The European Capitals of Small Retail kick off!

The European Capitals of Small Retail project has its roots in a citizens’ petition to the European Parliament, proposing to create an award for cities that excel in small retail revitalisation and city centre attractiveness. The European Parliament has asked the Commission to implement this action with a total budget of €3 million for two years.

The European Capitals of Small Retail will contribute further to the development of the Commission’s #RevitaliseRetail initiative which fosters an exchange of best practices on the green and digital transition of retail SMEs. SMEs are crucial for the retail ecosystem as they represent 99% of all companies, two-thirds of the ecosystem’s employment and over 60% of its value added. They are also a key element of the social fabric in urban and rural local communities, they offer proximity to consumers and contribute to vibrant city and town centres. Their competitiveness and resilience are thus pivotal for a successful transition of the EU economy, both from an economic and a social perspective.

The objectives of the project are to showcase success stories of cities which have supported vibrant city centres and a thriving small retail sector, identify stories of small retailers who have achieved a successful digital and green transition, provide a forum for the exchange of best practices to provide inspiration to competent authorities, retailers, and other stakeholders and promote the key economic and social role of small retail in urban and rural communities.

The winning cities will benefit from a package of services: awareness-raising activities, workshops, events and dedicated city exchange programme to share best practices with other winning cities.

The Commission will confer the organisation of the competition to an external contractor. The first edition of the competition will be launched in 2025 with a view of awarding the first three cities (a large, a medium-sized and a small one) as European Capitals of Small Retail in 2026. The second edition will start in 2026 to award cities for 2027.

The call for tenders to identify the external contractor is now open and the deadline for applications is set on **18 of November 2024, 10:00 (CET)**. More information and links to application portals can be found on the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency’s (EISMEA) website: [Creation of the European Capitals of Small Retail (EISMEA/2024/OP/0017) - European Commission (europa.eu)](https://eismea.ec.europa.eu/funding-opportunities/calls-tenders/creation-european-capitals-small-retail-eismea2024op0017_en).

