

## Europe needs ambitious digital policy for the retail sector

Today, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted its resolution ‘Digital transformation opportunities for retail companies and its advantages for European consumers’. The report addresses the major impact on businesses of the digital transformation of the sector, the impact of COVID and the opportunities and challenges of the digital and green transition.

EuroCommerce Director-General Christel Delberghe commented:

*‘The EESC report recognises the strategic role that the retail ecosystem plays in driving European recovery, underlines the significant transformation under way and the need to support investment and resilience. Last year, we launched our Pact for Commerce ([here](#)), supported by our social partners ([here](#)), setting out investment and policy needs for the retail and wholesale sector, focussing on digitalisation, sustainability, local employment and the need for open markets. I would like to thank the EESC for its very helpful and supportive report highlighting the importance, but also the needs, of our ecosystem in order to remain competitive and continuing to provide in the future the essential service it gives its customers every day.’*

EuroCommerce also wholeheartedly endorses the call in the EESC report for redesigning employment and skills support measures, and investment in the skill sets of future retail workers. While our sector has a proud record of training and upskilling, equipping the workforce for a rapidly changing business environment needs support.

Equally important for the nearly 5 million SME retailers and wholesalers in Europe will be help, including tailored expert advice, on how to build an online presence and succeed in a market transformed by the digital and sustainability transition.

The EESC report also highlights the important role of retail in rural areas, towns and villages. These are ecosystems in which retail, other services and cafes and restaurants feed each other and make their community an attractive place to visit, work and live. Changing consumer behaviour and the effects of the COVID pandemic have seen many stores close and with it the loss of the backbone of local communities. Concerted public-private initiatives, involving all parts of the community and its businesses, are urgently needed to reverse this trend, with support at regional, national and EU level.

---ENDS---

**Contact:**

Neil McMillan - +32 479 40 22 41 - [mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu)

Rémi Guastalli - +32 456 17 72 53 - [guastalli@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:guastalli@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 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.*