



FTA
Foreign Trade Association



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Enhancing EU Competitiveness: EuroCommerce and FTA Call for Trade Modernisation

Brussels, 5 March 2015. The Foreign Trade Association (FTA) and EuroCommerce, leading European associations representing the retail and wholesale sectors, joined forces today at a high-level conference in Brussels attended by 150 stakeholders, where they reiterated their support of EU Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström - keynote speaker at the conference - in her efforts to pursue a European free trade agenda. The competitiveness of the European business sector would strongly increase through policy measures designed to leverage the full potential of international trade to create jobs and growth.

European consumers should be able to fully benefit from the choice and competitive prices offered by globalised markets. During the event, held under the title *“Unleashing the Potential of EU Trade Policy: Time for Action”* and aimed at discussing Europe’s capacity to adapt its commercial policy to the needs of an increasingly globalised world, both organisations addressed the need to update and streamline the many unnecessary barriers and regulations currently existing and suited to obsolete trading patterns. Such modernisation would support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to overcome the obstacles they currently face - although SMEs make up the majority of companies and create the most jobs in Europe, they do not have the resources of larger companies to deal with trade barriers. Thus, significant growth potential is lost.

They also highlighted the need for rules of origin and anti-dumping rules to be revised to reflect the new reality of global supply chains, where products are often made up of components from all over the world. Moreover, they particularly underlined the need for a rapid conclusion of the Trade in Service Agreement (TiSA) currently being negotiated in Geneva, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and a series of other bilateral agreements. Whilst European trade policy should continue to promote sustainability goals in third countries, this must not override its primary goal of achieving greater trade facilitation.

Christian Ewert, FTA Director General, said: *“The EU needs to invest substantially more effort in promoting a modernised legal framework facilitating business, and to enforce it in and outside Europe. A dynamic and liberal trade policy is crucial for Europe's economic recovery and for strengthening its role as a key world player, and it clearly contributes to the sustainable development of sourcing countries. We truly believe that Europe stands to gain from free and sustainable trade”*.

Ralph Kamphöner, EuroCommerce Director of Policy, said: *“Millions of jobs in Europe depend on trade and foreign investment, and in future, our ability to compete with increasingly important emerging economies can only be assured by embracing free trade. We need a strong WTO, we need TiSA and TTIP and a number of other agreements. These offer a real opportunity to give the European economy a kickstart, creating jobs and helping SMEs expand into markets they cannot address at present. Rules of origin and antidumping have not held pace with global value chains and need to be overhauled urgently”*.

~ENDS~

Event material and resources will be available shortly on the [conference website](#).

For further information, please contact:

Kayleigh Lewis

Digital Communications, EuroCommerce
Tel: +32 2 894 64 83
lewis@eurocommerce.eu

Stephanie Luong

Head of Communications, FTA
Tel.: +32 2 741 64 09
stephanie.luong@fta-intl.org

Neil McMillan

Director Advocacy and Political Affairs
Tel.: +32 2 737 05 99
mcmillan@eurocommerce.eu

Pierre Gröning

Trade Policy Advisor
Tel.: + 32 2 741 64 03
pierre.groening@fta-intl.org

The Foreign Trade Association (FTA) is the leading business association of European and international commerce that promotes the values of free trade. We bring together over 1,500 retailers, importers, brands and national associations to improve the political and legal framework for trade in a sustainable way. www.fta-intl.org

EuroCommerce is the voice for six million retail, wholesale, and other trading companies. Our members include national commerce federations in 31 countries, Europe's 28 leading retail and wholesale companies, and federations representing specific sectors of commerce.
www.eurocommerce.eu

Foreign Trade Association

Avenue de Cortenbergh, 172 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium
Tel. +32 2 762 05 51 - Fax +32 2 762 75 06
e-mail: info@fta-intl.org - Internet: www.fta-intl.org