

Commission e-commerce plans require Members States' action

Today, the Commission adopted its long-awaited communication [“E-commerce communication: A comprehensive EU toolbox for safe and sustainable e-commerce”](#). This is a response to the retail sector’s call for help against unfair competition from third-country traders and marketplaces.

Christel Delberghe, Director-General, said: “The Commission’s actions respond well to [our campaign #Compliance4all](#) against unfair competition from third-country traders and marketplaces. This is a top priority for the retail sector because consumers are at risk, and national authorities are struggling to enforce EU rules protecting consumers and ensuring a level playing field for European retailers.”

Retailers and wholesalers appreciate the Commission’s plans to prioritise enforcement by national authorities, coordinate actions among authorities, speed up reforms and explore additional measures.

Christel Delberghe continues: “Many plans depend on Member States’ and national authorities’ willingness to participate in joint actions. We need them to support the Commission and rebuild European consumers’ trust that the products they buy in Europe are safe and compliant, that their rights are respected and that they have access to redress, no matter where, from whom, and how they purchase products and services.”

Two important elements should be added to the Commission’s plans according to EuroCommerce:

1. **Compliance with the GDPR.** This has been part of the retailers’ campaign for a level playing field and recent actions by [NOYB](#) show there is a real risk that third-country players process personal data of EU customers in China.
2. **Focus on preventing non-compliant products from being bought.** A lot of the plans focus on enforcement of product rules after products have been bought at the EU borders or when they have entered the EU. However, then the damage is already done. Europe needs to prevent non-compliant product offerings from being available online.

“The launch of an investigation under the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network shows that the EU legal framework is well-equipped and that the Commission and Member States have adequate instruments to react to unfair and unsafe conditions”, concludes Delberghe.

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Note to editors

EuroCommerce campaign #Compliance4all

All information, supporting figures and test and studies of our members and others are available here: <https://www.eurocommerce.eu/compliance4all/>

In October 2024, EU retailers and wholesalers called for:

European retailers and wholesalers call upon EU legislators and national authorities to establish an **EU-level playing field** in retail for all players targeting EU-based consumers, regardless of where they are established. To achieve this, we need a **multi-faceted effective and efficient enforcement strategy** based on all **relevant legal instruments**, aiming to incentivise competent authorities, Member States and the European Commission.

In the past years competition from non-EU-based traders and marketplaces targeting EU-based consumers has drastically increased: the proportion of EU consumers making online purchases from sellers outside of the EU has risen by 36% between 2016 and 2022. We believe that a part of the rapid growth of some of these non-EU-based traders and marketplaces may be based on unfair competition. EuroCommerce welcomes more competition as it creates new opportunities, drives innovation and increases choice and the availability of affordable products for consumers but all players need to respect the rules.

At least a part of the success of some of these third-country players is based on aggressive marketing practices, misleading and manipulating consumers, not respecting EU consumer contract law, offering products that do not comply with EU product safety rules, lacking due diligence, disregarding customs rules, breaching data protection rules, creating unsafe online environments, subsidies received from Chinese authorities, etc. In short, some non-EU based players selling on the EU market do not comply with European rules and regulations.

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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, 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.