

Dear Mayor,

I am writing to you as President of the European Association for Digital Transition (EADT) digitalforeurope.eu, a citizens' initiative created to help the European Union progress toward an essential digital transformation focused on people and aligned with its founding values: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity and justice.

I am writing to you and many other mayors across Europe because of a very specific concern, which we certainly share, related to the challenges we as Europeans are facing. I am talking about the serious problems of local business. Businesses, small and also large, bring the streets to life and provide employment to citizens. They reflect our way of life and, in the most significant cases, are part of our emotional heritage. Their owners pay taxes, the taxes we need to keep the streets clean, have municipal police to serve the citizens, offer sustainable and quality public transportation, etc.

As you know, local businesses depend to a large extent on what happens these final weeks of the year, where Christmas parties and what is known as 'Black Friday' are concentrated. But this year is different. The pandemic has devoured and done great damage to neighbourhood and area business. For many nearby shops, it is not closing the year a bit better or worse that is at stake. It is about their survival. If these kinds of businesses are marginalised, something we are heading toward, cities lose and citizens lose. Less employment, less tax revenue, less tourist appeal, less diversity, less life on the streets. **Hundreds of thousands of families in Europe live from local business and depend on where citizens decide to buy over the coming months.**

Urban businesses are working diligently at adapting, and many can already be considered a success for their e-commerce billing. But let's not be fooled: they compete on an uneven playing field dominated by e-commerce giants. Platforms which, because of their dominance in the electronic market, have been under investigation for years by the European Commission. Platforms originating in the United States and Asia that get bargains on paying taxes and often lower the working conditions of their employees. This is not the business model that European citizens and consumers want.

The competitive advantage of e-commerce giants is so great and voracious that it cannot be considered fair. It is not about renouncing e-commerce, but rather is about recognizing that these all-powerful platforms operate on unfair terms for other businesses because they have created the rules with their financial power.

That is why, because we believe this model is profoundly unfair, we have initiated this European action to support local business and employment in our cities. Therefore, **I cordially encourage you to raise awareness and ask your neighbours to support businesses in your city by not buying from the e-commerce giants. Other cities such as Paris, Grenoble, Poitiers and Barcelona, among many others, have already taken the step by asking their neighbours not to shop on Amazon during this 'Black Friday' and the upcoming Christmas holidays. The situation is critical and the time is now.**



We need a clear commitment in defence of all local business and against predatory companies that contribute almost nothing in return. That is why this same letter, in several languages, is on the table of dozens of mayors across the EU to send a concerted, strong and homogeneous message from all of us: a more balanced model of transformation is needed for e-commerce. Businesses and neighbourhoods must clearly feel our support during these difficult times.

I am at your disposal to give you more details about this initiative. Attached please find the campaign logo should you feel it appropriate to disseminate it among the businesses in your locality.

I thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Ricardo Rodríguez Contreras

President of the European Association for Digital Transition

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