

Draghi Report: Retail and wholesale key to EU competitiveness

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen received Mr Draghi's report on the future of the European Union's competitiveness. The report announced in the 2023 State of the Union is expected to steer the incoming Commission and the actions it takes to improve the EU's competitiveness. The report has put decarbonisation, energy independence, defence, strategic economic security and innovation at the top of the EU agenda.

EuroCommerce Director-General Christel Delberghe, who represents Europe's retailers and wholesalers commented: *"Draghi's recommendations will steer the EU's actions for the next five years. We welcome the clear focus on investment, the energy, sustainability and technological transition, better quality legislation and the Single Market. But, any effective EU competitiveness strategy needs to look beyond manufacturing and recognise the contribution of services"*.

Retailers and wholesalers are the largest service sector, contributing 10% of the EU's GDP and are Europe's first private employer, providing jobs to 26 million Europeans and are present in every community in the EU. Many have been at the forefront of innovations that EU customers now take for granted, such as ecommerce, better for the planet food and consumer electronics, more sustainable clothing and the supply of greener construction and electrical equipment for home or office buildings.

As key partners at the end of the value chain, retail and wholesale are ideally placed to lead by example, coordinate solutions along the supply chain and/or encourage their customers towards more sustainable choices. They are already making significant investments in supporting the energy transition, developing new business models built on the principle of circularity and leading with digital innovation

The sector is recognised in the report as outperforming the US in mid-technology sectors. Retail and wholesale plays a significant role in Europe's competitiveness and can do more. This requires the EU and member states to prioritise the [Single Market](#), work in partnership with retailers and wholesalers to develop a skilled workforce, [to support decarbonisation](#) and to ensure high impact, high-quality legislation that is low cost to implement.

Commenting on the potential for retail and wholesale to be the EU's partner of choice, EuroCommerce Director General, Christel Delberghe noted: *"We strongly encourage the European Commission to think holistically and recognise what retailers and wholesalers can contribute to the EU's competitiveness. As the demand side, retailers and wholesalers provide huge potential to scale up green and digital innovation. We must also look beyond our borders and support diversification of global supply chains that help us remain both resilient and globally competitive"*.

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Background: EuroCommerce [Manifesto for 2024 to 2029](#)

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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.