



PRESS RELEASE

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Independent retail groups set the example for supply chain efficiency, consumer choice and innovation

Brussels – 28 May 2013 – With high ranking European Commission officials in attendance, independent retail groups gave a concrete demonstration of their successful contribution to supply chain efficiency, consumer choice and innovation.

The meeting, held at the EDEKA Zentrale in Hamburg, was a golden opportunity for UGAL members to highlight the many positive aspects of their unique, entrepreneurial business models in front of a truly European audience.

Else Groen, UGAL Director General, summarized, “groups of independent retailers are critical in maintaining a competitive and diverse retail market place. As well as contributing to supply chain efficiency, they guarantee the survival of independent, SME retail entrepreneurs in the current economic climate. The consumer is the ultimate beneficiary.”

Given current supply chain deliberations in Brussels, discussions addressed the proposed voluntary system addressing B2B unfair trading practices that is being implemented across the EU. Commenting on the voluntary initiative, Mr Paul Csiszar, a European Commission Director in DG Competition encouraged UGAL members to sign up to it, “if you are aiming for progress, please keep up the good work. The Commission supports this voluntary initiative, from which everybody including the farmers will benefit.”

Ms. Maria Reh binder, Head of Unit at DG Internal Market and Services focused debate on the European Retail Action Plan. She emphasized, “a priority of the European Retail Action Plan is to drive innovation in the retail sector. In this respect the specific features of retail innovation must be carefully considered.” She also underlined the need to promote balanced and sustainable supply chains. “Participation in the voluntary system is essential to achieving this goal.”

Commenting more generally on the UGAL General Assembly, Else Groen, UGAL Director General, welcomed the election of the new President, Ralph Gerking, Managing Director of the Edeka Verband. “The President will play an important role in the life of our association over the next three years. He will be closely involved in further developing UGAL’s strategy to actively promote and protect the interests of groups of independent retailers in the European legislative process. We would like to thank the retiring President, Dr. Peter Hampl, for his dedication over the past years.”

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About UGAL

Established in 1963, UGAL – the Union of Groups of Independent Retailers of Europe – is the European association that acts as an umbrella organisation for the main groups of independent retailers in the food and non-food sectors.

UGAL members group together 300,000 independent retailers with a combined retail/wholesale turnover of approx. 900 billion euros. UGAL members have more than 540,000 sales outlets directly contributing more than 5 million jobs to the EU economy.