

## **EuroCommerce: Commission views on AB InBev a welcome step in tackling Territorial Supply Restrictions**

Reacting today to the Commission statement of objections to AB InBev, Christian Verschueren, EuroCommerce Director-General, said:

*"We are particularly pleased to see the Commission taking action against territorial supply restrictions. Retailers are not able to freely source the same products across borders, and thus unable to fully exercise their rights under the Single Market. In turn, this means consumers suffer from higher prices and less choice. This is important in a digital market where consumers can buy cross-border, but shop-based retailers cannot. This distorts competition and prevents retailers from offering their customers the best service".*

The Commission has today sent its statement of objections to AB InBev for imposing practices making it impossible for Belgian retailers to freely source the same products from France and the Netherlands. Practices at stake include restrictions on the availability of language options, limited access to key products, and promotions.

Territorial supply restrictions are illegitimate restrictions, imposed by suppliers of "must-have" products and restrict retailers' ability to source centrally or in the country of their choice, or negotiate better purchasing conditions with suppliers. These arise often in the fast moving consumer goods sector. There can be legitimate reasons for local adaptation, such as local consumption habits, taste and national regulatory requirements. Some restrictions are more questionable, such as slight modification of packaging (e.g. size), slightly different composition, restricting availability of language options, etc.

Verschueren added:

*"Retailers are key to making the Single Market a reality for consumers. We ask the Commission to take all the necessary steps to ensure that it is possible for retailers to make parallel imports for fast moving consumer goods. The Commission announcement today is an important step in addressing this issue, and we ask the Commission to pursue their efforts further."*

~ENDS~

**Contact:**

Kinga Timaru-Kast - +32 2 894 64 83 - [timaru@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:timaru@eurocommerce.eu)

Neil McMillan - +32 2 737 05 99 - [mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu)

[www.eurocommerce.eu](http://www.eurocommerce.eu)

---

*EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 31 countries and 5.4 million companies, both leading multinational retailers such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small family operations. Retail and wholesale provide a link between producers and 500 million European consumers over a billion times a day. It generates 1 in 7 jobs, providing a varied career for 29 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.*