



European Materials Handling Federation

Call to the European Union and to national Heads of States and Governments

Brussels, 24 March 2020

COVID-19: enabling the European materials handling industry to keep supply chains operating

Dear Madam/Sir,

The COVID-19 outbreak is a major challenge for Europe. We are in a state of sanitary emergency, where the preservation of people's health and life is critical. We are also in a state of economic emergency with hundreds of thousands of companies experiencing a dramatic slowdown if not a complete halt of their business.

Such an exceptional situation calls for equally exceptional measures and we welcome the first announcements from national and European leaders. Since the situation evolves on a daily basis and uncertainty will prevail over the coming weeks, coordination among Member States and at EU level will be absolutely necessary. Only a collective response will address the health but also the economic impacts of the pandemic, regarding demand, production, growth and employment.

Whilst containment and sanitary protection measures are rightfully being implemented and must be strictly followed, our countries must continue to function, not least to ensure essential supplies to our people. Our companies play a crucial role: they provide the equipment and solutions that make our supply chains work. In these exceptional times, the entire European materials handling industry is committed to maintain fast, efficient and reliable supply chains in support of our citizens' most urgent needs, notably for food and healthcare equipment. In turn, our companies expect national and European leaders to clearly commit to and take the necessary measures to preserve their industrial capacity.

Preserving our industrial production is absolutely essential to mobilise the capacities to fight the pandemic in the short term. This is also critical in the longer run, preparing for after, to ensure we are ready to pick up and recover. We must act now to secure our future. If we do not, our competitors, and in particular those who were hit earlier by the outbreak, will use it to their commercial advantage.

In FEM, we are closely monitoring how the situation evolves across our industry and preparing ourselves for the future. We would like to work together with authorities to win the battle against COVID-19.

Yours sincerely

Jos De Vuyst
President