

CECIP statement on COVID-19 pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant negative impact on the European weighing industry. Although the size of the impact is still uncertain, it is clear that the industry faces major economic problems due to disruptions in supply chains, production and providing services. CECIP, as representative of the weighing industry in Europe, welcomes the wide-range of measures already introduced by Member States and calls on the EU and Member States to continue with new actions. The European weighing industry is a world leading industry that provides key instruments to numerous sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food and industry. Therefore, it is crucial measures are taken to avoid unnecessary bankruptcies and structural economic problems for this, otherwise healthy, industry. CECIP believes actions should be taken to focus, at least, on the following points:

- **Ensure liquidity of companies**
Many deliveries and services are cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, companies face a reduction in capital coming in, while many bills still need to be paid. Measures that can support companies in ensuring liquidity and being able to pay the bills are highly important. Not only for the weighing industry itself, but for all its suppliers and service providers. This could, for example, be a delay of VAT-payments, short-time work compensation or reducing bills for utilities or rental fees. It is important that bureaucracy should be kept at a minimum for the measures introduced.
- **Increase flexibility in deadlines weighing industry**
Audits and verifications are carried out on a continuous basis within the weighing industry. Often these need to be done before a certain deadline. Examples are weighing instrument that need to have periodic reverifications, audits that need to be carried out on a periodic basis or type-approvals that may expire. Considering the social distancing measures in place in most Member States CECIP believes it is better if deadlines can be extended. This will give companies the opportunity to reduce human interaction without not making the legal metrology deadlines.
- **Retain personnel with right skills**
In the last years the European weighing industry is experiencing difficulties with attracting sufficient personnel with the right skills. It is important that the employees currently working in the industry can be retained, despite possibly temporary unemployment and cashflow problems. Short-time work compensation as introduced in several countries is a vital measure that should be introduced as widely and flexible as possible.
- **Keep supply chains and borders open**
The supply chains of the weighing industry are highly international. Components to produce weighing instruments are coming from all over Europe. Without the free movement of goods the supply chains are even more severely disrupted than it is currently the case. Consequently, production processes will experience more problems and productivity is reduced. Additionally,

technicians need to be able to carry out services in other countries. Therefore, CECIP requests maintaining the free movement of goods and persons with as little hindrances as possible.

- **Avoid unnecessary bankruptcies**

A number of companies in the European weighing industry will face adverse conditions in the coming months. Normally healthy companies will fight for survival. CECIP welcomes the Corona Response Investment Initiative and extension of the EU solidarity fund to provide Member States resources to help those companies. Additionally, where measures to ensure liquidity by postponing payments are not sufficient to safeguard the survival of companies in the weighing industry it is crucial that loans are available for these companies. European funds via the European Investment Bank should be dedicated to protect companies that are in trouble due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, national governments should introduce state-backed loan guarantees to banks allowing companies to get the options to keep the business ongoing in the heat of the crisis.

The European weighing industry is a competitive industry and structurally in good health. It is a world leading industry and vital for enabling other sectors to function properly and innovate. Therefore, CECIP is convinced that the weighing industry can overcome these problems if the right actions are taken by the EU and its Member States.