, to deliver for farmers, consumers and Europe’s competitiveness and maintain jobs in local communities” Delberghe added.

The visit reflects the shared commitment of retailers and wholesalers to work together on a sustainable food system that supports farmers, strengthens local communities and keeps food affordable for European consumers.

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The Rewe Group Competence Centre for Agriculture

REWE Group's Competence Centre for Agriculture is breaking new ground in the cooperation between agriculture and retail. The challenges facing the domestic agriculture and food industry are immense and have socio-political dimensions: whether climate change, animal welfare or the resilience and diversity of European farms. All players in the supply chain need to work together to develop solutions. REWE Group is pursuing this approach with the Agricultural Competence Centre, which was founded in January 2023.

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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.