

# Annual report on the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices

## General information

<b>Name in full + acronym</b>	<a href="#">EuroCommerce</a>
<b>Contact person with contact details</b>	Els Bedert bedert@eurocommerce.eu
<b>N° in the transparency register</b>	84973761187-60
<b>Date of signature of the Code</b>	19 June 2021
<b>Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...)</b>	Retail and Wholesale
<b>Who do you represent? (e.g., number of members, companies, SMEs)</b>	34 Company members 27 National associations 15 Affiliated EU associations <a href="#">Members</a>

- Endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code.

By endorsing the code, we subscribe to its aspirational objectives and inform and engage our membership in meeting these objectives. We also support reaching these aspirational objectives via our participation to the activities organized within the remit of the Code of Conduct and through our membership in various EU platforms (Food Waste, Animal Welfare, EBAF, European Food Forum) and presence at international organisations, such as the [Consumer Goods Forum](#), and [Efficient Consumer Response](#) (ECR).

We regularly produce reports covering subjects that are part of the Code's objectives, specifically our annual report on grocery retail together with McKinsey and our report on climate net-zero emissions (2024) in partnership with Oliver Wyman.

- Promote and disseminate this Code with(in) our constituency.

EuroCommerce has continued to inform and engage its members on the implementation of the Code of Conduct and the activities organized within its remit, despite the continued considerable workload brought about by the changing focus of the new Commission with a focus on competitiveness

Information and exchanges primarily take place via our biweekly WG F2F meetings, where members are updated on the Code's developments and are encouraged to contribute to its further growth and success. This working group consists of +/- 70 member representatives from our membership (hence beyond signatories).

We allocate time for exchange during our Food Committee meeting (3x per year) and in the Status Report prepared ahead of this meeting. We are reaching around 200 experts via this channel. We also report in our biweekly newsletter to all members.

In addition, EuroCommerce serves its members through our dedicated wholesale interest group and SME interest group. The SME group debates and outlines specific SME needs in EU policy development. This group was informed about the new agrifood code of conduct tool developed under the cluster collaboration platform and the AgriFood Platform.

EuroCommerce's website includes examples/best practices of our members' sustainability efforts – which is part of our commitment under the Code: <https://www.eurocommerce.eu/farm-to-fork/>

- Encourage their members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate.

The CoC is a priority listed in our Food Committee annual workplan. Nevertheless, the continued high workload - with many legislative files currently considered for simplification or needing preparation for implementation - again absorbed most of our members' attention due to the high impact these developments might have.

EuroCommerce continued to refer to the Code and its ambitions when speaking at stakeholder events.

- Explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code.

In April 2025, we published the fifth version of the joint McKinsey/EuroCommerce state of grocery report covering the year 2024 and following earlier versions (*see annex*).

These reports provide consumer insights on sustainability issues in relation to food. It reports on challenges for our sector as well as current market trends based on consumer surveys (+/-14.000 Consumers) and CEO interviews.

Many companies have made SBTi<sup>1</sup> carbon emissions reduction commitments and several of our association members have developed roadmaps to reach net zero.

We are an engaged partner of the ECR Community whereby our members and other companies exchange practical learnings, such as on how to prevent food waste ([ECR retail loss group](#)), on category management or packaging.

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<sup>1</sup> Science -based target initiative: <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

- continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policymakers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership.

We continued to engage closely with other food chain EU association members, as members of the CoC liaison group, and at dedicated Code of Conduct events. We have recently become a member of the European Food Forum which provides further opportunities to engage on a number of topics.

## A sample of interactions at European level

### **Code of Conduct Workshop on action on healthy and sustainable diets – 17 June 2025, Brussels**

[LinkedIn Post](#)

The event, organised by EuroCommerce with the support of the CoC liaison group members, aimed to promote the EU Code of Conduct and encourage collaboration between stakeholder organisations and companies via interactive round table discussions on achieving sustainable, healthy, and affordable diets. It did so by highlighting signatories' initiatives in driving sustainable, affordable, healthy diets, emphasizing their commitments and achievements to inspire and motivate participants, and to facilitate discussions on achieving nutritious and healthy diets as part of a competitive, sustainable, resilient, and fair EU agri-food system. Speakers included Herbalife, Colruyt Group, Independent Retail, and EU Pledge.

Key messages that surfaced during the discussions related to the importance of innovation and need for supportive policies to facilitate market entrance; the need to continue to invest in education and in informing consumers and for continued cooperation along the supply chain.

### **EU action plan for plant-based foods – 11 June 2025, European Parliament**

[LinkedIn Post](#)

130+ people gathered in the European Parliament to discuss the need for a comprehensive plan to support the plant-based food value chain. Inspired by the Danish Plant-Based Action plan, an EU plant-based action plan with concrete policy measures and initiatives to support value chain actors from farm to mouth was developed. Politicians, policymakers from the European Commission and stakeholder representatives outlined their views for a sustainable future with more plant-rich diets. More [here](#)

EuroCommerce participated in the panel at the event, alongside experts from BEUC, IFOAM, LIDL, EPAH (and others) drawing attention to the fact that competitiveness and sustainability is fully interconnected in the Food System, pointing to the need to continue to engage to understand each others role, activities, benefits and challenges in these fields. As retailers and wholesalers, we recognise our important role in empowering consumers to choose a diet fitting their healthy, sustainable live-styles and ethical considerations. We have seen a continues shift in plant-based products as consumer become more conscious of climate and health considerations. Retailers adapt their offer and make commitments on plant-based protein to meet their climate commitments: Together with our suppliers, we ensure offering choice and serve our diverse consumers base.

### **The Power of Fruit and Vegetables - Conference 9 April in Brussels**

[LinkedIn Post](#)

EuroCommerce participated in a panel at this joint event of Freshfel Europe and PROFEL (European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processors) in the session on *“Repositioning sustainability to*

secure competitiveness". This session highlighted the need to refocus on a new bottom-up process to secure sustainable competitiveness, refocusing on the three pillars of sustainability and the central role fruit and vegetables have to play.

### **Food Drink Dialogues Healthier Living Dialogue - 19 February 2025, Brussels**

*Title: Empowering consumers for better food and drink choices How can we build food environments that make it easy to consume a balanced and sustainable diet?*

#### [LinkedIn Post](#)

EuroCommerce delivered a 'spotlight talk' during the facilitated lunch discussion organised by FoodDrinkEurope, outlining what we understand by positive food environments, what the retail sector is doing to enable healthier food choices, what consumers tell us what they need and want.

### **EP event on Nutrition as Prevention - 4 February 2025, European Parliament.**

#### [LinkedIn Post](#)

The event brought together 'agri-food' and 'health' perspectives of the food system (*one health*), underlining the urgency of addressing public health problems caused by food consumption and production. Co-hosted by MEPs Manuela Ripa, Biljana Borzan, Laurent Castillo, and Tilly Metz, key voices from the EU institutions, and health, environmental and industry organisations called for action.

EuroCommerce was among the speakers, emphasising how grocery retailers are already stepping up to support healthier food environments. Their initiatives include:

- Expanding product choices for balanced diets
- Reformulating products to improve nutritional value
- Encouraging fruit & vegetable consumption
- Promoting responsible marketing & health campaigns

### **Exchanges via European platforms**

- [Market advisory Council on fisheries \(MAC\)](#) – The MAC is a stakeholder-led organisation composed of representatives of the entire seafood value chain (primary producers, processors, traders, suppliers, retailers, trade unions) and other interest groups (NGOs). The MAC provides advice on a broad range of topics including sustainability labelling and the future framework for sustainable food system. In 2024 and 2025, advice was formulated on the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Fisheries Control regulation, Sustainability criteria, consumer information in HORECA, *and much more* and a report was published on forced labour in fisheries sector ([here](#)).
- [EU platform on food losses and food waste](#) - The EU Platform established in 2016, brings together EU institutions, experts from the EU countries, international organisations and relevant stakeholders. The Platform aims to support all actors in defining measures needed to prevent food waste; sharing best practice; and evaluating progress made over time. EuroCommerce is a member and is actively contributing in the Action & Implementation, Date marking and Food Donation sub-groups and facilitating the sharing of best practices in the sector.
- [EU platform on animal welfare](#) - The 'Platform on Animal Welfare' aims to develop and exchange of coordinated actions on animal welfare with a particular focus on: better application of EU rules, through exchanges of information and best practices and the direct involvement of stakeholders; the development and use of voluntary commitments by businesses to further improve animal welfare; the promotion of EU animal welfare standards to valorise the market value of the Union's products at the global level. Our membership was extended under the new mandate running.

- [European Circular economy stakeholder platform](#) - A joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee which includes work on packaging (among others). EuroCommerce is part of the coordination group.
- [Commission Expert Group/Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Protecting and Restoring the World's Forests, including the EU Timber Regulation and the FLEGT Regulation](#) - The platform was launched to help protect and restore world's forests brings together an unprecedented range of stakeholders and expertise: consumer and producer countries, civil society organizations, and industry associations.

## Annex

### **(Edition 2025)** [The State of Grocery Retail Europe 2025](#)

2024 was a year of mixed emotions for European grocers. Volume grew again, albeit slowly, some consumer segments traded up, and AI has been creating value for some grocers. Now, looking ahead to 2025, cost pressure remains high, some supply chains are highly volatile, and many shoppers are still cautious as economic pressure persists.

Questions from grocery executives mirror the mixed picture of 2024: How can grocers attract the more affluent shoppers as well as those whose sensitivity remains high? What will the “shopper of tomorrow” look for? How can opportunities from sustainability be captured? Finally, how can grocers benefit from data and AI most effectively?

For this report, 14,000 consumers and over 30 grocery executives from more than a dozen countries across Europe were surveyed. Additionally, we interviewed four grocery CEOs. *Developments regarding possible tariffs or other trade restrictions that unfolded in March 2025 are not reflected.*

To mark the fifth anniversary of The State of Grocery Retail Europe publication, various new features, including a five-year outlook, were added a data-driven analysis of the signature practices of successful grocers, and a proprietary volume growth model to inform the assessment of growth opportunities in different parts of Europe.

### **(Edition 2024)** [Signs of Hope: The State of Grocery Retail in 2023](#)

The 2023 edition highlights a crucial trend, namely sustainability. While challenges remain, the potential for positive impact is immense. Millennials and Generation Z are leading the way in demanding eco-friendly products. Europe's top grocers are accelerating their efforts, particularly to reduce Scope 3 emissions.

Regenerative agriculture is changing the game, offering a pathway to healthier products and lower emissions. See the potential for reducing emissions in scopes 1 to 3 through bold sustainability initiatives.

### **(June 2024)** [Net Zero Game Changer: Tackling the hidden carbon footprint in European retail and wholesale value chains.](#)

Our joint report aims to shed light on the carbon footprint of the sector in Europe and its value chains around the world. Besides providing insights into the status quo, it aims to set out a path towards a more sustainable future across four retail and wholesale subsectors: food and beverage and health and beauty, textile and apparel, consumer electronics, and home and do-it-yourself (DIY).

We hope to inspire and guide practitioners in the sector towards adopting low emission practices. The challenges posed by climate change require a collective effort, and this study seeks to empower stakeholders across the full value chain with data and analysis that will allow them to take decisive action toward a more sustainable future.

This report is the result of a collaboration between EuroCommerce and Oliver Wyman.

The key takeaways:

- **Impact:** The sector's value chains contribute nearly a third of Europe's CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of which 98% are in scope 3 (outside its direct control).
- **Action:** It's time to act decisively on carbon reduction to meet our targets. Sitting at the nexus between suppliers and consumers, retail and wholesale are pivotal in facilitating changes that will help cut CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.

- **Collaboration:** Only through collective efforts can we achieve meaningful change. This needs the right framework and support with agreed methodologies and efforts to ensure data are comparable and reliable.

## Earlier editions

(Edition 2023) [The state of grocery retail: Living with and responding to uncertainty](#)

(Edition 2022) [Transforming the retail and wholesale sector](#)

The 2022 report by EuroCommerce in partnership with McKinsey **on transforming the retail and wholesale sector** shows that necessary **investments** and the pressure to invest are significant: Euro 230bn to achieve 90% reduction of scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions in our sector and Eur 35bn for circularity.

(Edition 2022) [The state of grocery in Europe: Navigating the market headwinds](#)

(Edition 2021) [Disruption and Uncertainty – State of Grocery Retail 2021 report](#)