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## Consumer Co-operatives: Key Enablers of Ethically Sound Supply Chains

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On 23 January, Euro Coop hosted in Brussels the Roundtable '*Ethically Sound Supply Chains: A Consumer Co-operative Perspective*' in partnership with the **Vice-President of the European Parliament Heidi Hautala**. Consumer co-operatives were pinpointed as key enablers of ethically sound supply chains because of their unique values-based business model.

Euro Coop Vice-President **Albino Russo** opened the event by stating: "*Consumer co-operatives are enterprises which operate on a well-established set of **values** and **principles** including sustainability and care for the community. This is why ethical supply chains are core to our business.*" Consumer co-operatives in the room highlighted how the solution passes through a series of combined actions involving first of all the courage to deal with uncomfortable truths. Best practices shared included co-op's quest for radical transparency in their supply chain, scaling-up of technology and applying broad co-operation and building committed partnerships with suppliers in bringing about the change.

In her intervention, **Vice-President Hautala** highlighted the political momentum shaping up at EU Institutional level to tackle this thorny issue and acknowledged consumer co-operatives' key role in bringing it to the next level: "*The co-op movement is in the **forefront** because its point of departure on social and societal issues is much higher, keeping in mind that the environment is a natural extension of this responsibility*". She added that "*consumer co-operatives have developed best practices, with which they **engage consumers** on the importance of the issue and send a clear **message to policy-makers** of the need of a level-playing field, because responsible operators should not be outperformed by the irresponsible ones*".

The Roundtable was the occasion for all contributors to ask for **mandatory legislation on due diligence**, with a **shared pledge** to intensify pressure at enforcement level - the weakest correlated point. Public procurement was also in the spotlight, because of its strong potential to change the market for good. Finally, Euro Coop reinvigorated its commitment to partner with all dedicated stakeholders in facilitating a paradigm shift towards a fairer, more sustainable and just economy and society; thus calling for a broader discussion on political level to make this become a concrete reality.

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### **Note to the editors:**

*Euro Coop brings together the national consumer co-operative movements in 19 countries, which represent 7.000 local organisations, employ 700.000 citizens, operate 76.000 points of sale and are owned by and serve 34 million consumer-members daily.*

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