

The Budapest Declaration:

Don't forget about the services sector, cautions EuroCommerce

Ahead of the informal EU leaders meeting in Budapest tomorrow, EuroCommerce – the association representing retailers and wholesalers in Europe - applauds member states' renewed ambitions to create a more competitive, productive, innovative and sustainable Union, while stressing not to omit the services sector.

“We were encouraged by the recommendations to strengthen the Single Market and to boost competitiveness in the Letta and Draghi reports”, commented EuroCommerce Director General, Christel Delberghe. “And we support the call for a comprehensive industrial strategy for competitive industries and quality jobs. However, the Heads of State and Government need to look beyond manufacturing and make services an integral part of the solution. Leaders should remember that nearly three in every four workers in the EU27 are now employed by the services sector.¹”

Retailers and wholesalers are well-established pioneers and deployers of transformative innovation within the services sector. As one of the EU's most significant contributors, with a presence in every community, contributing 10% of GDP and employing 26 million people, they can be an integral partner in delivering measurable, tangible benefits to improve the EU's productivity and competitiveness.

As key partners at the end of the value chain, retailers and wholesalers are well situated to lead by example, coordinating solutions along the supply chain and encouraging consumers to choose sustainably, to embrace the energy transition and be early adopters of circular and digital solutions.

Against the backdrop of the geopolitical, economic, demographic and planetary challenges that society faces, the EU's commitment to re-prioritise competitiveness and create a roadmap to deepen the Single Market is paramount. This will only be feasible if there is a revolution in regulatory simplification where everyone works together, to strengthen the Single Market and to deliver on a common vision, says EuroCommerce.

“We stand ready to play our part in closing the innovation, productivity and sustainability gaps to deliver a more dynamic, revitalised EU. It's high time to level the playing field for services for Europe and for Europeans”, concluded Delberghe.

¹ [The changing structure of employment in the EU: Annual review 2023](#)

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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.