

Minutes: 39th Meeting of the Retail Forum

17 September 2025, 10am-12am

(hybrid meeting held in Room 110, Kildare St and online)
Meeting held under Chatham House Rules

Chair: Alan Dillon TD, **Minister of State for Employment, Small Business and Retail**

Attendance at Appendix 1.

Item 1: Welcome and Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed attendees and updated members on a number of matters.

Item 2: Retail Crime

The Chair introduced Inspector Damien Boland from An Garda Síochána (AGS) who updated members on Operation Táirge and measures to tackle retail crime. The Chair urged members to ensure that all incidents of retail crime are reported. He informed members that the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (DJHAM) is to host a targeted stakeholder engagement event on the new Retail Crime Strategy, on the 7 October which will provide Retail Forum members with an opportunity to highlight ideas for inclusion in a Retail Crime Strategy including issues like engagement with AGS and legislative provisions.

Comments arising

- Members noted increased Garda presence in some areas, but anti-social behaviour continues.
- A member added that it was important to speed up specific legislation for retail crime.
- A member described their great relationship with Gardai at local level and thanked the AGS members present.
- An update on the implementation of the recommendations in the Dublin City Taskforce Report was requested for the next Retail Forum meeting.

Action:

- An update on the implementation of the Dublin City Taskforce recommendations for the next Retail Forum.

Item 3: Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity

The Chair invited Dermot Coates, and Rory Mulholland of the Economic and Tax Policy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment (DETE) to update members on the publication of the Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity.

The Action Plan contains 85 actions for enhancing competitiveness and productivity performance. Mr Coates referred to areas affecting SMEs that are being looked at including legal regulation and regulatory simplification.

Comments arising

- A representative body stated that the execution of the recommendations in the report will be important and that reform of the litigation system is necessary.
- Better consultation was sought, noting that a survey was used when introducing the environmental levy on single-use disposable cups. Getting a voice at the right table at the right time was crucial.
- A retailer commented that some of the recommendations in the Action Plan may not be relevant to bricks and mortar shops such as proposals to create and scale SMEs. Many of the Government supports are not available to SME retailers. It was suggested that the SME designation should be refined to differentiate between micro/small versus medium enterprises for the purposes of eligibility for Government supports.
- DETE referred to the R&D tax credit, which is only available to pharma/tech companies as the definition of R&D concerns creating 'new to world' innovation. Discussion is happening on this and how 'new to firm' technologies/innovation could fall under tax credit eligibility. In parallel to the R&D tax credit, proposals to allow firms to obtain innovation credits are being considered by Revenue.
- A retail representative body sought clarification regarding the definition of an 'energy-intensive' industry
- A member said that there needs to be a culture shift away from regulation and that a more pro-business approach should be pursued.
- A retailer referred to LEEF (Labour Employer Economic Forum) where minimum wages are discussed. Wages are retail owners' single biggest expense. The matter of wages isn't on the Cost of Business Advisory Forum (COBAF) agenda.
- A representative body referred to a survey conducted which showed that 32% of those surveyed cited regulatory costs as a real problem. 44% reporting that costs have gone up.

Action:

- Clarification to be sought regarding the definition of 'energy intensive' industry.

Item 4: EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

The Chair welcomed Patrick Nulty and Ger Fox from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and invited them to update members on the EUDR.

EUDR will apply to large / medium enterprises from 31 December 2025 and to small / micro enterprises from 30 June 2026 (with the exception of wood products presently subject to the EU Timber Regulation 995/10). For those operators, the regulation will

apply straight away from 31 December. The regulation aims to ensure that products consumed within the EU do not contribute to global deforestation and forest degradation and replaces the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). The regulation applies to cattle, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, soya, and wood.

Comments arising

- Members expressed concern at the requirements being placed on retailers.
 - A member who will be considered an operator for the purposes of the Regulation expressed concern regarding the requirements. They mentioned that the Regulation will not apply to B to C transactions so large online platforms selling directly to consumers will not face the same burdensome requirements. They asked for clear guidance on what Customs requires; and also sought some clarification on market surveillance/ spot checks.
 - A retailer asked for some guidance on whether some ingredients of products fall under the scope of the Regulation.
 - DAFM stated that their Minister has put on record that a significant number of member states have asked the Commission to consider simplification.
 - The Chair asked that DAFM officials bring comments from today's meeting to their Minister. He also said that he would engage with Minister Heydon.

Action:

- The Chair asked that DAFM officials bring comments from the meeting to their Minister. He also said that he would engage with Minister Heydon.

Item 5: AOB

A member asked for the environmental levy on single-use disposable cups to be discussed at the next meeting.

Action:

To consider tabling the environmental levy on single-use disposable cups as a discussion item at the next Retail Forum meeting.

Attendees

Retail Forum Members	Name
ALDI Ireland	Louise Cassidy
Basecamp Outdoor Store	Jack Layden
Bookselling Ireland	Cian Byrne
Brown Thomas Arnotts	Mark Limby
Chambers Ireland	Ronan Ward
Convenience Stores & Newsagents Association (CSNA)	Vincent Jennings
Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment (DETE)	Brian Walsh
Department of Finance	Éamonn Sweeney
Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration	Gerry O'Brien
Department of the Taoiseach	Fiona Curran
Enterprise Ireland	Katie Kent
Hardware Association Ireland	Jim Copeland
ICTU	Gerry Light
.IE	David Curtin
Irish Petrol Retailers Association (IPRA)	David Blevings
Irish Pharmacy Union	Jim Curran
ISME	Neil McDonnell
Musgrave Group	Edel Clancy
Primark	Maria Doyle
Retail Excellence	Jean McCabe
Retail Ireland	Arnold Dillon
RGDATA	Tara Buckley
SFA	Jonathan McDade
Sligo BID	Finbarr Filan
TU Dublin	Damian O'Reilly

Additional attendees

Organisation	Name
DETE – Secretary	Marian Cassidy
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine – Presenter	Patrick Nulty
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine – Presenter	Ger Fox

Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment - Presenter	Dermot Coates
Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment - Presenter	Rory Mulholland
An Garda Síochána - Garda National Community Engagement Bureau - Presenter	Damian Boland
An Garda Síochána - Garda National Community Engagement Bureau - Presenter	Susan Lawlor
DETE – Special Adviser	Jenny McCormack

Apologies

Organisation	Name
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Stewart Logan
Dublin Town (BID)	Richard Guiney
Network of Local Enterprise Offices	Padraic McElwee
Tesco Ireland	Rosemary Garth
Waterford City and Co. Council (Nominee for the Local Government Management Agency)	Michael Quinn