

The garden and outdoor power equipment industry must be recognised as an essential sector in European society

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Today, European society is facing an extraordinary challenge from the outbreak of Covid-19. The pandemic is significantly impacting citizens, workers and businesses.

Besides the vital need to preserve people's health and life, we need to maintain the functioning of our critical infrastructures and economy. This is an utmost necessity for both public health and safety as well as community well-being.

As is the case with the whole European economy, the garden and outdoor power equipment industry is severely hit. Our companies are experiencing a dramatic slowdown, if not a complete shutdown of their businesses. Necessary containment and sanitary protection measures have been implemented all over Europe, thus disrupting work and organisation. In addition, manufacturers are facing obstacles to the free flow of goods, workers and services, resulting in interruptions in the supply of parts and components.

Only a spirit of cooperation will help to respond to the current challenge: we welcome the coordinated European approach to the exit strategy, which prepares us for the recovery. Member States must work closely with EU institutions to ensure that European and national strategies for the recovery are harmonised as much as possible.

First of all, the economic activity should restart in a safe way, as highlighted in the joint European Roadmap. As a next step and to smoothly resume their activities, European industries need clear and consistent instructions, for health and safety at work.

Moreover, the implementation of the exit strategy should address, as soon as possible, the diverging interpretation of which economic activities are considered as essential and those which are not. Today, these inconsistent definitions inhibit the smooth functioning of the Internal Market.

In this context, we call on European and national leaders to recognise the garden and outdoor power equipment sector as essential since it plays a critical role in European society. It is essential that the production, shipping, distribution, maintenance and servicing of our equipment are shortlisted as a sector requiring emergency continuity.

As a primary reason, we cannot expect nature to wait until the pandemic is over: nature is blooming today! Green area maintenance and food production operates according to the seasons since the work is inextricably linked to the natural cycles and weather conditions. Spring started in March and opened the period of seeding, weed prevention, grass mowing, shrub pruning as well as flower and shrub planting. In addition, many operations are currently critical in orchards, vineyards, olive groves and vegetable farms.



Consequently, the market for garden and outdoor power equipment is seasonal: about 70% of sales are made in the first half of the year. The production and sales are scheduled to match the market demand. This period shapes the business outlook for the whole year.

Our industry does not only manufacture garden machines. We produce a very wide variety of equipment covering a large range of products, in terms of size and usage, for landscaping, forestry, turf maintenance and food production.

Indeed, outdoor power equipment is critical for landscapers to perform their duties around houses and buildings. They are also necessary for greenkeepers to maintain playing fields, golf courses and sport pitches. Municipalities fully rely on our equipment to maintain parks, community gardens, cemeteries, schoolyards, playgrounds.

It should be noted that professional users of our equipment tend to work in isolation. They keep away from other workers and the public for safety reasons; social distancing will consequently be maintained.

Our industry also provides reliable tools to forestry workers. In fact, chainsaws are essential to perform thinning work and targeted operation to keep our forests healthy. A properly maintained forest protects it from fire hazards, disease, flooding, and erosion.

In addition, farmers use our equipment, notably motor hoes and sprayers, for food cultivation. Our machines help farmers, usually small and family businesses to efficiently grow vegetables, fruits and wine. Our motorized harvesters are also critical to collect millions of tonnes of olives every year to produce olive oil.

Gardeners use our equipment for taking care of their backyards, which provides them with much needed physical exercise and mental well-being. It is also used to maintain their vegetable patches, which allows them to grow food for their own consumption.

Furthermore, servicing and repair of our equipment is also essential to keep safety at the highest level. Such services are performed by dedicated dealers and retail stores. Safety cannot be compromised.

Finally, green areas improve quality of life. Various scientific publications have proved that urban green spaces offer significant health benefits to citizens. In the current context, where containment measures dictate social distancing and 'stay-at-home' orders are enforced, millions of people throughout Europe shelter at home: teleworking and following online classes. It has therefore never been more important for all European citizens to have access to urban green spaces, in order that they can recharge their batteries by getting out to the parks, woods, and gardens.

The European garden and outdoor power equipment industry shares with households, municipalities, landscapers, greenkeepers, gardeners and farmers the responsibility for green area maintenance and food production.

Our industry is committed to maintaining green areas and growing food products, in a safe and healthy manner during this crisis.





For further information, please contact EGMF Secretary General,
secgen@egmf.org

The European Garden Machinery Industry Federation – EGMF – has been the voice of the garden machinery industry in Europe since 1977. With 30 European corporate members and 7 National Associations representing manufacturers of garden, landscaping, forestry and turf maintenance equipment, we are the most powerful network in this sector in Europe.

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