

Retailers and wholesalers working for sustainable food supply chain

As MEPs discuss the European Parliament's report on the Farm-to-Fork strategy, EuroCommerce Director-General Christian Verschueren said:

"Retailers and wholesalers have a strong interest in working to meet consumer demand for sustainably produced food. As responsible actors playing a central role in the supply chain, we seek to cooperate with all our suppliers to deliver on our shared commitment to sustainability. We therefore support the Farm-to-Fork strategy's overall objectives and will work to make our contribution to sustainable food systems which benefit consumers and the rest of the supply chain."

EuroCommerce and many of its members signed up to the Farm-to-Fork Code of Conduct, confirming our commitment to work on responsible food business and marketing practices. Our members already have in place a wide range of initiatives promoting more sustainable options, including guaranteed orders for farmers during the transition to organic. By providing the possibility of selling larger volumes, our sector is helping to reward farmers adopting sustainable practices and allowing a wider range of consumers access to more sustainable food at affordable prices.

Our sector wants Farm-to-Fork to achieve its ambitious objectives, and in a way in which all players can benefit, from farmers to the final consumer. No one part of the supply chain can do so on its own, and we will be asking the Commission to collaborate with all parties to build cooperative and effective dialogue, but also to adopt practical approaches which are transparent about the impact of the policies and ensure that they work with the grain of the market and consumer interests.

We regret to hear some misperceptions of the concentration of retail.

The sector is aware of its role to support sustainable behaviour and practices, but we don't have all the solutions alone. On food waste, it is important that it is addressed throughout the food chain, but remembering that retail is responsible for no more than 5% of food waste, and has achieved major results, e.g. through optimised sourcing or donation, to reduce this even further. Public authorities and, for example, their tax treatment of donations would help further to reduce waste and get even more wholesome food going to households which need it. 53% of food waste still arises in the home and we are also active in helping consumers both save money and reduce waste with many ideas on how to plan what they buy and how to use up what they have in their fridges.

Retail and wholesale are subject to a significant level of competition. Such competition is the best way to ensure that consumers have a wide choice of innovative products at the best price. We are actively working to make our operations as sustainable as possible. Multiple examples of all the sector's sustainability initiatives are set out on our dedicated website [#sustainablecommerce](#).

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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.