

“This time I’m voting”

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EuroCommerce supports campaign to mobilise citizens to vote in European elections

Speaking today on the occasion of Schuman Day, EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschueren said: *“On 9 May 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman issued the declaration which laid the foundations of what, some 70 years later, has grown into today’s European Union. This is indeed an achievement we should all celebrate today. The EU has brought all of us immense benefits, which it is sometimes easy to take for granted.”*

In 1950, people in Europe often needed visas and to cross from one country to another; complex permission to settle and work; many different currencies; and a higher purchasing power to pay for more expensive goods and services. Today, even in these days of heightened security and concerns about illegal migration, we can travel freely around Europe. If we fall ill in another EU country, we can be treated under the same conditions as locals. We can choose to live and work in another country. Students can gain the invaluable experience of studying in a foreign university. European social and environmental standards and consumer rules help protect Europe’s citizens and ensure that their food and drinking water are safe.

For retailers and wholesalers, the EU has allowed to buy and sell across Europe. They have been able to rely on European law to help overcome barriers which may arise. A strong Europe, able to strike extensive trade deals with third countries, has helped us source the best products the world has to offer for our consumers and business customers. Harmonised rules make it easier to sell goods and services across Europe. This common framework has helped to create jobs and growth in all our countries, and bring prosperity to Europeans.

It is far too easy to forget how far we have come over these last 70 years. While there is still a lot more that we need to work on, it is worth reflecting on what in the Brussels jargon is called ‘*the acquis communautaire*’. Even more so that there are forces both inside and outside Europe that are working at undermining the European project. This is why EuroCommerce supports many of its member organisations and other business federations that encourage more Europeans to take a deep interest in the European debate, and go out and vote in the European elections at the end of the month. Verschueren added: *“We ignore at our peril the need to keep Europe working to preserve and reinforce those freedoms we enjoy every day. There is a lot at stake in these upcoming European elections. Citizens have traditionally taken less interest in the European elections than in national ones. Or, sadly, European elections are fought on national issues rather than on fundamental strategies for the EU. That is why we call on Europe’s voters to take a keen interest in Europe, and get out and vote this month, to ensure that their voice is heard in the new European Parliament.”*

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