



# CONTACT

International



04

66th International SPAR Congress >

06

Expanding SPAR Brand presence >

10

Local Champions SPAR Glashaven >







# Your skincare, with SPAR Daily

Meet SPAR Daily, SPAR's own range of Personal Care products which has been developed with a focus on a fresh and modern design, great formulations, and environmentally friendly choices.



SPAR Daily offers sustainable and attractive scented Hand Soaps and Shower Gel in 500 ml bottles made from 100% RPET, and Facial Wipes that are plastic-free and aim to cleanse, soothe, and hydrate the skin. In 2023, the range will expand with new products replacing the existing Health & Beauty line.

for information contact:

Buying Department SPAR International, Amsterdam, product@spar-international.com tel: +31 (0)20 6 26 67 49



"Through the collective resilience of our people and working together, we ensure that we meet the needs of our local communities by applying best practice and innovation."

Tobias Wasmuht, Managing Director, SPAR International

Our 66<sup>th</sup> Annual International SPAR Congress took place in South Africa, with the central theme focusing on "Collective Resilience, Forward Together". As key stakeholders from across the SPAR global network came together to reconnect, build relationships, and share best practices from across the industry, we also recognised the challenges that we have faced in recent times, and how by working together we were equipped to deal with them.

We are proud to showcase success across the SPAR network in this issue of Contact International. We have entered four new territories in the last 12 months, including the Latin American market with our first store in the city of Luque, Paraguay, as well as further expansion in Africa, where 9 stores now operate in Angola.

An important event in the SPAR International calendar was our inaugural SPAR Data Analytics Conference in the Netherlands, covering a variety of topics including customer behaviour, personalisation instore through data, the importance of data in decision making, using data to inform demand forecasting, and cloud migration opportunities.

There was also cause for celebration on a local level, with SPAR retailers in Denmark, Italy, Austria, and Slovenia being recognised with industry awards for their work in their communities. Meanwhile, we call out colleagues from SPAR UK & SPAR South Africa, who have been giving back to their communities through extensive charity work and volunteering. We also shine a light on the Glashaven store in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, for the SPAR retailers commitment and success in serving their local community.

We round off this edition with a birds-eye view of other developments and innovations from across our SPAR partner organisations, such as in Norway, Ireland, and Zimbabwe.

- 04 [66th International SPAR Congress >](#)
- 06 [Expanding SPAR Brand presence >](#)
- 08 [Supporting local communities across the SPAR network >](#)
- 10 [Local Champions: SPAR Glashaven, SPAR Netherlands >](#)
- 12 [Inaugural SPAR Data Analytics Conference >](#)
- 14 [Industry Recognition for SPAR >](#)
- 15 [Unmanned \(Forecourt\) Store in Switzerland >](#)
- 16 [Focus on Distribution Network >](#)
- 18 [EU Athletics: Indoor Championships 2023 >](#)
- 20 [SPAR Worldwide News >](#)



# better together

Cover Photographs: Selection of images from across the SPAR network. © All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of SPAR International. SPAR International, Rokin 99, 1012 KM Amsterdam, the Netherlands: www.spar-international.com



The annual International SPAR Congress brings together senior executives and leadership teams of global SPAR country organisations. Delegates gather each year to discuss brand development, strategy, and collaborative opportunities, as well as to renew the ties that bind all SPAR members together, regardless of where in the world they are located.

## 66<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SPAR CONGRESS, SOUTH AFRICA

### Collective Resilience, Forward Together

This year's Congress theme "Collective Resilience, Forward Together" sets out a core premise that despite the most challenging of environments the food retail industry may have faced in modern times, SPAR has demonstrated great collective resilience and the firm belief that through working together and sharing strengths and resources, SPAR moves forward together. During his opening speech, the President of SPAR International reflected on a local saying:

"If you want to go fast, go alone, yet if you want to go far, go together".

Therefore, he called on all delegates to embrace the SPAR spirit, and the essence of this Congress. He encouraged them to actively seek areas of cooperation as the international SPAR network strives to move forward together.

In the feature article in this issue, which is dedicated to the ongoing expansion of the SPAR network into new markets, readers can learn more about the brand's growth into new territories. In just twelve months, SPAR has launched in four new countries, a tremendous achievement that demonstrates the confidence of new partners in the strong SPAR Brand and organisation.

During this year's Congress, presentations were heard from 26 SPAR speakers and 5 guest speakers, showcasing the strength and diversity of the international network, incorporating supply chain and retail businesses of varying scales and development stages.

### Better Together

As everyone within the SPAR network knows, SPAR is unique. SPAR forms a global common bond between all delegates participating in this year's Congress, uniting all and providing the means to share resources, knowledge, and experiences.



One aspect of this bond includes an ever-growing range of SPAR Own Brand products, which are sourced locally, regionally, and internationally. Another aspect of this year's Congress included an exhibition area where delegates could explore a broad variety of products in food and non-food categories available under the SPAR Brand or exclusively on offer in SPAR stores.

The rollout of the online shopping platform, SPAR2U in South Africa, was also showcased, with delegates given more information about the international IT solutions facilitated through SPAR International.

As a food retailer, providing customers with fresh products forms a core part of the instore experience, and one section was dedicated to these essential areas. Internationally recognised brands also presented innovative offerings available for SPAR country organisations, complementing SPAR's initiatives with supplier brands.

### Legacy donation to Operation Hunger

As a global yet local food retailer, SPAR strives to add value to the communities it serves. Each year, all the participating delegates of the International SPAR Congress contribute towards a significant donation. The total sum is then passed on to the chosen partner of the host country. This way, the International SPAR Congress leaves behind a legacy aligned with the strategic community enhancement initiatives of that market, building on existing ties for a better future.

The partnership between SPAR South Africa and Operation Hunger, as outlined in a brief presentation, is highly valued by the global SPAR family. Recognising the importance of supporting lasting changes in consumer behaviour to strengthen local communities is something many SPAR organisations could identify with.

Through the significant contribution this year of ZAR900,000, SPAR delegates leave a positive, long-lasting legacy, making a real difference to the communities with which Operation Hunger is working to alleviate poverty through improved nutrition.





Since 1932, SPAR has been growing its presence across the globe, partnering with independent retailers who then access one of the most established and successful voluntary food retail trading organisations in the world.

## EXPANDING SPAR BRAND PRESENCE IN TWO CONTINENTS

### Paraguay

In 2023, the brand's expansion continues with the granting of a license to operate the brand in Paraguay to the well-established Amiria Group. Entry into Latin America began with the opening of the first store in Paraguay on 5 May 2023 in the city of Luque. The festive opening followed several months of close collaboration between SPAR Paraguay and SPAR International to adapt international best practices to market conditions. The locally owned and operated Amiria Group runs stores under the Los Jardines and Food Production Centre Innal brands.

SPAR Paraguay highlighted on the opening day to guests the benefits of being part of the international network of independent retailers. SPAR Paraguay seeks to provide customers with an even better shopping experience, adapting new and international best practices to meet the local community's needs in each location.

Within the first SPAR Supermarket, customers can find a great selection of products, including a strong focus on fresh produce with the fruit and vegetable section visible from the entrance. Further into the store, customers can find a butchery and a bakery. The 737m<sup>2</sup> SPAR Supermarket employs 28 team members who have received training in the principles of SPAR as well as customer service and product knowledge.

The multi-format retailing strategy of SPAR will form a basis on which SPAR Paraguay can build. Combining the expertise of the local team, who understand their customers' needs, along with international design, has produced a store which sets the tone for the future development of SPAR in this market.

### SPAR PARAGUAY

Year joined SPAR: 2023

Location of the first store: Luque

Number of employees: 28

Retail sales area: 737m<sup>2</sup>



### Angola

Further expansion on the African continent came with the granting of a license to the well-established local retail and distribution company, United Investimentos, to operate the SPAR Brand in Angola in 2022. Within one year, nine SPAR Express convenience stores were opened. Much of the country's existing retail trade is informal and there is a lot of competition in the market from brands well-known on the continent and in Europe. Adapting international best practices from the SPAR network to suit local market needs has led to these convenience stores offering an assortment that is tailored to suit customers' needs.

In the arrivals terminal of Luanda International Airport, there is a compact SPAR Express store. The other eight SPAR Express stores operating at the start of this year in various locations in partnership with a local distributor, Pumangol Group, have an average of 100m<sup>2</sup> retail selling area.

SPAR Angola incorporates in its stores an offer of freshly baked bread and pastries from their bakery production, an instore café, and a full range aligned to the convenience market. SPAR Own Brand products make up to 25% of the range available, with SKUs varying from 1,000 – 4,500. Long opening hours, including some on a 24/7 basis, make shoppers' lives easier.

SPAR Angola employs 280 team members to run its stores and distribution operations. Continual adjustments in training and skills are made to deliver the best shopping experience for all customers.

### SPAR ANGOLA

Year joined SPAR: 2022

Number of stores at year-end: 9

Average retail selling area: 100m<sup>2</sup>

Number of employees: 280





At SPAR, people are at the heart of our business and are instrumental in driving our success. Their talent and dedication do not go unrecognised and below we acknowledge our dedicated colleagues and teams who have made significant contributions to their local communities.

## SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE SPAR NETWORK

### SPAR retailers recognised

SPAR Denmark retailer Malene Houni Hansen is a successful local retailer, who has been awarded for her hard work in two different awards. In 2021, she won the prestigious FMI Store Manager Award in the international category (run by Food Marketing Institute), and more recently in 2022 she also won the Danish Retail Award. Malene is a well-known member of the community and a tutor for fellow SPAR retailers in Denmark. Her enthusiasm for grocery retailing is reflected in her team and the excellent service they provide.

In SPAR UK, retailer Leslie Francis, previously called out as an unsung hero in her community, was recently recognised in the New Year Honours list with a British Empire Medal. The New Year Honours List, published by order of King Charles III, marks the incredible public service of individuals from across the United Kingdom. With her husband, Tim, [Leslie](#) runs a location that meets customers' needs and creates employment opportunities.

Peter McBride, another independent SPAR retailer, was also recognised for services to the economy and the community in County Tyrone in Northern Ireland. He was made an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the New Year Honours List 2023.

### SPAR UK retailer team volunteers

Independent SPAR retailers are renowned for their commitment to local communities. SPAR UK's regional organisation A. F. Blakemore recently recognised and called out independent SPAR retailer Mark Bostock and his team for the incredible 1,155 hours they spent volunteering in local communities this year. Beneficiaries from their volunteer work include food banks, schools and organising local litter collections. This team truly represents the 'Nurture our Neighbourhood' value of the local SPAR business.

In addition to volunteering so much time, the team has also raised £21,676 for the chosen charity partner, NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).



SPAR UK retailer Mark Bostock and team

### SPAR UK retailer Mark Bostock and team committed to local communities

-  **1,155 hours volunteering**
-  **£21,676 donated to charity partner NSPCC**
-  **'Nurture our neighbourhood' value**

### Supply chain employees crucial for communities

In the highly competitive retail environment, operational efficiency is critical to support retailers who are meeting the needs of their local communities. SPAR distribution and wholesale colleagues around the world play a pivotal role in securing supply for the independent SPAR retailers that rely on them and often are involved in charity projects supporting local communities.

In South Africa, Supply Chain Manager Thato Letsoalo became a mentor to the principal of the local high school. Through the partnership called 'Partners for Possibility', informative sessions to motivate Grade 12 pupils were developed. These featured a variety of speakers highlighting opportunities for future careers. Furthermore, pupils' needs including stationary for the year were identified and support was provided.

A team of 40 colleagues from the licensed SPAR UK organisation for Scotland, CJ Lang & Son Ltd, raised funds for their national charity partner Marie Curie, the UK's leading end-of-life care charity operating nationwide and on a local level. The 40 volunteers from distribution, logistics, warehouse, head office, and SPAR Scotland stores raised £4,000 for this longstanding charity partner.

SPAR country organisations, retailers, and individual team members are involved in numerous projects supporting local communities around the globe. There is a strong sense of resilience, solidary and collaboration amongst SPAR retailers and team members which lie at the heart of the SPAR network.



Malene Houni Hansen, SPAR Denmark



Mark Bostock's team members, SPAR UK



Thato Letsoalo, SPAR South Africa



Team members SPAR UK partner, CJ Lang & Son Ltd.



Independent SPAR Netherlands retailers Edwin and Diana van Holland cater to a strong younger customer base and changing shopping behaviours, adding local value in Glashaven, Rotterdam.

## LOCAL CHAMPIONS

### SPAR GLASHAVEN, SPAR NETHERLANDS

#### Adding Local Value

The SPAR convenience supermarket is located on the ground floor of a recently opened apartment block for students within a short distance of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. SPAR Glashaven offers a unique shopping experience that is specifically tailored to its customers' needs. We spoke to Edwin and Diana about their experiences as grocery retailers in the post-pandemic era, as well as the local community.

#### Post-Pandemic Challenges

Edwin and Diana have a positive outlook for their store but retailing during the pandemic was not without its challenges. Today, with price increases across the board resulting from energy, cost of living, and inflationary pressures, retailers are facing increased difficulty even post-pandemic, Edwin said.

The viability of retailers resulting from the quadrupling in energy prices within a short period of time is a major

#### SPAR Glashaven, Netherlands

**Established in:** 2010

**Number of team members:** 6

**Store size:** 488m<sup>2</sup>

**Self-checkouts:** 3

concern, particularly for independent retailers, unable to benefit from any aid due to local legislation.

Staff shortages, particularly high across the hospitality and retail sectors, have affected SPAR Glashaven, with the team decreasing from 20 colleagues to 10 (last



November) and now down to just six. The shortage of colleagues experienced by the industry since the pandemic meant that online services also had to pivot, making it harder to offer the delivery services the retailers pride themselves on. Online ordering has decreased as a growing number of customers prefer to shop in person, attracted by the Tosti Club offer and coffee corner available in this store. Diana has a particular focus on the food service offering and is delighted that their investment in this area is attracting office workers and students back into the store.

By working closely together, the team ensures that the SPAR store remains open seven days a week. It is the retail couple's energy and passion for their store that keeps them going, as expressed by Edwin during the interview.

#### Catering to their customers

In a post-COVID-19 world, there has been a strong shift to online shopping as experienced by SPAR Glashaven. The consumer can now order almost everything which is offered in the shop online, either for delivery or collection. Due to the proximity to the university, the younger customer of SPAR Glashaven puts convenience above all else. Products that can be made quickly, but are still relatively healthy, provide an easy option for students on-the-go.

The SPAR Glashaven retailer, Edwin van Holland, has taken the time to get to know his consumers' needs. Going above and beyond to help improve the shopping experience instore and anticipating what young adults would want when shopping is a part of his daily life.

Taking into account that this shopper group is the core of the store's customer base, the retailer experiments with food lines to meet their needs. For example, Edwin offers a selection of different soups at a sample stand to draw in the younger shopper.

#### Community Spirit

SPAR Glashaven has successfully embedded itself in the local community and gives back in many ways. Convenience stores are becoming more than just neighbourhood supermarkets, they are becoming a one-stop-shop to meet all the consumer's needs. With the introduction of online shopping, students and young shoppers can save time during their busy days by reducing the time spent on grocery purchases. The retailer has not forgotten about the store's older customer demographic, although they are not the core customer. Every fortnight on Tuesdays, SPAR Glashaven hosts a coffee hour for the neighbourhood, in cooperation with the Rotterdam Municipality, where elderly shoppers can gather and socialise while enjoying coffee and cake. This is just one way that Edwin and Diana give back to the community.

A pleasant surprise for Edwin van Holland was the willingness of SPAR Glashaven customers to also give back to the store. A regular customer of SPAR Glashaven named Helma, who is 64 years of age, saw how hard the staff was working so she asked if she could do anything to help. She now works as a volunteer and helps keep shelves tidy. The community surrounding SPAR Glashaven has not forgotten to give back to the shop that works tirelessly for them.





“We are on a journey and we are on it together” was the takeaway line following the inaugural SPAR International Data Analytics Conference.

## INAUGURAL SPAR DATA ANALYTICS CONFERENCE

Held in the Netherlands, delegates attending the two-day conference explored the exciting and fast-developing area of digital and data in retail. Attendees were immersed in an action-packed agenda that brought together data specialists, insight managers, business managers and directors, industry-leading suppliers, and academics.

The topics covered across the two-day conference included: customer behaviour instore, enhanced shopper personalisation through the use of data, and how data can inform business decision-making. Other areas in which presentations were given touched on how data can inform demand forecasting and the opportunities of cloud migration.

Tom Rose, Head of International Operations at SPAR International, said:

“Bringing colleagues together, sharing knowledge, insights, and experiences openly enables our colleagues to enhance their data analytics understanding and makes us all stronger.”

“All participants departed the conference with a greater understanding of the journey we are on together, enthused and motivated about the opportunities with data analytics.”



In the true SPAR spirit of united cooperation, SPAR country organisations identified opportunities for collaboration and developing capabilities in the area of data analytics.

### Pushing the Boundaries

A panel session on the data journey included delegates from SPAR Netherlands (NL), SPAR Gran Canaria (GC), and SPAR Austria (AT). Below we share their answers to some key questions asked on their individual data journeys.

### What are the biggest challenges faced so far?

GC – The cleansing of data and understanding it, checking that it is correct. If you do not have clean data, then the harmonisation process becomes a big issue.

AT – For building Advanced Analytics and Machine Learning solutions, it isn't sufficient to just have a lot of data and to bring it into the cloud. You have to collect the data that is used for training the models in a certain way, because the right data source is crucial to build the models based on that.

### What is the next step on the projects that you are doing?

AT – When we talk to our business colleagues about AI, sometimes you get the response ‘I don't understand it... I don't want to work with it...it's not for me.’ What I often ask is ‘Do you have a microwave at home? Do you know how it works? Would you be able to build one from scratch?’ No - but you are able to use it. I think this is the crucial point: To educate and to make the solutions easy and even fun to use for our business colleagues.

NL – Making concrete and actionable insights. We also want to get more speed into the development of our insights and our analytics by communicating and cooperating across the business.

### Where have you seen the biggest business benefits?

GC – One area is waste control as we had all the data and could create a plan with our stores. We have reduced it and at the same time, saved a large amount of money. Another is price control and how that has helped us to maintain our position in the market.

NL – Our most important mission is to make the individually-owned SPAR stores as successful as possible. Our first and primary focus is the profit and loss (P&L) impact. In December and January, we did a large-scale promo, which made a significant difference to each store's P&L.

### Working together with Wageningen University & Research

SPAR International has joined the Wageningen University & Research (WUR) Agri-Food Platform that brings together a community of companies, experts, and new talent to agri-food supply chain and logistic challenges.

WUR has designated data science as a focus theme within its educational offering on life and environmental sciences where the study of food supply chains is a topic of interest.

SPAR is supporting the students who are following the Masters course and have specialised in Sustainable Supply Chain Analytics, as well as providing internship opportunities.





As an international retail brand with over 13,600 stores around the world, SPAR retailers bring communities a high-quality grocery offer tailored to meet local needs. This focus on quality has earned SPAR several accreditations and industry awards.

SPAR Switzerland and AVIA are providing an innovative experience for customers with their new fully unmanned SPAR Express forecourt store at Zurich's Sihlqui bus terminal, which has no onsite personnel and is maintained through FASTaXs technology.

## INDUSTRY RECOGNITION FOR SPAR

### SPAR Italy: Retailer of the Year 2022-2023

SPAR **Italy**, locally known as DESPAR Italia, has recently been recognised as Retailer of the Year 2022–2023, in the Retailer of the Year Award promoted by Q&A Research Italia srl. It marks the third year in a row that the SPAR Brand has achieved this prestigious recognition in Italy. The Retailer of the Year Award started in 2003 in the Netherlands. It covers 27 categories assessing retailers on specific criteria such as customer service, shopping convenience and expertise.

To celebrate this important milestone, DESPAR Italia has launched a comprehensive social media and instore campaign. The campaign highlights topics such as product quality, staff friendliness, and shopping convenience, features for which customers selected SPAR as their supermarket of choice.

### SPAR Austria: EuroShop RetailDesign Award

One of SPAR **Austria**'s stores, the INTERSPAR Hypermarket Schottentor has been honoured with the EuroShop RetailDesign Award 2023 in the food category. The jury was impressed by the store's interplay of shop architecture, colours, materials, lighting and visual merchandising.

[INTERSPAR Hypermarket Schottentor](#), located in the former headquarters of the Viennese Association of Banks, is now identified as one of the stores with the best shop concept worldwide.

The EuroShop RetailDesign Award annually honours the best store concepts worldwide. The criteria assessed are a clear target group appeal, clear product range message, consistent concept, and successful interplay of architecture, materials, lighting, colours, and visual merchandising.

### SPAR Slovenia: Socially Responsible Employer

SPAR **Slovenia** is the first local retailer to achieve certification as a Socially Responsible Employer. The certificate was awarded by the Ekvilib Institute, an independent non-profit organisation, working in the fields of social responsibility, human rights and development cooperation. The certification recognises improvement in socially responsible management towards employees.

During the process of obtaining certification, the company developed a detailed plan for the implementation of measures to elevate their socially responsible conduct concerning employees.

The retailer already holds a full certificate recognising it as a Family Friendly Company. With this Socially Responsible Employer accolade, SPAR Slovenia continues to show its concern for job satisfaction, safety, and the future of its employees.

## UNMANNED (FORECOURT) STORE IN SWITZERLAND

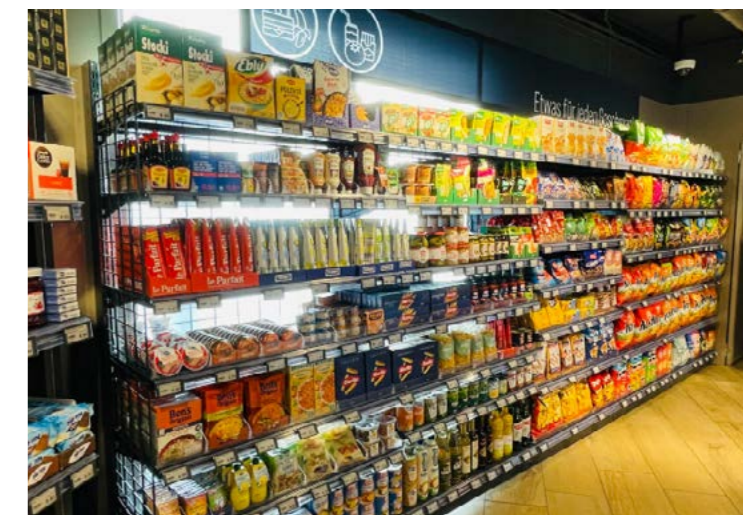
SPAR **Switzerland** and AVIA opened the first 24/7 SPAR Express forecourt store operating without onsite personnel at Zurich's Sihlqui bus terminal last February. In addition to refuelling 24/7, customers can now also stock up on groceries, fresh snacks, and coffee at the same time. The 50m<sup>2</sup> store offers about 1,000 products for everyday shopping including bread and bakery products, fruit and vegetables, dairy products, meat, drinks, basic food items, hygiene articles, and car accessories. Access to SPAR Express is made simple through innovative FASTaXs technology which allows customers to enter the store by scanning a QR code at the entrance with their smartphone and accepting the terms and conditions. Customers do not need to download an app or register and the door can be opened by smartphone. Scanning and payments can also be done with the smartphone.

The store is equipped with cameras and sensors and information is provided online instantly and additional support is offered. Sales in the SPAR Express store is monitored via an app which ensures that the store is always replenished with fresh food. Customers purchasing fuel can pay at the AVIA petrol station with a fuel card, debit or credit card or cash. For customers who are not familiar with QR code scanning, students were present instore to help in the first few days following the opening.

SPAR Switzerland and AVIA intend to open additional unattended 24/7 SPAR Express forecourt stores. Installing unattended 'SPAR Go24' retail units outside urban centres is also part of SPAR Switzerland's growth strategy. These small retail units are primarily intended to complement the existing SPAR stores in order to offer customers 24/7 shopping. This means that those working early or late shifts can enjoy a fresh coffee with croissants or a light meal.

SPAR is always on the lookout for opportunities to enhance our customers shopping experience in line with our goal of providing customers with fresh products, high quality, and convenience. It is great to see the launch of this solution in Switzerland, using the latest state-of-the-art technology to bring a frictionless retail offering to shoppers 24/7.

Watch the video of the store [here](#).





SPAR's supply chain network continues to show strength and resilience despite challenges across the external environment. SPAR country organisations are prioritising the adoption of sustainable initiatives and innovative equipment to grow the international supply chain network.

## FOCUS ON DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

### Challenges in distribution

As supply chain challenges continue to pose the threat of disruption across every industry, SPAR country organisations are working hard to mitigate any disturbances caused by economic instability, supplier disruptions, technology and data management, labour shortages and environmental considerations. SPAR is working hard as a collective to reduce its environmental impact and make its supply chains more sustainable by working closely with suppliers to coordinate inbound deliveries to its warehouses and outbound deliveries to its stores, reducing empty vehicle mileage and minimising our carbon footprint. SPAR also works with suppliers, warehouses and stores to minimise food waste by making sure the right products, in the right quantities, are delivered on time. By working together, SPAR ensures a well-functioning supply chain that is fit for purpose and at the heart of the retail industry.

### People focus

Earlier this year, truck drivers from SPAR organisations convened in Sweden for SPAR International's inaugural Driver of the Year competition.

Hosted by Scania in Södertälje, on 8 and 9 March, drivers from across SPAR came together to compete in three disciplines testing their driving style, manoeuvrability, and safety awareness, all supervised

by the Scania test centre team. The competition was held to highlight the value truck drivers play in SPAR's successful operation and to promote driving HGVs as a career.

Over the two days, drivers and their guests also had the opportunity to visit the Scania assembly factory to see the latest vehicles and the Scania museum. There was also the opportunity to drive a range of different Scania vehicles on the test track, including electric trucks and buses.

This competition reflects the incredibly valuable role that HGV drivers play in the SPAR retail network, ensuring supply chains are robust, resilient, and meet the needs of our customers every day. It also enabled an important dialogue regarding the optimisation of the working environment and showcased SPAR's valuable drivers, committed to safety and quality in their work.

Scania is a preferred supplier partner of SPAR. Evalena Falck, Director of Strategic Account Management at Scania, said: "People sustainability is very high on the Scania agenda as we have a very clear ambition to drive the shift to sustainable transport solutions. We are a proud partner of SPAR who shares our ambition to be leaders in sustainability".



### Transport Sustainability

In addition to SPAR's recent Driver of the Year competition, SPAR Austria's Transport Managers travelled to Sweden during the two-day event, to hold their twice-yearly Transport Manager Meeting. Here they discussed the latest innovations in electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, as well as efficiency in transport operations and sustainability in transport.

Through ongoing investment and innovation, SPAR's operations worldwide continue to enhance product availability while sustainably reducing costs.

In Ireland, SPAR is investing in electric vehicles. They recently introduced the first heavy goods vehicle in the 20-tonne category to their distribution network. The 20-tonne Volvo electric truck, which has a capacity for up to 33 pallet spaces, is powered by four 240 kWh batteries, providing a range of up to 250 kilometres. This reflects the commitment of the distributor to pioneer breakthrough technologies across their supply chain.

The new vehicle will undertake inter-depot delivery operations, in addition to nationwide deliveries to SPAR and EUROSPAR Supermarkets, using fast charging to increase the daily range.

In Austria, electric vehicles have increasingly been added to the distribution fleet, investing in charging stations at the warehouses. SPAR Austria plans to expand its number of charging stations to 535 by the end of 2028, creating the largest charging network at retail outlets in Austria.

In Norway, electric vehicles are now solely used to transport goods between their warehouses on either side of the fjord, following significant investment in electric vehicles, as outlined in the article accessed by [clicking on this link](#).



The European Athletics Indoor Championships were held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 2-5 March 2023. Norway topped the medal table with incredible performances from their athletes, followed by the Netherlands, celebrating strong successes of female athletes. Great Britain & Northern Ireland, Italy and Belgium all tied with six medals for third place in the medal table.

## EUROPEAN ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

As a principal sponsor since 1996, SPAR continues to support European Athletics, promoting healthy lifestyles from grassroots upwards.

At this key event in the sporting calendar, the European Athletics Indoor Championships 2023, SPAR had a strong brand presence via the overall event branding, including on athletes' number bibs as well as on dedicated signage in the stadium.

A total of 593 athletes from 47 countries participated, with the number of male and female athletes being closer than ever before - 301 men and 292 women. This strongly reflects the European Athletics' promotion of women in the sport.

Belgium's Nafissatou Thiam delivered a world record of 5055 points in the pentathlon. This was the first world record to be set at the European Athletics Indoor Championships since 2011.

Norway topped the medal table for the first time in European Athletics Indoor Championships history. Aside from Jakob Ingebrigsten winning the 1,500m and 3,000m for the second successive Championships, Karsten Warholm regained his title in the 400m, while Sondre Guttormsen won the pole vault title on countback.

In total, 21 nations won medals, while 33 countries had at least one athlete place inside the top eight in a final. Four world-leading marks were set across the four days of competition, along with 12 European leads and 39 national records.

### Phenomenal media interest

Media interest for the event was exceptional with 480 accredited media onsite, including 120 photographers. Fitting with the growing popularity of digital media, the EBU Livestream free-to-air platform brought the action to fans at home if their home country broadcaster was unavailable.



### Livestream platform

The platform registered over 141,800 hours of viewing. Media calculations of competition broadcasts show broad interest, seen in both television hours and audiences. Reflecting the improvement in mobile accessibility, 65% of the total viewing hours were accessed using mobile devices.

### Support for those in need

Due to the devastating earthquakes in Turkey in February 2023, social media messaging and consumer promotion activity by SPAR was significantly reduced to align with the organisers' recognition of this traumatic natural disaster.

Following the event, European Athletics donated €20,000 to the Government of Turkey's Disaster Management Agency to support the earthquake victims. Athletes and member federations also showed their support for the people of Turkey, expressing sympathy for all those affected.



593  
athletes



268  
broadcasts



26  
events



47  
countries



500  
hours of  
coverage



Over 270  
hours of onscreen SPAR  
brand visibility



For more information about these and other stories, visit the SPAR International website: [www.spar-international.com/pressroom](http://www.spar-international.com/pressroom).

## SPAR WORLDWIDE NEWS

1 SPAR **Austria** consolidated its market leadership position in 2022, with a market share of 36.3%, and food retail sales exceeding €9 billion, equivalent to a sales growth of 4.7%. SPAR remains the largest private employer in Austria and with its 2,500 trainees is the [largest private training company](#) in the country. In total, SPAR created nearly 1,400 new jobs in 2022 through its expansion.

SPAR Own Brands contribute over 40% of the company's food retail sales. SPAR Austria invested nearly €3 million in own brand product development. The SPAR Veggie range was expanded to over 100 products and sales increased by 8.5%.

With regard to sustainability, about 160 photovoltaic systems are currently installed on the roofs of SPAR, EUROSPAR, and INTERSPAR stores. SPAR Austria cooperated with nine leading domestic electricity suppliers to [expand the e-charging network](#) in the last year.

The retailer continues to pioneer innovative ways to [reduce food waste](#). In 2022, SPAR developed an accurate solution with its IT partners using Artificial Intelligence. This reduced the amount of unsold food by 10% in that year.

2 SPAR **Austria** has recently launched the second round of its [SPAR Diversity Award](#). The award, for the preservation of biodiversity, invites prospective Austrian high school graduates to submit their pre-scientific work on the topics of biodiversity and species conservation, with an expert jury assessing the work. The overall winner receives a KlimaTicket, which allows the use of all transport services in a specific area for a year. In addition, the three best projects per federal state will be rewarded with vouchers and SPAR-branded products.

Through its initiative 'Let's preserve diversity together' SPAR Austria, experts, suppliers and customers are campaigning for the diversity of species and varieties. This includes the promotion of the bee population, the preservation of old breeds, the banning of glyphosate, and the continued expansion of organic products. The pre-scientific paper is the first of three pillars of the school-leaving examination at general and vocational secondary schools.

3 Two Irish Olympians, SPAR **Ireland** Ambassador boxer Kellie Harrington and rower Gary O'Donovan, have joined forces to launch SPAR Ireland's new SPAR Better Choices campaign for 2023. The campaign aims to encourage customers to make 'Better Choices'

when shopping across Ireland's favourite convenience retail network.

To launch this initiative, SPAR Ireland partnered with Dietician, Dr Yvonne Finnegan. The Olympians fulfil challenges using foods shown in a series of videos. An educational element has been included in the campaign with fun food facts in the videos. This helps consumers' confidence when making shopping choices in their local SPAR store.

Snack favourites of the SPAR Better Choices range include fresh fruit, rice cakes, popcorn, nuts, and seeds. SPAR stores provide meal solutions through high-protein meats, fresh vegetables, chilled soups, and high-fibre bakery products. Many stores offer SPAR customers better choices through self-serve salad bars and grab-and-go salad bowls from the chilled cabinet.

4 SPAR **Norway** is celebrating its 30th anniversary and to mark the occasion, independent SPAR retailer, [Per Irgens Skjerdal](#), wrote his fourth script reflecting the journey of SPAR throughout the decades.

SPAR values and community involvement are constant, even in a time of ever-increasing pace of change. The commercial celebrating this milestone anniversary of SPAR Norway highlights how the brand has been building its presence, supporting its retailers, valued shoppers, and suppliers throughout the decades in the market. SPAR Norway intends to continue growing its brand presence, remaining a welcoming and friendly space for its customers in the future.

Per Irgens Skjerdal runs a store in Aurland, southern Norway. In addition to being a proud retailer, Per is a regional and national representative in the SPAR Norway Merchant Council and a retailer representative on the SPAR International Executive Guild.

5 SPAR **Slovenia** remains a loyal supporter of the Basketball Federation of Slovenia, extending its sponsorship contract with the Basketball Federation of Slovenia (KZS), supporting Slovenian basketball players for the 23rd year in a row.

In 22 years of partnership, basketball has become part of SPAR Slovenia's corporate identity. 2023 will see lots of activity, with the upcoming traditional SPAR Cup, with promising young players, and this year's World Cup. It will be a varied basketball year, with the Women's EuroBasket and the Men's World Cup as the two highlights.





6 SPAR **Spain** partner Ignacio de las Cuevas began the year with the opening of a new 150m<sup>2</sup> SPAR Express supermarket in the town of Miño in the province of La Coruña and two new SPAR Express stores with a sales area of 150m<sup>2</sup> each in the towns of Palanquinos and Villacedré in León, increasing the company's number of SPAR Express stores to 62, following eleven store openings in the preceding twelve months. The SPAR Express stores are adding value to their communities, where people can shop without leaving their towns, and support local producers.

SPAR **Spain** retailer Fragadis, operating in the East of Spain, identified and responded to a need for larger supermarkets, opening four EUROSPAR Supermarkets. The retail sales area of the EUROSPAR Supermarkets ranges from 990m<sup>2</sup> to over 1,500m<sup>2</sup> in size. All stores include butchery and delicatessen counters, plus fresh sections with regional fruit and vegetables. These stores prioritise accessibility, incorporating wide aisles and ample parking facilities for customers' convenience. Each store's retail offer is tailored to meet the shopping needs of customers in the community. All of the supermarkets feature a high-quality fresh food offer with a focus on regional products.

7 Following the enormous success of the Community Cashback scheme in 2022, SPAR **UK** launched its second £100k Community Cashback scheme. The scheme gives grants to selected local voluntary or community organisations and charities.

Shoppers from all over the UK can apply for a grant for an organisation or charity they feel would benefit from access to funding. Applications must highlight the exceptional contribution that the organisation makes to their community and what the grant would be put towards. There are grants available covering all geographical regions across the UK. Amounts up to £10,000 are available, with a total pool of grants valued at £100,000. Successful applicants will be visited and awarded their grant from their local SPAR representative.

The top 100 shortlisted charities will have the opportunity to be showcased across SPAR UK's social channels and the website for a single month. This gives the charities valuable exposure and amplifies the SPAR Community Cashback campaign.

SPAR **UK** retailers believe in nurturing their neighbourhoods and supporting the communities they serve. The Community Cashback scheme is another way to help, especially now when deserving local organisations need some extra financial support.

8 The SPAR **UK** partner in Scotland, CJ Lang & Son Ltd, works in partnership with the youth work charity, Helm, to support young people to obtain qualifications, gain work experience, and prepare for employment or further education. The wholesaler has designed a specific eight-week training programme for Helm's adolescents.

For 40 years, Helm has been working at grassroots level to address the inequalities that many adolescents are facing. They are given the opportunity to work within all teams, thereby giving them a wide understanding of the industry and gaining experiences which are useful as they start seeking employment. During the last week of their placement, young people spend time in the HR department developing their CVs and working on interview techniques.

In December 2022, Helm presented CJ Lang with its first-ever Outstanding Commitment Award for supporting and nurturing young people while on placement. The company was recognised for spending many hours creating and implementing a training programme specifically for Helm's adolescents.

9 In an ongoing programme of retail experience transformation, SPAR **Zimbabwe** has invested in another of their core stores, increasing the area dedicated to fresh and frozen foods, as well as the food service offer. The SPAR Supermarket, which reopened on 22 February, is located in a shopping centre in a suburb of Harare. Almost 500m<sup>2</sup> in the refurbished SPAR Supermarket now highlights SPAR's 'fresh is best' policy. The renovation targeted not only future supermarket trends and improved technology, but it also included the store's layout, an improved product offer and the implementation of an extensive gifting and home décor section.

Renovations were completed in a record time of just 4 weeks. Top-quality service departments create destination departments in the store, including a bakery, meals-to-go counter, a delicatessen, and a butchery department. Seafood is found alongside freshly prepared Sushi while a state-of-the-art Biltong Bar was incorporated.

There is also a fully licensed restaurant, which serves speciality coffees, breakfasts, lunches and teatime treats.







# SNACKING NEVER TASTED THIS GOOD



MADE FROM  
60%  
BISCUITS



SIMPLY SPREAD  
ON TOAST



100%  
VEGAN 



THE SPAR BISCUIT SPREAD IS MADE FROM SPECULOOS BISCUITS THAT ARE PROCESSED FRESH FROM THE OVEN. THE BISCUITS ARE THEN FINELY GROUND TO A CREAMY SPREAD FOR A SMOOTH TEXTURE THAT CAN BE APPLIED ON BREAD OR CRACKERS AND USED AS AN INGREDIENT IN DESSERTS.

THIS FLAVOURFUL SPREAD WITH A DISTINCT CARAMEL TASTE IS MADE OF 60% BISCUITS AND IS SUITABLE FOR VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN DIETS. IT COMES IN A GLASS JAR WITH 400G OF SPREAD FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

for information contact:

Buying Department SPAR International, Amsterdam, [product@spar-international.com](mailto:product@spar-international.com) tel: +31 (0)20 6 26 67 49