

Press release

21 September 2017

New survey shows Europe's large retailers face increasing trade barriers and discrimination in the single market

The Centre for European Policy has now published the results of an independent EU-wide survey, commissioned by European Retail Round Table member METRO AG, entitled 'What do trade companies perceive as discriminatory national restrictions against their business in the Internal Market?' As previously explained, at the ERRT Business Cocktail in Strasbourg hosted by Michael Gahler MEP on 12 September, the survey results are not representative insofar as they do not cover all the 28 EU Member States. Nevertheless, the analysis provides clear evidence that the retail sector is facing evolving challenges in the Single Market of the European Union because of trade barriers and discriminatory measures.

"The results of this survey demonstrate that cross-border sales are hampered by restrictive barriers across the EU through specific national administrative actions. It also shows that retailers operating in a number of EU Member States encounter more barriers than domestic companies do. The hurdles to selling products from other EU countries are burdensome labelling requirements, minimum sales quotas and the obligation to promote domestic products. Local companies are considerably less affected than foreign players" Director-General Dr. Susanne Czech said. Discriminatory measures mean higher costs for the ERRT members -Europe's largest retailers - and importantly inhibit the ability of European agricultural exporters to increase their own trade within the European Union.

"We are strong believers in open markets and fair competition and need the rule of law to be upheld in all Member States for our member companies to be successful. Those countries referenced within the study and the European Commission should act now to remove the perceived barriers and foster intra-EU trade, for the benefit of both, retailers and consumers" Ms Czech added.

Opportunities and obstacles for the integration of the EU retail market are the key focus of the European Commission's currently open public consultation on retail regulations in a multi-channel environment and the present survey result will assist ERRT in its response.

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□ CEP Survey:

http://politics.metroag.eu/fileadmin/resource/content/BRU/img/publications/2017_cep_overview_trade_barriers_EU.pdf

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The **European Retail Round Table (ERRT)** ERRT brings together the CEOs of Europe's largest multinational 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. ERRT members are active in a variety of retail markets, including food, furniture, fashion, and electronics, amongst others. Each retailer has both physical stores as well as multichannel operations in Europe. The retail sector is of fundamental importance to the European economy and the well-being of EU citizens. ERRT promotes a Single Market in Retail, the delivery of a more sustainable consumption model, and the creation of new market opportunities globally.