

Sector report on the retail sector presented to State Secretary Van Gennip

Together with the MKB-Nederland Nationale Winkelraad, the retail association representing the interests of small and medium-sized retailers, the RND has worked hard on the retail sector report [Domeinrapport Detailhandel]. The report features an overview of the retail sector's main regulatory frustrations. On 13 September 2006, the sector report was presented to the State Secretary for Economic Affairs.

This sector report is the fifth set of recommendations presented to the cabinet by the Stevens Commission. Professor Stevens believes that rules and regulations are important for well-organised trade, but that they can hinder business if too rigid.

Professor Stevens' sector report features the following recommendations:

1. Local authorities should scrutinize their licensing systems, taking the government's approach to state licenses as their model;
2. In the short-term, local authorities should revise their system of local levies by greatly simplifying them and lowering fees. For instance, the charge levied on shop front names should be dropped;
3. The norms for vehicles delivering stocks to shops in city centres must be set nationally; similarly, the times at which shops in city centres are stocked should be harmonised nationally;
4. There should be more parking spaces available to shoppers and parking fees should be lowered;
5. Further reduce contributions to employees' insurance and pension funds for part-time jobs;
6. As far as part-time jobs are concerned, abolish the registration duty and data retention for working hours. The employer's declaration on the number of days and hours pupils with part-time jobs attend school should be accepted;
7. Limit inspections of the retail sector. Inspections should concentrate on businesses at risk;
8. Compile a new behavioural code for taxation bodies for intellectual ownership rights. Ensure that different fees are covered by a single bill for each business;
9. Establish maximum terms during which consumers can have durable products checked and repaired;
10. Modernise the Pricing Law with respect to the mandatory price indication for certain products;
11. Advocate a revision of the information featured on labels across Europe. Allow for labelling regulations to be limited to the most essential product information and for more detailed information to be provided on a web site;
12. Advocate for SMEs in Europe to be exempt from Intrastat's transport statistics;
13. Simplify the registration duty for packaging material.

Plan of action

Ahead of the elections, the state secretary will publish a plan of action to reduce the regulatory pressure experienced by the retail sector. The RND will be closely involved in this.

We are aiming for a three-year plan of action, with a considerable joint budget. Just like the approach to retail crime, this requires close collaboration between the retail sector – Platform Detailhandel Nederland – and the Ministry for Economic Affairs, with the two parties sharing costs.