



***PRESS RELEASE: Launch of The Supply Chain Initiative:
Together for good trading practices***

EMBARGOED until 16 September @14:00 hrs CET

(Brussels, 16 September 2013) Today during a special event held in Brussels, seven EU associations^[1] launched 'The Supply Chain Initiative' with the aim of ensuring fairness in commercial relations along the food supply chain.

In November 2011, members of The Supply Chain Initiative agreed on a set of Principles of Good Practice, including a list of examples of fair and unfair practices in vertical trading relationships. These were warmly welcomed by the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain of the European Commission and subsequently, a voluntary Framework for their implementation and enforcement was adopted in January 2013. Since then, all companies involved in the food supply chain have been encouraged to formally sign up and implement the Initiative. The hope is that EU policy-makers will give the Initiative a chance to deliver and meanwhile, for those not yet on board, the door remains firmly open for other stakeholders to join.

82 companies from across the entire EU have expressed their intention to register. Half of these are local companies. Taking into account the subsidiaries of international groups, 457 operating companies are signed up. To access the full list and for detailed information about the Initiative, please visit: www.supplychaininitiative.eu.

During the high-level event, Philip Clarke, President of the European Retail Round Table (ERRT) and CEO of Tesco PLC, said: *"As an industry, we know how important it is to nurture strong, collaborative supply chains, and the self-regulatory initiative we are launching today reflects our commitment to working together in a positive and fair way. We started on this journey back in 2011, and what we have today is a framework which will protect all parties along the chain, so that we can focus on our important shared goal – delivering for the consumer."*

Mella Frewen, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope representing Europe's food manufacturing industry, commented: *"Europe's food and drink manufacturers welcome the launch of The Supply Chain Initiative."*

^[1] The associations involved in this Initiative are: the food and drink manufacturing industry (FoodDrinkEurope), the branded goods manufacturers (AIM), the retail sector (the European Retail Round Table (ERRT), EuroCommerce, EuroCoop and The Union of Groups of Independent Retailers of Europe (UGAL)), and agricultural traders (CELCAA).

This important joint effort demonstrates the commitment of the food manufacturing industry, together with our food chain partners, to fairer commercial practices along the food supply chain, leading to greater accountability and transparency for all. The launch of the Initiative is timely and represents a key deliverable following the collaboration of all the stakeholders involved over the past 24 months. As with any such Initiative, the proof of its effectiveness is in the implementation; we look forward to the application of the voluntary Framework in the months to come and we strongly encourage others who have not yet signed up, to do so, without delay.”

Roger Scarlett-Smith, President of European brand manufacturers association AIM, said: *“Brand manufacturers want to conduct their business with suppliers and customers on the basis of fairness. By adhering to the Supply Chain initiative’s simple principles of good business practice, manufacturers, suppliers and retailers should be able to devote their time to better meeting the needs of shoppers, as opposed to managing resolutions to business disputes. This is why our European trade association AIM and so many of us have been strong supporters of this initiative from Day 1.”*

Christian Verschueren, Director-General of EuroCommerce, added, on behalf of the whole retail and wholesale sector: *“This initiative should bring a culture change across Europe, with this pan-European reference framework for fair business-to-business relations as a guide. It is based on a pragmatic approach and on continuous dialogue. After two years of hard work, a critical mass of business leaders in retail and manufacturers are committing to the initiative. We believe we have delivered. We now call on the EU policy-makers to unambiguously endorse this initiative and give it a chance to show results, before considering any other measures. We also invite the European farmers’ organisation to come on board and benefit from this initiative.”*

-ENDS-

NOTE TO EDITOR: Additional documentation (x4) in ANNEX: (i) Principles of good practice, (ii) Framework for implementation, (iii) Background information, and (iv) Questions & Answers document.

Contact: Jessica Imbert, Project Manager, +32 2 285 00 78, jimbert@eurocoop.coop

