

COVID-19: The European tyre industry braces for long-lasting impact and calls for recovery support

Brussels, 25th March 2020 – The increasingly severe impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on our societies and economy is unlike anything we have seen before. Health concerns, supply shortages, low demand and government measures have led the European tyre industry to take decisive action. Over the past week, many member companies of the European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers Association (ETRMA) have announced the temporary closure of their European manufacturing facilities. The impact goes beyond that: R&D facilities, other operational areas and retail networks, which are key to the industry's future, are also affected. Due to the extensive economic and human consequences of this crisis, ETRMA calls for constructive dialogue on remedial measures and support schemes at both the EU and national level.

The tyre industry is taking all appropriate and necessary measures to protect the health of employees and communities and act quickly to contain the spread of the virus. With the temporary closures of facilities, the European tyre industry has followed the recommendation of international, national and local authorities with the aim of protecting its workforce, interrupting chains of infection and helping contain the spread of the pandemic.

"The suspension of the main operational activities will undoubtedly have severe, long-lasting reverberations for our industry. This is one of the biggest challenges our industry has ever faced," affirms Fazilet Cinaralp, *"and it is yet unclear when the European tyre industry will be able to resume its production activities and the international supply chain will be up and running again"*.

Due to the unprecedented nature of this crisis, the European tyre industry calls for firm and rapid action at both the EU and national level to enact policies that will remediate the impact of this crisis on European tyre manufacturers. ETRMA supports constructive dialogue between industry, EU institutions and governments to develop schemes that ensure the well-being of the tyre industry's workforce, while COVID-19 prevails, and that support a smooth and successful restart of activities in this vital sector for the European economy at large, once the immediate health crisis is over.

"Tyres are not only crucial for the movement of goods and people, but for the European economy. We employ approximately directly 370,000 people in Europe. Now it's mandatory to identify how to support our employees and serve the automotive sector and our customers, and how to stimulate the recovery of our sector to avoid a permanent loss of capacity, research capability and innovation, with the engagement of all European stakeholders," concludes Fazilet Cinaralp.

ETRMA underlines its continued support for the measures that have already been taken at both the European and national level, and expresses its deepest gratitude for all those on the frontlines of this pandemic keeping us safe.

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For more information, please contact Fazilet Cinaralp ETRMA Secretary-General at: f.cinaralp@etrma.org

About ETRMA

The European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers Association (ETRMA) represent nearly 4.400 companies in the EU, directly employing about 370.000 people. The global sales of ETRMA's corporate members represent 70% of total global sales and 7 out of 10 world leaders in the sector are ETRMA Members¹. We have a strong manufacturing and research presence within the EU and candidate countries, with 93 tyre-producing plants and 17 R&D centres.

¹ ETRMA's membership include the following tyre manufacturers: APOLLO VREDESTEIN, BRIDGESTONE EUROPE, BRISA, COOPER TIRES, CONTINENTAL, GOODYEAR, HANKOOK, MARANGONI, MICHELIN, NOKIAN TYRES, PIRELLI, PROMETEON, SUMITOMO RUBBER INDUSTRIES AND TRELLEBORG WHEEL SYSTEMS. Furthermore, members include Associations in the following countries: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK.