

## Europe's grid technology providers highlight the essential role of the transmission and distribution sector

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The COVID-19 outbreak represents an unprecedented situation for Europe's citizens, society and economy. T&D Europe, the voice of Europe's grid technology providers, welcomes the macro-economic and political measures that Member States and the EU have already agreed to help tackle the pandemic. T&D Europe members are already supporting initiatives that are aimed at ramping up the production of the scarce goods desperately needed to tackle the crisis.

In these difficult times it is encouraging to see that Europe can rely on a well-developed societal infrastructure. Despite the far-reaching measures aimed at controlling the crisis Europe's critical energy infrastructure has continued to deliver. As a result, many of society's vital activities remain in operation normally. In these exceptional times one realises that electricity has become an essential and critical resource of the daily life of Europeans. Few people can imagine living without the benefits of electricity. A temporary or prolonged disruption in our electricity supply touches virtually every part of our society and economy. Without electricity, everyday life is severely disrupted, creating massive impacts on essential services such as transportation, water and food supply, communications, security and health services.

T&D Europe members provide equipment and services to the operators of Europe's critical electricity infrastructure. In the current situation the T&D industry is already mobilised to ensure the production and continued delivery of critical goods and essential services to European transmission and distribution operators. A number of EU Member States have taken measures to halt industrial production in their country as a means to contain the spread of the virus. We welcome the decision by a number of Governments to identify the manufacturing of transmission and distribution equipment for electricity as an essential service. We also support the Commission Guidelines concerning cross-border workers in essential sectors, which identifies workers in the T&D community as providing essential services. T&D Europe calls on all Governments who are forced to take further measures to shut down industry to consider the approach taken by, *inter alia*, the French, Italian and Spanish Governments. In those countries, the manufacturing of electric motors, generators, transformers and electricity distribution and control apparatus (NACE 27.1) have been included in the list of essential services.

We also call on the European Council to ensure a more coordinated and coherent approach across EU Member States, not least to avoid limitations to the free movement of goods and of the workforce needed to maintain production as much as possible. We recognise that short term measures need to be in place to control the current situation, and we support the particular focus on essential goods, including goods and services for the electricity transmission and distribution sector. Such an approach is, on the one hand, important to ensure the continued availability and reliability of Europe's electricity infrastructure. On the other hand, the continued functioning of the T&D industry will also reduce the risk of increasing Europe's

technological dependence on non-European suppliers. As a strategically important critical infrastructure, Europe's electricity network operators need to have access to a strong European base of technology providers.

For Europe's grid technology providers the safety of employees, suppliers and customers remains paramount. Companies will have to ensure the application of the required distancing within their sites and adhere to the relevant health and hygiene measures, in close consultation with their workforce. Our members across Europe are committed to finding practical and responsible solutions, working closely with the relevant authorities and social partners.

We remain convinced that taking resolute action in a coordinated European approach is essential to manage the immediate medical needs and mitigate the wider socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in the EU. Industry stands ready to step up to help protect our people today and protect our economies tomorrow.

After the crisis, a strong industry will be essential to ensure Europe stands ready to tackle the socio-economic consequences of the crisis, rekindle Europe's economies and safeguard the prosperity and wellbeing of its citizens.