



**Conference call with CEO's on State of play of the PPE supply chain in the context of the coronavirus threat**  
**10 March, 11:00**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Industrial stakeholders**

- [REDACTED] (Belgium) - [REDACTED] Chief Commercial Officer EMEA / APAC
- [REDACTED] (Germany) - [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED], Group President [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] (Denmark) - [REDACTED] CEO
- [REDACTED] (Belgium) - [REDACTED] Vice President, Government Relations
- [REDACTED] (France), [REDACTED] Directeur des Operations EMEA
- [REDACTED] (USA) - [REDACTED] Global Business Leader (USA)
- [REDACTED] (France) – Vice-President
- [REDACTED] (Norway) - [REDACTED], Supply Chain Manager
- [REDACTED] (France & Belgium) – [REDACTED] Directeur de Division
- [REDACTED] (Italy), [REDACTED] CEO
- [REDACTED] (Belgium) – [REDACTED] Head of Corporate Corporations
- [REDACTED] (Sweden) – [REDACTED] Sales Manager Central Europe
- [REDACTED] (Germany) – [REDACTED] Joint Managing Directors
- [REDACTED] (Czech Republic) – [REDACTED], CEO

**EC staff**

- CAB Breton (Commissioner Breton + CAB Members) + DG GROW (Acting Director General + DG GROW representatives)
- CAB Kyriakides Members + DG SANTE representatives
- CAB Lenarčič Members + DG ECHO representatives

## Summary of the meeting

Most of the companies have reported that they have either already increased their manufacturing capacity or that they are in the process of doing so. In the case of some companies – [REDACTED]

– the increase in capacity has already been in the order of 2 to 3 times, or even higher – [REDACTED]

A number of companies have already expressed preparedness to further increase their capacity – [REDACTED] (*potentially doubling their current capacity of 5 million disposable FFP type face masks per month within the next 2 months*) – in some cases, conditioning this increase on the need to deploy additional investments [REDACTED]

In relation to bottlenecks to the potential increase in manufacturing capacity, there was a clear consensus among the companies (at least 7 companies raised the point in their respective intervention) that the major source of disruptions of the value chains are the unilateral export restrictions, which have been introduced by a number of Member States. A number of companies have at least one of their main distribution centers in a Member State that have introduced export restrictions such as DE [REDACTED] FR [REDACTED] IT [REDACTED] or in a neighboring Member State, such as BE [REDACTED]

Asked specifically about potential bottlenecks related to the supply of raw materials and or components, none of the companies expressed concerns about the availability of such raw materials or components.

When asked about possible support measures that they would expect from the European Commission, the majority of the companies [REDACTED] have urged the Commission to engage with the Member States in order to possible repeal the existing export restrictions and also to avoid the introduction of any further similar restrictions.

At least two companies [REDACTED] insisted on the need to ensure an efficient collaboration and smooth operation of the distribution networks between the EU27 and the UK.

Other possible support measures raised by one or several companies included possible assistance with shipments of certain types of PPE not subject to export restrictions from China to the EU [REDACTED], raising awareness among purchasers and national authorities about the potential benefits that re-usable face masks can offer in terms of costs and protection [REDACTED] the need to clarify the exact scope of export bans and whether they apply to both disposable and re-usable face masks [REDACTED] A single company [REDACTED] suggested that the European Commission could also advise the Member States to adopt similar measures as the ones recently taken by the IT authorities, restricting all public gatherings in order to limit the spread of the infection and avoid an even further exponential growth of the demand that would effectively become impossible to meet.

Finally, at least two companies [REDACTED] suggested to consider the possibility to use PPE items, which do not necessarily meet the EU's regulatory requirements (and thus bear the CE mark) but which comply with other international standards which could be recognized as providing equivalent levels of safety (such as the N95 standard). The companies have thus indicated that allowing for such products of equivalent level of protection to be used in the EU would allow the use of a number of

other manufacturing facilities, located globally, which for the moment cannot be used to manufacture products for the EU market.

Operational conclusions by Commissioner Breton:

- The Commissioner indicated that another meeting could be convened already next week to ensure follow-up;
- The Commissioner encouraged the companies to continue working towards increasing their capacity;
- The Commissioner took note that no major issues regarding the supply of raw materials has been raised by any of the companies for the moment but urged to be cautious;
- The Commissioner indicated that the issue of the possible acceptance of products ensuring equivalent standards of protection will be investigated;
- The Commissioner indicated that the issue of the possible increase of use of re-usable masks will be investigated.