I replaced Kerstin in a panel “Making the Single Market More Resilient”. In my intro statement, I highlighted the benefits of the Single Market and advertised our January package on SM@30. The questions I got focused on the future of SM, elimination of barriers, resilience; but also whether the EU needs a common unemployment insurance system (the idea was in the COM WP in 2020) or an agency for public procurement.

My co-panelist from Eurocommerce made i.a. the following points:
- SM Emergency Instrument is needed “in crises” (i.e. should not go further)
- EU has the tendency to regulate every issue which emerges. Go back to the initial idea of a free trade area.
- Retailers are in trouble when MS governments regulate retail prices to protect consumers from high inflation. Retailers have to sell at a loss. Hungary. Poland applies a zero-rate VAT on food, which leads to cross-border shopping from Czechia. CZ retailers suffer. SM is not working.

My other co-panelist (CZ government, EU coordination):
- Presidency tries to protect SM, but Member States have no willingness to do anything more on SM.
- Globalisation is backtracking (their Presidency umbrellas are stuck in a container in China!).
- COVID led to border closures. SM not working.
- We need faster problem-solving mechanisms, not spending years at Court of Justice
- Policies must adjust to new transport and commerce modes, new ways of living, digital services.

I received plenty of Eurocommerce documents, which I will pass on to the most relevant colleagues. Many thanks to everyone who provided background material before the event!

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