

Urgent call for level playing field and effective enforcement of EU rules towards all e-commerce players active in the EU

Today, Ecommerce Europe and many of its national association members issued an [Open Letter](#) to decision-makers, enforcement authorities and stakeholders in general, both at EU and national level, stressing the urgent need to ensure a level playing field and effective enforcement of EU law towards all e-commerce players active in the EU Single Market.

“In the past years and even more recently, new e-commerce players from outside the EU have entered the Union and are putting a lot of pressure on the Single Market and on companies that are already established in the EU. We have always been, and we will continue to be, strongly in favour of an open and competitive market, as e-commerce is a global phenomenon. However, decision-makers and competent authorities must ensure that this competition is fair”, declared Luca Cassetti, Secretary General of Ecommerce Europe.

Companies that are already based in the EU are subject to many regulations and compliance costs tend to be high as rules are generally complex and often not fully harmonised at EU level. Therefore, it has become challenging for EU-based players to compete on an equal level with these new players from outside the EU who are targeting EU consumers. Most importantly, the commercial practices used by these players raise questions about their compliance with Union legislation, especially in the areas of consumer protection, product safety, counterfeiting, data protection, privacy, environmental and taxation legislation. By not complying with these rules, besides the unfair competition angle, products that are potentially dangerous can reach EU consumers.

If companies already based in the EU violated these rules, there would be consequences, with authorities potentially taking enforcement actions on them. As also highlighted in our [Manifesto for EU Elections](#), the EU has already rules in place that should guarantee a more equal treatment. The problem lies in the poor enforcement of these EU rules towards non-EU based players. National authorities are often under-resourced, under-staffed and lack coordination. This gives those non-EU based players that do not play by the rules an unfair competitive advantage.

Considering the very fast growth of some of these players, the co-signatories of the letter urge decision-makers at EU and national level to act as swiftly as possible to:

- Ensure all necessary means to scrutinise the activities of non-EU based actors as thoroughly as for companies already established and operating in the EU.
- If issues were to be identified, competent authorities should sanction non-compliant players with the same determination that is applied to EU-based players in case of infringements.

- Promote and facilitate deeper cooperation and coordination among EU Members States and their authorities.

We believe EU legislation provides all the necessary tools to ensure a high-level of consumer protection in Europe, and no further obligations should be introduced on traders before current rules are effectively and efficiently enforced across the EU and towards non-EU based players active in the Union. However, if new legislation is considered, its impact on the level playing field and the prerequisites of successful enforcement should be thoroughly assessed before putting forward any new legislative proposals.

Please read the Open Letter for more detailed information.

[DOWNLOAD OPEN LETTER](#)

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