

PRESS RELEASE

Ceramic Industry updates regarding to COVID-19

24 March 2020, Brussels – With the impact of the COVID-19 on Europe and throughout the world, the Ceramic Industry is aware of this crisis and stands in solidarity with those who are affected. During this pandemic, the main priority now is to protect the health of populations affected to prevent further spread and limit as much as possible the casualties.

In reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe, the ceramic industry is taking measures at national level. As it is important to have access to protection tools during this crisis, the ceramic industry is trying its best to contribute to helping those who are being impacted the most. For instance, in Italy, the industry is supporting hospitals via donations for the purchase of intensive care beds and by disseminating clear information on restrictions to the public adopted by the Government. Moreover, the industry has also promoted the adjustment of business procedures and operational protocols to align production, shipping and logistic activities with this emergency situation.

The ceramic industry welcomes the efforts of the European Union to coordinate a common response to reinforce public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact in the EU. The industry notably welcomes the following initiatives:

- [Communication](#) of 13 March providing a **Coordinated economic response to the COVID-19 Outbreak** and related measures aimed at ensuring solidarity in the Single Market, alleviating the impact on employment, facilitating access to liquidity and mobilising investments towards national healthcare systems and other economic sectors, with focus on hard-hit SMEs, allowing Member States to take prompt actions to support citizens and companies facing economic difficulties thanks to a more flexible [Temporary Framework for State aid measures](#) and flexibility in relation to Stability and Growth Pact rules;
- [Communication](#) of 23 March on the **implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services.**

We particularly welcome the Commission's proposal to make use of European structural and investment funds **"to provide liquidity to corporates in order to tackle short-term financial shocks linked to the Coronavirus crisis, covering e.g. working capital in SMEs to address the losses due to the crisis"**.

With the obstacles that the COVID-19 presents, it is important now more than ever to implement measures which will support the economy and business, **to maintain the functioning of the internal market** during the pandemic and in its aftermath. **All the necessary health and safety measures required for employers to guarantee the protection of workers should be put into place to allow particularly the construction and automotive sectors to continue working** as well as allowing these sectors to **restart as soon as possible when the conditions are met. Beyond the construction supply chain, ceramic sectors such as refractories and technical ceramics play a vital role in the production of a wide range of essential goods.** While the future may seem bleak for now and the consequences of the outbreak are unknown, the ceramic industry ensures that it will work closely with all the stakeholders during this time to maintain the strengths of the European economy and help our society recovering from this crisis.

The European ceramic industry covers a wide range of products including abrasives, bricks & roof tiles, clay pipes, wall & floor tiles, refractories, sanitaryware, table- & ornamentalware, technical ceramics, expanded clay and flower pots. The industry generates over 200,000 direct jobs and a production value of €31 billion in the EU.

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