



## **Independent Retail Europe launches its Manifesto for 2024 EU Elections: "Together for a Stronger Independent Retail Sector in the EU"**

**Independent Retail Europe – the European trade association that represents groups of independent retailers and local retailers - released today its manifesto for the EU elections in which it calls on candidates to the EU elections, European political groups and the European Commission to adopt a pro-independent retail agenda in the next EU mandate. The manifesto outlines the sector's key priorities, with a strong focus on the competitiveness of independent and SME retail, the preservation of the endangered Single Market, and help for retailers with the digital and green transitions.**

Under the title *"Together for a Stronger Independent Retail Sector in the EU"*, the manifesto highlights four crucial priorities for the next EU mandate:

➤ **Boost the competitiveness of independent retail**

Independent retailers urge policymakers to acknowledge the unique cooperative model of groups of independent retailers, advocating for tailored regulations that ensure a level playing field. Moreover, the manifesto makes concrete proposals for a more ambitious SME policy and calls on the restoration of contractual freedom endangered by the Commission proposal on Late Payments.

➤ **Ensure a smooth twin transition for independent retailers**

Regulatory overload must be prevented. The focus should shift to implementing existing legislation rather than adding new ones. Sustainability policies such as the Green Claims Directive or the Sustainable Food Systems Framework should encourage sustainable investments, while keeping businesses viable. Digital policies should support beneficial online personalisation practices in retail and ensure a level playing field.

➤ **Strengthen the EU Single Market**

The European Commission should more staunchly defend the Single Market's integrity. A more robust infringement policy is required, while the EU should abolish unilateral practices from large global suppliers (e.g. Territorial Supply Constraints) that artificially fragment the single market. The Unfair Trading Practices Directive should tackle unfair practices from large global suppliers and preserve competitiveness within the Single Market.

➤ **Reinforce Better Regulation through a more thorough consultation process**


Several initiatives from the last EU mandate will lead to many new burdens and require huge investments from retailers, many of which could have been avoided with a better integration of the retail perspective in the EU institutions' policymaking. The manifesto makes proposals to enhance consultation processes and ensure negative impacts of policies are genuinely factored in.

*"During the past five years, independent retailers had to face unprecedented challenges, while embracing digital transformation, launching reskilling programmes and boosting sustainability efforts. To enable local retailers to cope with these challenges and at the same time invest in the future, we ask for the new 2024-2029 EU mandate to boost competitiveness, defend more strongly the Single Market, and focus first on implementing recent regulatory initiatives",* emphasised President Thomas Nonn.

*"Independent retailers across Europe play a key role for local communities and society. Their importance and challenges, such as low margins and supply chain complexities, should be better recognised by EU institutions. Ahead of the EU elections, we invite EU policy makers and stakeholders to embrace our manifesto's messages",* added Director General Else Groen.

[Find our Manifesto for the EU 2024 Elections](#)

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**About Independent Retail Europe:**

Independent Retail Europe is the European association that acts as an umbrella organisation for groups of independent retailers in the food and non-food sectors. Our members are groups of independent retailers, associations representing them as well as wider service organizations built to support independent retailers. Independent Retail Europe represents 23 groups and their over 462.000 independent retailers, who manage more than 737.000 sales outlets, with a combined retail turnover of 2 trillion euros and generating a combined wholesale turnover of 604 billion euros. This represents a total employment of more than 6.390.000 persons.

