

PRESS RELEASE

Supply Chain Initiative appoints Independent Chair

8 November 2017, Brussels - The Governance Group of the Supply Chain Initiative (SCI) is proud to announce the appointment of Michael Hutchings as its Independent Chair. This is a decisive step in strengthening the governance and impartiality of the Initiative, following up on a commitment made at the High-Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain last year. Mr Hutchings will bring enhanced impartiality and a keen eye to the work of the Initiative. He will help strengthen the dispute resolution mechanism, to make it work even better for all players in the supply chain.

Mr Hutchings has extensive experience of working with companies and trade associations in the grocery sector, and was closely involved in the UK competition inquiry that led to the adoption of the Groceries Supply Code of Practice and the appointment of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. He is an English lawyer specialised in competition and EU law. He was a partner with Lovell White Durrant (now Hogan Lovells) for 15 years, and managed their Brussels office in the mid-1980s. He has been working as an independent lawyer since 1996.

"I am delighted to join the Supply Chain Initiative as Independent Chair. This initiative has grown considerably in the course of its four years existence. Its Principles of Good Practice are increasingly gaining traction across the food supply chain, creating a strong basis for encouraging good practice and supporting operators to find solutions to problems when they arise. I am looking forward to contributing to this process, handling confidential complaints, and working with members of the SCI to issue guidance, recommendations of general interest and promote good practice." Mr Hutchings said today.

The appointment of the Independent Chair comes together with an important revision of the SCI rules, and both represent a significant step forward in improving a platform, which advocates for a fairer supply chain and resolves disputes where they arise. Since its launch in 2013, the SCI has attracted over 1,160 national operating companies, nearly 70% of which are SMEs, to sign up to the Principles of Good Practice and SCI commitments

The Governance Group is also pleased to announce that Fabienne Eckert has joined the SCI as Project Manager, running its day-to-day activities. Ms Eckert is an independent consultant in the field of public affairs and communications. She brings to the SCI proven experience in stakeholder relations, and in association and project management.

For more information:

- SCI manager : Fabienne Eckert, info@supplychaininitiative.eu
- AIM: Alain Galaski, alain.galaski@aim.be
- Celcaa: Pascale Rouhier, p.rouhier@celcaa.eu
- Euro Coop: Todor Ivanov, tivanov@eurocoop.coop
- EuroCommerce: Kinga Timaru-Kast, timaru@eurocommerce.eu
- European Retail Round Table: Susanne Czech, s.czech@errt.org
- FoodDrinkEurope: Mella Frewen, m.frewen@fooddrinkeurope.eu
- Independent Retail Europe: Else Groen, else.groen@independentretaileurope.eu

Note to the Editors:

The Supply Chain Initiative was launched in September 2013 by a group of 7 EU-level associations representing the food and drink industry (FoodDrinkEurope), the branded goods manufacturers (AIM-European Brands Association), the retail sector (EuroCommerce, Euro Coop, the European Retail Round Table-ERRT, and Independent Retail Europe), and agricultural traders (CELCAA).

The SCI aims to implement and enforce a set of good practice principles agreed by 11 EU-level organisations, including Copa-Cogeca. Companies subscribe on a voluntary basis to the principle of good practice and a set of commitments to ensure fair treatment of all partners in the food supply chain. The SCI is designed to ensure that registered companies respect their commitments towards other market operators and benefit from a set of dispute resolutions options.