

EU Deforestation regulation: retail & wholesale calls for delay.

EuroCommerce has today written to the president of the European Commission to express deep concern regarding the preparation for implementation of the Regulation for Deforestation-free products (EUDR). Reiterating our full support of its important objectives, the rules still need clarification on many important practical aspects to allow retailers and wholesalers to comply.

Retailers and wholesalers are particularly affected by the EUDR due to the broad range of products in scope they sell, involving thousands of direct suppliers, with tens of thousands of upstream suppliers, the large majority of which are SMEs.

The many questions we have shared with the Commission during the past year, have so far remained unanswered. In addition, the appropriateness and readiness of the Information System (IS) and the application programming interface (API) remains a major concern. These are however indispensable to allow the connection and automation which our sector needs, as we trade multiple products, sourced from thousands of different suppliers and regions.

This situation makes it impossible to prepare in an appropriate and timely manner. There is now a clear risk that supplies might be disrupted, that SME suppliers are excluded due to lack of preparation, and that major business investments needed for its implementation are misdirected.

To address this highly uncertain situation, we are now asking the Commission that the transition period is extended allowing a minimum of 6 months after the IT tools and the benchmarking system are ready, piloted and tested, and made available for data entry, together with access to the required training material to ensure optimal preparation for this important regulation.

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EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 27 countries and 5 million companies, including leading global players and many small businesses. 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.