

Competition central to future prosperity of Europe and consumers' welfare

Speaking today on the presentation of the Commission Communication on a Competition Policy Fit for New Challenges, EuroCommerce Director-General Christel Delberghe said:

“EuroCommerce welcomes the Commission’s recognition that competition in the single market is central to Europe’s recovery and ensuring the global competitiveness of European businesses, driving choice and innovation and ensuring better prices. Our sector needs a competition framework which fully reflects the challenges and significant investment needed in meeting the demands of the digital and sustainability transition while operating at very low margins. It needs regulation that, along with recovery funds, can support its future resilience and attract investment.”

Retail and wholesale operates in a highly competitive environment. European competitiveness both globally and at home can only be achieved by ensuring proper competition and a single market that works for all actors and consumers.

Supporting investment is a key priority. In 2020, the Commission estimated investment needs in retail and wholesale to be €115 billion. Our sector will need to double its investment if it is to remain able to provide other ecosystems and customers the essential service it does now and meet the challenges of the digital and sustainability transition. It also needs the necessary infrastructure and a framework which allows it to succeed and thus attract the necessary private investment.

Companies in our ecosystem are showing leadership in sustainability, with major investments to make their operations and what they sell even more sustainable – reflected in the many examples in our website sustainable-commerce.com. They have also made a range of commitments under numerous public and private sector initiatives, but none of this can be achieved by companies - or the sector - alone, and their efforts need to be combined with others’ to be effective. Competition rules which provide clarity on what forms of cooperation and data exchange are possible will help companies join forces with the necessary legal certainty in pursuing genuine sustainability efforts (rather than cosmetic greenwashing).

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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, both leading global players such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small businesses. Retail and wholesale is the link between producers and consumers. Over a billion times a day, retailers and wholesalers distribute goods and provide an essential service to millions of business 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.