

N°257 | 30 May 2023



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## [Investment study in the European Parliament](#)

Today we held an important event in the European Parliament, hosted by Vice President Dita Charanzova (Renew Europe/CZ), to shed light on the transformation of the European retail and wholesale sector and discuss the necessary measures to ensure its sustainable, digital, and skills-driven progress by 2030.

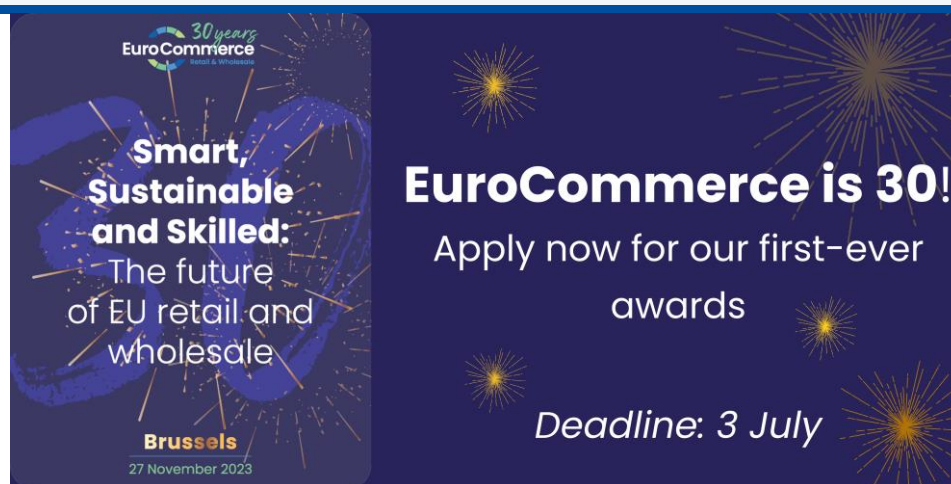
A highlight of the event was the presentation of our joint report with McKinsey on ***Transforming the EU Retail and Wholesale sector*** together with members sharing their experience on the importance of investment for the transformation of their business. In the current context, which includes both competitive and regulatory pressure on the sector, there is no choice but to invest. However, this requires access to significant resources that are currently being driven away in a high inflation and poly-crisis environment. The sector will not be able to carry this alone and will need a mix of financial support, an enabling policy framework and a well-functioning Single Market.

The event was part of a series of events to engage policymakers, including MEPs, on the sector's transformation.

### *Next steps*

We expect the Commission to present their consultation on a transition pathway for our eco-system before the summer recess, which will provide further opportunities to engage on our sector's transformation and needs.

Contact: [Joanna Inglis](#)



## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

### **The Future of European Commerce Awards – Apply now!**

**Deadline: 3 July 2023**

As part of our 30th-anniversary celebration, we are organising awards to celebrate innovation and good practice supporting our sector's digital, sustainability and skills, transformation and local community engagement. We would like to invite you to apply with your best projects or initiatives. The awards are open to retailers and wholesalers and their associations in Europe for innovative projects in:

- Digitalisation
- Sustainability
- Community engagement
- Skills

You will find [here](#) more details describing this initiative, including details on the criteria for applications. The deadline for submitting entries is 3 July 2023 at midnight. We look forward to your brilliant contributions!

Do not hesitate to share this information with colleagues or members and apply!

[APPLY NOW](#)

### [ForumEurope's 11th Annual European E-Commerce Conference 2023](#)

On 23 May we sponsored and participated in the 11th E-Commerce conference, organised by ForumEurope in partnership with Amazon and Ecommerce Europe, on how to deliver a consumer focussed digital single market in Europe. We were represented by member, Stephan Tromp, Managing Director of IFS Management Gmbh and Deputy Chief Executive of the German Retail Association (HDE). Mr Tromp participated in a panel discussion that focused on the specific challenges facing SMEs operating in the field of e-commerce. The event was well attended, bringing together industry experts with a wide variety of stakeholders and Commission officials. Other speakers included representatives from Amazon, Amaryllis Verhoeven from DG GROW and Alexia Bertrand, Secretary of State for Budget and Consumer Protection at the Belgian Ministry of Justice. Commissioner Didier Reynders [provided a video address](#) which emphasised the importance of ensuring consumer safety online.

#### *Next steps*

We will publish again our E-Commerce report together with ECommerce Europe in September 2023.

Contact: [Joanna Inglis](#) or [Anton Delbarre](#)

### [Retail association leaders meet in Athens](#)

On 24 May, we joined the international network of retail association leaders (FIRA) meeting kindly hosted by our Greek member EESE. The meeting brought together leaders from Europe, the US, Canada, Brazil, and Australia, was chaired by our Vice President Jacques Creyssel, and offered a great opportunity to share notes on key trends and challenges facing the sector globally, including how association leaders respond. We heard an update on the significant

contribution of retail to the Greek economy and exchanged with three successful local entrepreneurs in e-grocery, clothing and consumer electronics.

Contact: [Christel Delberghe](#)

## [European Commission presents Country Specific Recommendations for 2023](#)

On 24 May the European Commission published the European Semester Spring package. The European Semester is a process which is established between the European Commission and the Member States to ensure greater convergence between Member States' economies. Among other things, the Commission published a general [Communication](#) presenting the package and, for each Member State, [Country Specific Recommendations](#) (CSR) and [Country Reports](#). The Communication has a reference to the soon-to-be-published Retail Restrictiveness Indicator (RRI), a tool that compares Member State's establishment and operational restrictions. It points out that *'in retail services, the level of restrictions remained either unchanged or even higher for many Member States in 2022 compared to 2018'*. In the CSR, the Commission may give its views on any policy contribution to growth and jobs in a Member State, even if this goes beyond its mandate. Member States are expected to implement the Commission's recommendations in the next 6 months. Usually, the implementation rate is very low. But last year, the Commission linked CSRs to the Recovery and Resilience Facility and REPowerEU. Since then, recommendations focused on reducing the dependency on Russian fossil fuels and promoting energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. Our sector's needs in terms of labour and skills necessary to achieve the digital and sustainability transitions are widely covered in the reports. We have prepared an analysis of the CSP for members.

Contact: [Ignacio Martinez](#)

## [European Commission publishes new Economic Outlook \(Spring 2023\)](#)

The European Commission Spring Economic Outlook is crucial as our sector's economic performance usually is closely aligned with the economic development in Europe. Here is a summary of the main findings:

The EU economy has been resilient in a challenging global context, with moderate growth in Q1 2023 and an improved outlook for 2023 (1.0%) and 2024 (1.7%). Lower energy prices have cut production costs and energy bills, but inflation is high (5.8% in 2023 and 2.8% in 2024 in the euro area), with core inflation (7.6% in March) above headline inflation. Financing conditions will tighten further due to the interest rate hikes and the financial sector crisis. The labour market is strong, with a record-low unemployment rate (6.0% in March) and rising wages, but below inflation. Downside risks have risen due to persistent core inflation, tighter lending standards and geopolitical uncertainty from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Lower energy prices could boost domestic demand. The forecast covers three new EU candidate countries: Ukraine, Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### *Next steps*

The European Commission publishes two comprehensive forecasts (spring and autumn) and two interim forecasts (winter and summer) each year. The interim forecasts cover annual and quarterly GDP and inflation for the current and following year for all Member States, as well as EU and euro area aggregates. The European Commission's Summer 2023 Economic Forecast will update GDP and inflation projections and is expected to be presented in July 2023.

Contact: [Anton Delbarre](#)



The graphic is a celebratory invitation for EuroCommerce's 30th anniversary. It features a large, stylized green '30' on the left, with the text 'Smart, Sustainable and Skilled: The future of EU retail and wholesale' written inside it. Above the '30' is the EuroCommerce logo and '30 years' text. To the right of the '30' is the text 'EuroCommerce is 30!' followed by 'Celebrate with us at our exhibition'. Below this, the word 'Brussels' is written in green, with '20 June 2023' underneath. The entire graphic is framed by a blue border and decorated with colorful fireworks. At the bottom, the word 'INVITATION' is written in blue, followed by the event details: 'Smart, Sustainable and Skilled: the future of EU retail and wholesale - our 30th-anniversary exhibition', '20 June 2023, 18:00-20:00 CEST | Concert Noble, Brussels'.

**Smart, Sustainable and Skilled:**  
The future of EU retail and wholesale

**EuroCommerce is 30!**  
Celebrate with us at our exhibition

**Brussels**  
20 June 2023

**INVITATION**

**Smart, Sustainable and Skilled: the future of EU retail and wholesale - our 30th-anniversary exhibition**  
**20 June 2023, 18:00-20:00 CEST | Concert Noble, Brussels**

We are delighted to invite you to join us in celebrating our 30th anniversary this year, at a very special exhibition, entitled 'Smart, Sustainable and Skilled: the future of EU retail and wholesale'. European Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton, will open our event and visitors will have time to engage with more than 15 exhibitors and enjoy the cocktail reception. Our exhibitors will showcase some of our projects in sustainability, digitalisation and skills development.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

### [EuroCommerce reflections on late payments](#)

In the coming weeks, the Commission is expected to present a proposal to revise the Directive on Late Payments in business-to-business and government-to-business transactions.

In our [position](#) paper, we warned decision-makers about the risk, where strict rules (e.g. a very strict payment cap) could limit choice, access and convenience if the flexibility for retailers and wholesalers to negotiate payment terms is restricted. Our position highlights the evidence that rules are working well and calls rather for a focus on better enforcement of existing rules and promoting training and awareness raising (especially for SMEs) of enforcement mechanisms, alternative dispute resolution tools and liquidity mechanisms (such as inverse factoring). Several member states have spoken against the need for a major overhaul of the rules, such as Czechia, Denmark, Austria, Germany and Belgium. At the second meeting of the Late Payments Observatory, work is progressing to identify what data points should be collected to observe how well payments are performing. Leena Whittaker, Director for Competitiveness in our team has been sharing her reflections on the matter on LinkedIn [here](#).

#### *Next steps*

We are pursuing our outreach efforts with policymakers and other stakeholders. We encourage members to help disseminate our LinkedIn reflections and to use our position paper with your national audiences. We also ask members to share any data collected on payments or studies in your country.

Contact: [Leena Whittaker](#) or [Niccolo Ciulli](#)

## FT addresses cost-of-living issues and Single Market priorities with EuroCommerce support

Recently the Financial Times has published several stories of interest to our sector on subjects related to the cost-of-living and the Single Market.

- [Policing of EU market rules drops under von der Leyen's commission | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](https://on.ft.com/3WvdVQv)
- <https://on.ft.com/3WvdVQv>

This is the result of our regular contact with their journalists here in Brussels. Our Director General Christel Delberghe and our Director for Competitiveness, Leena Whittaker, have been in touch frequently to discuss the views of retailers and wholesalers and potential interviewees for the cost-of-living issues and on the Single Market. Some of you were quoted and the articles reflected our views on the issues we had flagged to the FT correspondent.

### *Next steps*

We will continue our regular contact with the Brussels Financial Times office and are building up relations with other international news outlets.

Contact: [Daniela Haiduc](#)



**IDENTIFYING GREEN SKILLS TO TRANSFORM RETAIL AND WHOLESALE AND MEET ITS SUSTAINABILITY POTENTIAL**

**5 JUNE, BRUSSELS**

#EUGREENWEEK • 3-11 JUNE 2023 • PARTNER EVENT

### *INVITATION*

Join our Green Week partner event on  
identifying green skills

**5 June 2023, 14:00-16:00 CEST | Brussels Press Club**

This event raises awareness of the retail and wholesale sector's insufficient access to/knowledge of the available funds and schemes for EU upskilling



and/or reskilling initiatives to achieve the digital and green transition and to promote resilience identified in the Pact for Skills. We will discuss the key findings of people/skills chapter identified in the joint EuroCommerce/McKinsey study Transforming the EU Retail & Wholesale Sector

In a panel discussion, we intend to uncover how the retail and wholesale industries could develop a taxonomy of green skills, while also raising awareness about the challenges they encounter.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



### *Skills event*

## **Upskilling Hospitality - For more Sustainability and Resilience in Food Supply Chain 7 June 2023, 12:00-13:45 CEST**

The hospitality sector is one of the key drivers of the EU economy. HoReCa businesses (Hotels, Restaurants, Cafes) provide 11 million jobs in the EU27 countries and contribute between 2-3% of total EU GDP. Of almost 2 million HoReCa enterprises within the EU, 89% are micro-sized (employing less than 10 persons), meaning small independently owned businesses.

Looking at the years ahead, the sector is facing significant challenges. Two and a half years of Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns have left economic repercussions that are still felt up to this day. But financial recovery from the pandemic is not the only challenge the hospitality industry is facing. Inflation and high energy costs are heavy burdens, especially for the owners of independent businesses. Labour shortages continue to be a pressing issue. Although these existed before, they were exacerbated by the pandemic, with 10-20% of the workforce having switched to other sectors. At the same time, sustainability demands are increasing, be it due to the digital and green transitions or new consumer demands on animal welfare as well as regional sourcing.

A panel will discuss what skills are necessary to make the hospitality sector fit-for-the-future, more resilient and more sustainable at the same time.



[REGISTER HERE](#)

## [Exchange with DG GROW on the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce](#)

On 16 May, we met with Mary Veronika Tovsak-Pletersk, Director for Single Market Enforcement, and her team in DG GROW to discuss potential agenda items for the Single Market Enforcement Task Force (SMET). The mandate of the SMET is limited to uncontroversial topics that may focus on administrative burdens or simplification. While this limits the topics for discussion away from measures such as those being taken by governments to make food more affordable, it could be a potential forum for discussion on the soon-to-be-published new edition of the Retail Restrictiveness Indicator and to pursue discussions on the proportionality of rules, such as on the freedom of establishment.

### *Next steps*

We have invited DG GROW to explain the new edition of the Retail Restrictiveness Indicator at the IMCO meeting on 6 June.

Contact: [Ignacio Martinez](#)

## [Commission presents green claims proposal at EP IMCO Committee](#)

On 23 May, the IMCO Committee in the European Parliament hosted a dialogue with the Commission on the proposal for a [Directive on substantiating green claims](#). The Commission responded to MEPs' interventions on the risk of incoherence between this proposal and other EU consumer law, confirming they have worked hand-in-hand with other Commission services. Among the requirements, the proposal mandates an assessment to substantiate environmental claims. This assessment must be credible and proportionate, based on scientific evidence, and should consider relevant international standards e.g., ISO. The Commission also clarified that a full life cycle assessment for all claims would not be required, but that businesses should take a "bird's eye view". To stop the proliferation of environmental labels, those are to be backed by a certification scheme. Furthermore, the Commission explained

that “labels on aggregated scoring” are considered to be the most misleading and thus should be banned. The provisions also apply to third-country schemes to ensure a level playing field. Lastly, an *ex-ante* verification process for claims and schemes is introduced whereby the verifier will grant a certificate of conformity to the business making the claim, and for the certificate mutual recognition will be ensured.

### *Next steps*

We are preparing to answer the Commission's feedback consultation on the file and our position towards the European Parliament and Council, who have started working on the file. In the EP, IMCO is in the lead with Andrus Ansip (Renew, Estonia) as rapporteur.

Contact: [Els Bedert](#) or [Anne Birk Mortensen](#)

## ESPR - Council agrees on general approach

EU Ministers in the Competitiveness Council adopted their general approach on the ESPR proposal on 22 May 2022 (see [press release](#)).

The Eco-design for Sustainable Product Regulation (ESPR) is a framework for setting eco-design requirements for specific product groups to significantly improve their circularity, energy performance and other environmental and sustainability aspects. ESPR will set design- and information requirements for almost all products in Europe, and our sector will be highly affected by these.

The main element of the Council's position is to give Member State experts and stakeholders an active role when setting up ecodesign requirements, which we support. The Council is also in favour of introducing a direct ban on the destruction of unsold textiles, footwear and apparel, which we are not supportive of. There is still a lack of clarity on the definition of 'destruction', and, furthermore, on what companies should do instead, e.g., recycle, remanufacture or donate. Further analysis of the general approach was sent to members.

### *Next steps*

The European Parliament needs to define their mandate. The lead ENVI Committee is provisionally expected to vote on the draft Report and the

amendments tabled on 5 June, and the plenary on 10 July 2023. We sent voting recommendations to the relevant committees and our views on the remaining issues to tackle in the ESPR.

Contact: [Anne Birk Mortensen](#)

## WHOLESALE DAY 2023



*Competitiveness proofing  
the wholesale sector*

21 June, Brussels



### INVITATION

#### Wholesale Day 2023 - Competitiveness proofing the wholesale sector

**21 June 2023 | Brussels**

The Single Market has underpinned the competitiveness of European businesses for the last 30 years. Wholesalers bring the benefits they gain from integrated and interconnected value chains across the Single Market to provide better products, lower prices and innovation for EU and non-EU business customers.

On 21 June, we will bring together policymakers and businesses to look ahead at what wholesale needs to better use the Single Market to drive the long-term competitiveness of wholesale businesses and the EU. Join the discussion to examine what the competitiveness check announced in the Commission Communication, 'Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030' should take into account to ensure wholesale, and its many SMEs, can continue to use the Single Market to bring benefits for its customers, have the capacity to innovate and trade internationally, and to take stock of the regulatory burden holding wholesalers back.

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

## Beyond Growth Conference: the energy transition

On 15-17 May, the European Parliament hosted the Beyond Growth [Conference](#), a multi-stakeholder event focussed on discussing and co-creating policies for sustainable prosperity in Europe. We attended Panel 9: *building an energy sector compatible with ecological limits*. The speakers looked at systemic changes to the EU energy sector architecture to provide stable, secure, affordable, and clean energy to all.

The panel focused on the necessity of phasing-out fossil fuels and changes to the energy sector to help diversify energy supplies and accelerate the roll-out of renewable energy. Most speakers agreed that it is of outmost importance we focus our efforts on the demand side and on building appropriate infrastructure. According to Antonella Battaglini (Chief executive officer, Renewable Grid Initiative, World Economic Forum), we need more flexibility in the regulations and grid integration. To be able to scale-up renewables, the permitting process should also be relaxed and speeded up. Dirk Holemans, coordinator at Oikos, expressed the need to strengthen Power Purchase Agreements that would permit a decentralisation of the energy system with more focus on the demand side.

We have responded to the consultation on the reform of the [EU Electricity Market Design](#) by submitting a cover note, pointing out, among other things, that the reform of the electricity market should look into the demand side, allow more flexibility, reduce administrative burden, and incentivise Power Purchase Agreements. The Retail and Wholesale sector has the potential to be a partner in scaling-up renewables if enabled to do so.

Contact: [Anne Birk Mortensen](#) or [Sofia Ghezzi](#)

## EuroCommerce speaks at European Maritime Days

Our Director for Product Policy and Environment, Els Bedert, participated in a workshop during the European Maritime Day 2023 (EMD) in Brest, on 24 and 25 May 2023. The EMD involved high-level speeches, discussions and an expo displaying EU programmes, research and innovation, and knowledge networks related to the blue economy. As part of the conference, Els addressed a workshop organised by the European Association of Producers Organisations

(EAPO) on “Sustainability from producer to consumer” with speakers from DG MARE, WWF and MSC. She outlined the commitment of retail and wholesale to sustainable fisheries and highlighted actions taken by our members on responsible sourcing, our work with third-party certification as well as on information to consumers. All speakers agreed that sustainability needs to cover environmental, economic and social aspects and that the upcoming Framework for Sustainable Food Systems is key to further driving sustainable fisheries. EAPO highlighted the challenges they face to communicate in their sector towards the younger generation using social media. MSC explained how they work on elaborating their certification schemes of which [a new version](#) came into effect on 1 May and the work to certify the whole supply chain to ensure measures can be traced to the final product. WWF referred to their [seafood guide](#) to help consumers choose the most sustainable fish, while the Commission outlined existing legislation on fish labelling.

#### *Next steps*

We will continue to engage via the market advisory council and liaise with European Commission’s DG Mare regarding further communication on retail and wholesale best practices.

Contact: [Els Bedert](#)

### [Private labels manufacturers discuss key trends in Amsterdam](#)

Private label manufacturers from all over the world met in Amsterdam last week at the annual Trade Show organised by the Private Label Manufacturers’ Association.

Presentations by Nielsen and GfK painted a positive picture for private labels, which have grown by +0.8% in Europe in 2022, despite overall volumes being down, in all categories except alcoholic beverages and healthcare. The strongest performers noted were paper products, ambient food and fresh food. In GfK’s survey, 65% of consumers say they want to buy sustainable products, but the percentage of consumers who check (on labels and packaging) the environmental impact of a product is much lower (29%) and 59% of shoppers say they struggle to afford it. Also, 93% of shoppers say they have changed their behaviour to adapt to a higher price environment.

#### *Next steps*

Similar trends were also identified in our 2023 [State of Grocery Retail Report](#). We are working on some material on the cost-of-living crisis which will be shared with members in the coming weeks.

Contact: [Leena Whittaker](#)



### ***What is the digital euro and why should retailers and wholesalers care***

We released a document which explores the potential of the digital euro and why retailers and wholesalers should be informed about this development. The paper outlines the goal, purpose, and advantages of the digital euro and compares it to other payment methods in a comprehensive table.

We encourage you to spread this information within your organisation or with your members.

**[READ HERE](#)**

### **[Growing the Skills Partnership](#)**

At a [joint networking event](#) on 25 May, we presented the skills partnership with our social partners. More details are available in [our presentation](#). We are also submitting a renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships pledge together

with UNI Europa to underline our commitment to sharing best practices on upskilling and reskilling initiatives. It also ensures that innovative and up-to-date apprenticeship programmes exist to support and attract talent to our sector.

### *Next steps*

The renewed pledge will be launched at the [European Alliance for Apprenticeships High-Level Event](#) on 26 and 27 June with our Director for Competitiveness, Leena Whittaker as a speaker. Please send her examples of best practices in apprenticeships she could share. Contact us, should you be interested in directly supporting the pledge.

Contact: [Valeryia Despaigne](#)

## [EESC organises brainstorm on the promotion of the Single Market @30 and the European Year of Skills](#)

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) invited us to a meeting on the European Year of Skills (EYS) and the Single Market@30 alongside other business stakeholders (BusinessEurope, Copa-Cogeca, SME United and Eurochambres). The purpose was to brainstorm together with the Commission services from DG GROW and DG EMPL on how to promote the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Single Market in the frame of the Commission's [communication](#) and the European Year of Skills. Organisations attending presented their work on these matters. We are working on a Single Market paper that identifies opportunities and challenges for the Single Market from a retailers and wholesalers' point of view and an updated Single Market Barriers Overview, a document that keeps track of the main issues happening in the EU. DG GROW welcomes concrete examples and barriers to the Single Market. We also presented our works on the cost-of-living crisis and our #SingleMarket4All campaign and used the opportunity to promote the Skills Partnership, as well as suggesting a focus of efforts could be on identifying the top 10 common skills shortages across the EU to focus attention on what the EU labour market is lacking.

### *Next steps*

The Commission is organising and supporting events in the context of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Single Market, including a travelling bus that can be booked



for events in Member States. On skills, [DG EMPL is collecting success stories of companies in reskilling and/or upskilling](#). Please share your interesting stories!

Contact: [Ignacio Martinez](#) or [Joanna Inglis](#)

### Meeting DG FISMA cabinet on payments

On 17 May, Director General Christel Delberghe together with Joanna Inglis and Atze Faas met Mr Florian [Denis](#) from the Cabinet of Commissioner McGuinness to discuss payment related issues for our sector.

We shared our thoughts on our four problem areas around payment costs:

- 1) lack of competition,
- 2) lack of transparency,
- 3) regulatory gaps and
- 4) unfair %-based fee structures.

We expressed our support for instant payments and the digital euro as means to increase the competitiveness of European solutions versus non-European players and elaborated on regulatory gaps around scheme fees, meal vouchers and low value gift cards exemption.

#### *Next steps*

We offered to inform our members and their customers on the payments legislation package that will come out on 28 June. It will cover the update of the Payment Service Directive/Regulation, Instant Payments Regulation, Open Finance framework and legislation to enable the digital euro.

Contact: [Atze Faas](#)

### Payments Committee chair Isabelle Clairac joins Euro Retail Payments Board

Mr Frederic Mazurier from our member Carrefour/MarketPay has represented EuroCommerce in the Euro Retail Payments Board (ERPB) for a long time and we are very grateful for his invaluable contribution. We are very fortunate that

our Payments Committee chair, Isabelle Clairac, has made herself available to replace Frederic with immediate effect. The ERPB is hosted by the European Central Bank and drives the longer-term strategy of retail payments in Europe and the group met last week to discuss a crucial list of subjects for us, such as the digital euro, instant payment and a SPACE study on the consumer attitudes towards payments by the European Central Bank.

### *Next steps*

We will share regular updates from the ERPB meetings through the Payments Committee and InBrief articles.

Contact: [Atze Faas](#)

## UK Order Target Operating Model

The UK government launched a consultation on the UK Border Target Operating Model in April, which ended on 19 May. With the valuable input of our members, we submitted our feedback to the government. The [Border Target Operating Model draft](#) was published in the beginning of April and sets out the framework for the UK's future border controls. The aim is to prevent delays, reduce physical checks and ensure that checks are carried out away from busy zones such as ports.

In our feedback response, we acknowledged the need for the UK to introduce its own controls and border checks after Brexit but raised a few concerns. Firstly, the timeframe within which businesses need to provide Safety and Security declarations is extremely short. Secondly, businesses need to be given more information on several issues, for example on product risk categories and the Single Trade Window. Thirdly, we proposed the possibility of bundling export health certificates (EHCs) to avoid unnecessary delays. Lastly, we highlighted that special mechanisms need to be put in place to avoid chaos (this is especially important for fresh, perishable products). Furthermore, we stated that we would welcome a future SPS-agreement between the EU and the UK. This would decrease the costs and burden on businesses and would give the UK border controls the opportunity to focus on imported goods from higher risk countries.

### *Next steps*

The UK government is currently analysing the feedback it received and will use it for the Border Target Operating Model. The final version of the Model as well

as further guidance is expected to be published in the coming weeks or months. The UK government recommends that businesses prepare for the first phase on 31 October (health certification for imports of medium-risk products from the EU). We will discuss the UK Border Target Operating Model at the next International Trade Committee on 6 June.

Contact: [Harald Past](#) or [Sophia Seeber](#).

## Most comprehensive EU Customs Reform since 1968

On 17 May 2023 the [European Commission put forward its ambitious EU customs reform](#). The aim of the reform is to tackle challenges that arose in the last few years, and to facilitate import and export processes for economic operators. We published a [press release with a few comments](#) on the reform, as well as a [joint statement](#). The proposal intends to transition EU customs rules from the current situation to a more digital environment that embraces eCommerce against the background of the Green Deal. It consists of the following three pillars:

1. Data Hub and “Trust and Check” Traders: The EU Customs Data Hub will be launched in 2028 and will be mandatory as of 2038. It will allow importers to enter information on their products and supply chains into one platform. Companies will therefore have to submit the data only once for multiple consignments.
2. EU Customs Authority: The suggested EU Customs Authority aims at supporting Member States when prioritising risks and coordinating checks and inspections based on the EU Customs Data Hub information.
3. E-Commerce, platform responsibility and abolition of EUR 150 customs threshold for imports: Online platforms will need to ensure the payment of custom duties and VAT when the consumer purchases a product to avoid facing hidden charges later. Furthermore, goods valued at less than EUR 150 will not be exempt from custom duties anymore to prevent fraud.

### *Next steps*

The European Parliament and Council will form a position on the proposal in the coming months, with consultation of the Economic and Social Committee. We anticipate the European Commission will launch a consultation of the

proposal soon and will discuss this topic during our International Trade Committee meeting on 6 June. The reform might only be adopted in the next legislative period.

Contact: [Harald Past](#) or [Sophia Seeber](#).

## EuroCommerce meetings

The full [EuroCommerce meeting calendar](#) for 2023 is available.

**06 June** - IMCO Committee

**06 June** - Trade Committee

**07 June** - Food Committee

**13 June** - Wholesale Interest  
Group

**13 June** - Supply Chain  
Committee

**14 June** - Envi Committee

**15 June** - Non-Food Committee

**20 June** - General Assembly

**21 June** - Board of Directors

## EuroCommerce events

We are organising a multitude of [events](#) every month:

**05 June** - Green Skills

**20 June** - 30th anniversary  
exhibition

**21 June** - Wholesale Day 2023

## Previous Issues

[#256 - 16 May 2023](#)



[#255 - 2 May 2023](#)



[#254 - 18 April 2023](#)

Our next InBrief will be issued  
on

**13 June 2023**

Should you have  
any questions or comments,  
please contact

[Daniela Haiduc](#).



Editor | [Christel Delberghe](#)

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