



PRESS RELEASE  
Brussels, 23 April 2014

## **Retail and wholesale are diverse, job-rich, innovative, and increasingly digital**

### **Oxford study highlights the sector's critical importance for the European economy**

A report by the Oxford Saïd Business School<sup>1</sup>, released today, shows the magnitude of the commerce sector, its diversity, its dynamism and contribution to innovation, growth, and its employment creation in Europe. It further shows that the sector is going through profound transformation with the growth of online trading at the heart of this.

The report was presented to Commissioner De Gucht at the launch event in Brussels. It highlights that one in 4 businesses in the EU is a retail or wholesale operation (contributing 1/10<sup>th</sup> of EU's GDP), with a **diversity** and multiplicity of business formats in both sectors – from global leaders to a myriad of small to very small businesses. This plurality of stores and channels responds to the wide diversity of consumer and customer preferences across Europe. The report also illustrates the impact of external factors, such as regulation on the competitiveness of business.

**Innovation** is at the heart of retail and wholesale. A striking particularity is that retail and wholesale companies are more likely to engage in open, collaborative innovation than many other sectors, incrementally adapting their services and value propositions through a process of continual innovation. Examples include innovative technology systems, the development of successful private label brands, new processes and technologies related to more efficient supply chain management, product tracking and tracing, pricing devices on shelves, and electronic commerce.

The sector employs 29 million people, or 1 in 7 working Europeans. In a climate of high unemployment, especially amongst young people (one in four retail employees is aged 15-24), both large and small retail and wholesale businesses offer young people a wide range of **jobs** to fit all skills and education levels.

The **digital economy** is driving a major transformation of the European retail and wholesale sectors. For retail and wholesale firms, digitalisation brings opportunities and challenges for greater efficiency, new business models and trading formats, and creating new jobs with new skill requirements. Customers take advantage of this transformation by seeing more competitive prices, greater convenience and new opportunities for cross-border purchasing.

The full Oxford study can be downloaded via the following weblink:  
<http://www.eurocommerce.eu/resource-centre.aspx#Publication/7459>

~ENDS~

#### **For further information, please contact:**

**EuroCommerce**

Marjolein Raes  
Director of Advocacy & Communications  
Tel: +32 2 737 05 99  
[raes@eurocommerce.eu](mailto:raes@eurocommerce.eu)

**ERRT**

Dennis Kredler  
Director-General  
Tel: +32 2 286 51 22  
[dkredler@errt.org](mailto:dkredler@errt.org)

**Independent Retail Europe**

Else Groen  
Director-General  
Tel: +32 2 732 46 60  
[else.groen@independentretailleurope.eu](mailto:else.groen@independentretailleurope.eu)

---

<sup>1</sup> The report was carried out by the Institute of Retail Management (director: Prof J. Reynolds) of the Saïd Business School of Oxford University; it was supported by a research grant from EuroCommerce, the European Retail Round Table, and Independent Retail Europe.

---

### **EuroCommerce**

EuroCommerce is the main organisation representing European retail and wholesale. As an umbrella federation for the B2C and B2B trade sector, it groups leading multi-national retailers as well as the many small, family commerce operations. Its membership includes associations and companies in all European countries. It speaks on behalf of 5.5 million retail and wholesale businesses, or 1 in 4 companies in the EU. Those companies employ 29 million people, or 1 in 7 jobs in the EU.

[www.eurocommerce.eu](http://www.eurocommerce.eu)

### **European Retail Round Table (ERRT)**

ERRT brings together the CEOs of Europe's leading retail companies who share their collective experience and ideas with policy makers in view of giving Europe's consumers better access to the benefits of the Single Market and to promote delivery of a sustainable consumption model.

Collectively, ERRT members employ more than 2.3 million people in over 40,000 stores. ERRT Members are: Asda Walmart, Auchan Group, C&A, Carrefour Group, Dansk Supermarked, Delhaize Group, El Corte Inglés, H&M, ICA, IKEA, Inditex, Jerónimo Martins, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Mercadona, Metro Group, Royal Ahold and Tesco. [www.errt.org](http://www.errt.org)

### **Independent Retail Europe**

Independent Retail Europe is the European association that acts as an umbrella organisation for all groups of independent retailers in the food and non-food sectors. Our members are groups of independent retailers, associations representing groups of independent retailers and wider service organisations built to support independent retailers.

Independent Retail Europe represents over 355,000 independent retailers (with a combined retail turnover of more than 656 billion euros and more than 627,000 points of sale), and 22 groups and associations of groups in Europe (employing over 5 million people and generating a combined wholesale turnover of more than 320 billion euros). [www.independentretailleurope.eu](http://www.independentretailleurope.eu)