



Covid-19 - The Essential Role of Home Improvement Stores

We at the European DIY Retail Association (EDRA) and Global Home Improvement Network (GHIN) have been taken aback at the accelerating pace of the Covid-19 virus. It has taken 67 days from the first reported case of the virus to reach 100,000 cases globally, 11 days for the second 100,000, and only 4 days for the third 100,000. The world is facing, without question, one of the biggest challenges in our lifetime.

EDRA/GHIN unequivocally supports the numerous lock-downs that are taking place almost all over the world. The closing of public amenities and the increasing policies of social distancing are slowing the pace of Covid-19. EDRA/GHIN also believes it is right to temporarily close all stores with the exception of food stores, pharmacists, banks and other services deemed essential.

We passionately believe that home improvement stores should also be classified as essential retail. Our members' stores sell essential items such as electric, heating and plumbing equipment that customers require access to. Moreover, many home improvement stores also sell products that are currently in high demand (bleach, cleaning products/disinfectants, face masks etc...). Finally, as Governments are increasingly appealing to the global population to stay at home, it is even more important that these homes are functional and present a safe and secure living environment.

EuroCommerce, the voice of European Retailing in Brussels, appealed in their [press release](#) only last week on the 18th of March, to the EU Governments to consider keeping DIY stores open - albeit with some restrictions. Some Governments have installed restrictive measures to tackle Covid-19 and yet recognised the DIY sector as an essential retailer that should remain open.

Speaking today, EDRA/GHIN General Secretary John W. Herbert stated:

"Our absolute top priority is to protect the health and safety of both our customers and our employees and we are sure that if we install relevant restriction measures, for example reducing the number of customers in stores at any one time and ensuring social distancing is well observed, this will help to protect customers and employees' personal safety and give the customers the opportunity to maintain their homes."

Finally, EDRA/GHIN would like to ask the European Commission to suspend implementing new EU rules that are not directly related to the pandemic. Many companies are already feeling pressure from all sides. Adding new obligations, as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, may hinder their capacity to tackle this evolving crisis.

ENDS

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EDRA/GHIN is the voice for the home improvement industry globally. Today EDRA/GHIN represents 214 home improvement companies operating over 32,000 stores in 74 countries.