

Retailers and wholesalers welcome adoption of Single Use Plastics Directive, but ask for more robust waste management infrastructure

Speaking today at the formal adoption by the Council of the text of the Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastics on the environment, EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschueren said:

“As a sector, and having daily contact with Europe’s 500 million consumers, we have been working hard to respond to their demand for reducing plastics use. We have reduced packaging and worked on alternatives, as well as increasing our use of recycled materials.”

This is the final stage of adoption of the Directive on single use plastics. The retail and wholesale sector sees this as a welcome further step in providing a direction for more sustainable consumption. Achieving real progress in this area needs government, manufacturing industry and the distribution sector working closely together and each fulfilling their respective obligations.

In concrete terms of implementing this Directive, we will be looking for Member States and the Commission to work on a clear and practical approach to:

- 1) creating a harmonised definition of the products and
- 2) encouraging the establishment of appropriate and robust waste management infrastructure.

The latter is vital if we are to avoid unnecessary costs which will ultimately be met by consumers, and also to ensure that as much of the waste treated can be converted into high-quality recycled materials as possible.

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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 global players such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small businesses. 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.