

7th annual meeting of the EURO Working Group on Retail Operations
WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria

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From September 18th to 20th, 2024, the **7th Workshop on Retail Operations** took place at **WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business)** in Vienna, Austria. The event, expertly organized by **Gerald Reiner** and **Martin Waitz**, brought together 60 participants from Europe, the US, and Asia, all focused on the latest scientific advancements and innovations in retail operations. The community of the **EURO Working Group on Retail Operations**, led with great commitment by **Alexander Hübner** and **Pedro Amorim**, ensured, as always, a friendly atmosphere for everyone that enabled many fruitful discussions and interactions. Over the period of two days, 14 regular presentations and 13 poster presentations covered a wide range of different topics, including omni-channel optimization, returns management, and emerging retail technologies. It was an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and gain fresh perspectives on the evolving landscape of retail operations.



Keynote talk by Guillaume Roels

The workshop kicked off on Wednesday evening with a dinner at a traditional Viennese 'Heurigen' (= local wine tavern), introducing the participants to the local cuisine and hospitality. Thursday started with a special highlight when **Guillaume Roels** delivered a wonderful keynote talk. Using a framework that connects customers, employees, and the company, Guillaume presented his contributions and highlighted the need for more research on the link between customers and employees. His presentation, rich with examples, left a lasting impression—especially his comparison to classic composers, who mastered the art of creating an impactful experience by starting and ending their compositions powerfully.

In the evening, after an inspiring day full of presentations and discussions, a guided walking tour provided an insight into Vienna's rich history with its beautiful buildings and gardens. To conclude the day, the group had their conference dinner in one of Vienna's old wine cellars.

On Friday, the workshop ended with another highlight: the first handing out of several awards of the EURO Working Group on Retail Operations. Most notably, **Karel van Donselaar** received the first **European Lifetime Award in Retail Operations**. The award and laudation were presented by Jan Fransoo on behalf of the jury that further consisted of Alexander Hübner and Pedro Amorim. Karel's contributions have been in the domain of grocery retail operations since 1998 where he builds on his extensive prior research experience in inventory control and forecasting. In a recent 2023 paper, all relevant lost sales



European Lifetime Award in Retail Operations winner Karel van Donselaar

inventory policies over time were implemented, finding that Karel's policy, 25 years later, still outperforms all other policies.

The research article of Karel and his co-authors that created the most significant academic impact is his 2010 paper in *Management Science*. The article demonstrates the added value that store managers can have over and above an automated store ordering system. Just in 2023, five of the published papers in *Management Science* cite this work—13 years after its original publication date!

Karel also has had a great impact on his students throughout his career, where he introduced more than 1,250 graduate students to the exciting world of retail operations and supervised more than 140 master theses. In this way, many of the research insights and tooling that he and his research collaborators developed have found their way to industry applications, improving the competitiveness of retailers, enhancing customer experience, and reducing the environmental impact.

The 7th annual meeting of the EURO Working Group on Retail Operations also marked the first awarding of the **Retail Operations Doctoral Dissertation Award**. This award has been given to both **Rafael Escamilla** and **Christoph Baldauf** for their theses on grocery retail operations in emerging markets and the relevance of



Doctoral Dissertation Award winners Rafael Escamilla and Christoph Baldauf with Alexander Hübner and jury members Robert Rooderkerk and Laura Wagner

logistics in online and omnichannel retail, respectively. The award has been handed out on behalf of the jury that consisted of Sandra Transchel, Laura Wagner, and Robert Rooderkerk.

Finally, all conference participants were asked to cast their vote for their favorite poster and plenary talk presentations. The **Best Poster Presentation Award** was received by **S. Iman Moosavi** for the work he presented on “Behavioral Considerations of Automation.” The **Best Plenary Presentation Award** was given to **Christoph Baldauf** and the work he presented on “The Impact of Buy Now, Pay Later on Customer Sales and Returns in Online Retail.”

Hosting this year's workshop at WU Vienna was a great honor for us and we want to thank everyone who contributed to making it such a great success. We are looking forward to the 8th annual meeting of the EURO Working Group on Retail Operations hosted by Victor Martínez de Albéniz and team in Spain in 2025.