

Joint Eurovent-REHVA Position Paper: COVID-19 industry shutdown must exclude HVACR businesses

In a nutshell

Eurovent and REHVA call on all relevant authorities in the EU and globally to recognise the manufacturing, distribution, installation, maintenance and repair of HVACR equipment as essential business activities and therefore exempt them from COVID-19 shutdown orders and travel restrictions. HVACR equipment supports critical infrastructure in the healthcare, food cold chain, data centre and building sectors notably. Prolonged shutdown of HVACR manufacturing activities might have severe consequences during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

Heating, ventilation, air conditioning, cooling and refrigeration are crucial in many applications in all sectors of the economy. For example, HVACR equipment enables the production, transportation and storage of pharmaceuticals and food, replenishes and conditions the air in hospitals and grocery stores, and ensures the operation of data centres and telecommunication infrastructure.

Industry shutdowns

Several countries around the world have shut down so called non-essential businesses until further notice, including Italy. These shutdowns include the manufacturing of HVACR equipment and components.

The European HVACR market currently lost at least 50% of its production capacity with more expected to come to a halt in the next few weeks. Data from Eurovent Market Intelligence show that Italian factories alone provide about 20% of all finished products to the European HVACR market and over 40% in refrigeration and IT cooling.

These shutdowns might lead to shortages of supplies and services that ensure the integrity of HVACR installations in critical infrastructure during and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, both in Europe and regions dependent on supplies from European manufacturers.

Call for action

Eurovent and REHVA strongly advise regional, national and local authorities worldwide to include businesses active in the manufacturing, distribution, installation, maintenance and repair of HVACR equipment as essential businesses with reasonable exemptions from shutdowns and travel restrictions. HVACR manufacturers must be allowed to ensure a minimum of production and guarantee the availability of spares and replacements.

Eurovent and REHVA also call on the EU and all its Member States to better coordinate to ensure the continuity of supply chains in critical infrastructure. While the industry supports all activities and restrictions necessary to fight the pandemic, it also warns of severe consequences of uncoordinated shutdowns.

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About Eurovent

Eurovent is Europe's Industry Association for Indoor Climate (HVAC), Process Cooling, and Food Cold Chain Technologies. Its members from throughout Europe represent more than 1.000 organisations, the majority small and medium-sized manufacturers. Based on objective and verifiable data, these account for a combined annual turnover of more than 30bn EUR, employing around 150.000 people within the association's geographic area. This makes Eurovent one of the largest cross-regional industry committees of its kind. The organisation's activities are based on highly valued democratic decision-making principles, ensuring a level playing field for the entire industry independent from organisation sizes or membership fees.

About REHVA

REHVA, The Federation of European HVAC Associations, founded 1963, joins European associations in the field of building engineering services representing more than 100.000 HVAC engineers and building professionals in Europe. REHVA is an independent professional organisation dedicated to the improvement of health, comfort and energy efficiency in all buildings and communities. It encourages the development and application of both energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.