



European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry

THE EUROPEAN CLEANING INDUSTRY: A KEY PARTNER FOR THE POST-COVID-19 EUROPE



#InGoodHands
#HelpingEuropeRopen

Industrial cleaning is one of the major services industries in Europe. Employing more than 4 million people through over 280,000 companies, its yearly turnover accounts for more than 120 billion euros.

Our companies provide professional cleaning, hygiene, sanitisation and disinfection services which are essential in the fight against COVID-19 and will be even be more so in ensuring a safe pathway and through the “new normal”.

These services ensure the hygiene and safety of users in buildings, infrastructures, schools, public transports, industrial or cultural spaces and touristic facilities, among others. They are provided by trained employees with the necessary expertise to professionally design and implement targeted cleaning and sanitisation services using the recommended protocols and products.



CLEANING AND HYGIENE ARE AT THE CENTRE OF EUROPE'S REOPENING STRATEGY

- ▶ The European Institutions have repeatedly acknowledged the strategic and central role of the industrial cleaning sector in Europe's economic and social reopening.
- ▶ The Joint European Roadmap of 15 April towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures provided a common framework for European and national authorities to phase-out the extraordinary measures against COVID-19. In the centre of these measures, recommendations included intensifying regular cleaning and disinfection of transport hubs, shops and workplaces, enhanced cleaning of schools and universities or cleaning of high-contact surfaces. Further, the Commission's Guidance of 13 May on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's tourism in 2020 and beyond highlights how cleaning and hygiene services have a fundamental role to implement the gradual and safe recovery of activities in both transport and tourism.
- ▶ Cleaning and facility services companies are ready to **help Europe reopen**. Nevertheless, the sector needs specific support measures to ensure the lasting performance of its companies and calls for a sectoral approach in the design of European short and longer-term recovery strategies, identifying and supporting essential industries' immediate needs.

PROFESSIONAL CLEANING WILL REMAIN ESSENTIAL BEYOND THE CRISIS

- ▶ Various Member States (including Italy, Spain, France or Belgium) have explicitly recognised the essentiality of cleaning activities in different measures adopted in the context of the emergency against COVID-19. The status of essential sector must remain beyond the crisis to ensure:
 - The adequate recognition of the cleaning profession and of its agents in the frontline of the provision of essential services in safeguarding public health;
 - In a labour-intensive sector, a shift in focus towards quality in the purchase of cleaning services by public and private entities, moving forward from an outdated price-based approach.
- ▶ Further, in practical terms and in the crisis' context, it shall also grant access to personal protective equipment (PPEs) for highly exposed agents as well as the mobility of cleaning agents within Member States and in cross-border mobility¹.

A SECTOR HARDLY HIT BY THE CRISIS

- ▶ The sector has been directly hit by the negative economic impact of the containment measures. In some Member States, cleaning companies have lost up to 50% of their activities (and turnover) due to the temporary closure of offices, leisure and educational facilities which represent nearly 54% of the sector's market segments. While the number of companies being unable to continue in business is still uncertain, cleaning companies will face strong difficulties in resuming business and in sustaining additional material and organisational costs (which are reaching an average + 5%, including those generated by the acquisition of personal protective equipment and products (PPEs)).
- ▶ Further, our companies have been hit by unfair contracting practices: from unilateral cancellations to extended delays in payments. These practices are also aggravating further the cash-flow difficulties of our companies.

A VECTOR FOR EUROPE'S RECOVERY THROUGH THE CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ The industrial cleaning sector, with a steady yearly rate of 2,7% in the creation of employment, has been key for the provision of jobs in various segments of the active population. The sector will continue to be a vector for integration in the labour market, and shall play a key role for:
 - The integration of young people into the labour market;
 - The fight against undeclared work;
 - Providing employment to workers with transferable skills coming from sectors hardly hit by the Covid-19 outbreak;
 - Providing training in fundamental sector-related skills, essential also for basic re and up-skilling;
 - The creation of flexible jobs.
- ▶ Our companies provide essential services ensuring compliance with Collective Agreements and abiding by European and national legislation. Liaising with Social Partners is essential in the identification and design of support measures that ensure an ambitious and successful European recovery.

A SECTOR THAT NEEDS TARGETED SUPPORT TO CONTINUE PROVIDING ITS ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- ▶ Flexible unemployment schemes, adapted to the progressive phasing-out of containment measures, need to be accompanied by liquidity support measures to ensure the viability of European companies.
- ▶ Further, specific measures need to be designed to ensure that labour-intensive sectors have **smooth access to PPEs**. The health and safety of cleaning agents is a priority for cleaning and facility services companies. The extra costs resulting from the enforcement of public health and safety measures should be incorporated into public service contracts. When this is not possible, authorities need to put in place tax credit systems that help labour-intensive companies and purchasers to sustain these additional and burdening costs.

QUALITY-BASED AND FAIR CONTRACTING PRACTICES: AS RELEVANT AS EVER

- ▶ The COVID-19 crisis has evidenced the need for an urgent shift to quality in the criteria to purchase cleaning services. Quality-based selection ensures high social standards, duly trained professionals and the use of the adequate techniques and products to maintain and enhance hygiene and cleanliness levels. Setting aside the focus on price alone is necessary to ensure the provision of essential services that are key for the safe reopening of companies, transport hubs, cultural sites and other facilities and infrastructures.
- ▶ Quality-based tendering³ and purchasing of cleaning services by public and private buyers needs to be accompanied by fair contracting practices, such as the ones underlined by the European Business Services Alliance (EBSA) in its statement of 13 May 2020:
 - Prompt payment measures, especially for SMEs
 - Duly compliance of contracts during lockdowns and a revision of clauses to include the new hygiene and organisational needs.

A SECTOR READY TO SUPPORT EUROPE'S REOPENING

- ▶ The European Cleaning and Facility Services Sector is actively contributing to Europe's social and economic recovery. With the due targeted support measures, it will undoubtedly not only contribute to ensuring the health and safety of European workplaces, transport hubs and recreational facilities, but grow into an even stronger partner for Europe's socio-economic recovery.
- ▶ Our sector is ready to take on the challenge to do so while further integrating into the green and digital transition. With the adequate support measures as well as the necessary shift to a quality based approach in the purchase of cleaning services, the cleaning sector will fulfil public authorities' level of ambition for its role in Europe's roadmap to the new normal.



¹In this sense, the EFCI strongly supports the creation of a unitary EU laissez-passer that avoids burdensome efforts on companies in emergency situations like the COVID-19 lockdowns.

²As of data of 2016; see page 2016 of EFCI'S 2019 Trend Report "The European Cleaning Industry 1995-2016": <https://www.efci.eu/wp-content/uploads/flipbooks/1/>. Also, see in this sense our French member survey results of April 2020: <https://www.monde-proprete.com/impacts-covid-19-activite-entreprises-proprete-retours-enquete>.

³This principles are widely developed in the Best Value Guide, developed by the EFCI with its Social Partner UNI Europa with the financial support of the European Commission.

Who is the EFCI?

The EFCI is the voice of the European cleaning and facility services industry in Europe.

It brings together 13 associations representing the industry at national level, employing over 4.1 million people in more than 283,000 companies.


283.000
companies


4 million
people employed


120.000
billion turnover

EFCI's core objectives are:

- ▶ To communicate the industry's needs and priorities to the policy makers at the EU level and in the European Social Dialogue.
- ▶ To promote the industry and enhance the sector's competitiveness and image.
- ▶ To foster the exchange of information among EFCI's members and to facilitate capacity building.
- ▶ To organise and implement actions and projects at European level (on subjects such as responsible procurement, promotion of services' quality and of vocational training).
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The EFCI is an international non-profit association and is the recognised Social Partner by the European Commission for the sector. It is the employer's representative in the European Social Dialogue for Industrial Cleaning, where common projects are developed together with UNI Europa.

The EFCI is also an observer member of the European Platform tackling undeclared work.



The EFCI is an active member of the European Business Services Alliance (EBSA), the collective voice of the European Business Services Organisations. The EBSA works on increasing knowledge, visibility and recognition of the business services industry at the European level and promotes the convergence of views and positions expressed by the European Business Services.



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