

Retail & wholesale support EU Plastics Strategy

The retail and wholesale sector sees the publication yesterday of the EU Plastics Strategy as a welcome step towards a more circular economy. Today's plastic strategy will hopefully transform the way plastics are currently produced, used and discarded. Retailers and wholesalers are committed to the environment and believe that this new approach can bring new opportunities, provided the right legislative proposals are put forward and agreed in the EU.

The Retailers' Environmental Action Programme (REAP), in which EuroCommerce and its members play a key role has already made significant progress on plastics and the environment, with action to reduce the use of plastics, minimising plastic waste in supply chains, promoting recycling, and increasing recycled content in products and packaging.

Christian Verschueren, Director-General of EuroCommerce said:

“With 25 million tonnes of plastic waste generated annually in the EU and less than a third being collected for recycling, there is a real need to improve the sustainability of how we use and dispose of plastic. Properly designed plastic packaging helps to ensure food safety and reduce food waste, but we need to ensure that this is compatible with avoiding damage to the environment, and do so both in an effective, and a cost-effective way.”

EuroCommerce also welcomed the Commission initiative to act on single-use plastic and fishing gear to reduce marine litter.

Verschueren added: *“Every kind of waste that ends in the sea has a negative impact on the environment. We need to tackle the systemic failures on waste and waste water management, and prevent all types of plastics and waste from ending up in an already fragile marine environment. Several EU countries have already taken steps to limit the sale of some single-use plastic products (e.g. cotton buds). This is welcome, but to safeguard the Single Market, we need to define a consistent framework at EU level.”*

ENDS

Contact:

Kinga Timaru-Kast - +32 2 894 64 83 - timaru@eurocommerce.eu

Neil McMillan - +32 2 737 05 99 - mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu

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.