

ETSA Press Release in Response to the State of the Union Speech by President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

14 September 2022

[ETSA, the European Textile Services Industry](#) welcomes the emergency and temporary measures announced today by the European Commission, during the State of the Union speech by President von der Leyen, including the forthcoming discussions on price caps. We understand more detailed information will be shared and elaborated during the forthcoming meetings of the energy ministers in September/ October with regards to some specific measures in support of companies affected by the gas and energy crisis.

With this precarious time in mind, the textile services industry would like to communicate to the European Commission the severe impact the current energy and inflation crisis has had on **“the essential services provided by the Textile Services Sector”**. **Crucially, the textile services industry is vital to the infrastructure of essential industries, including the healthcare sector (such as hospitals), cleanrooms and hospitality.**

In the absence of rented textile services, the medical industry would be without sanitary mats surfaces and bed linens. There would be a lack of clothing for healthcare professionals, including protective sanitary gowns for surgeons, nurses and doctors, uniforms including other forms of personal protective equipment. This would be catastrophic, whilst the textile service sector continues to deal with the post COVID-19 pandemic consequences and now with the energy crisis. Other essential services and professions such as construction, food services, energy, police and more also depend on textile services for uniforms and supplies. Even in industrial laundries for tourism the situation is dramatic, the risk is that many small and medium-sized enterprises will no longer be able to operate.

Our sector has seen its energy costs increase by figures of double, triple and even higher. As relevant examples:

- 1) **Czech Republic:** where the Council Presidency originates, laundries are dealing with an equally dire situation. Gas and energy companies have been sending letters to laundries indicating that they will have no choice but to drastically raise prices which would be a disaster for the citizens. To this point the response in aid has been lacking and is insufficient in helping to keep these laundries in business and the service sector adequately stocked with hygienic materials. These laundries have seen as much as a 450% increase in their cost of gas when compared to 2019 and 500% with respect to electricity compared to 2019. As in Germany, the vast majority (~80%) of nursing homes and hospitals are reliant on a supply of hygienically cleaned textiles from textile service companies, with 90% of these firms being SMEs in the case of the Czech Republic. These smaller businesses will have an exceedingly difficult time surviving without proper support from EU and National Governing bodies.

- 2) **Germany:** here the textile service sector employs over 80,000 people in over 2,500 businesses, many of which are SMEs, who serve as the bedrock to local communities, creating jobs and supporting families. Energy costs have also risen exponentially in Germany. Without a sufficient state aid revision for energy intensive industries by both the Federal Government and the European Union, hospitals and the service industry could go without life-saving supplies. Furthermore, laundries (especially SMEs) are unable to absorb the cost and will be forced to close their doors. 80% of hospitals and nursing homes in Germany receive their sanitary and hygienically cleaned textiles from textile service companies who are providing an essential service to their citizens.

- 3) **Italy:** Here, the industrial laundry sector serves 800.000 healthcare workers, 220.000 hospital beds and ensures the implementation of 9 million surgical operations every year. the employees in the sector are 30.000 and the turnover in 2019 is equal to € 1.705.000.000€. The increase in energy and gas costs is seriously endangering the entire sector, at the moment the energy and gas costs incurred by companies amount to 444.109.675 €, more than in 2019 is 340.354.999 €, therefore the loss of the sector amounts to 215.370.505,71 €. In the absence of structural interventions on the cost of gas, as an association and as companies, we have already communicated to hospitals the risk of a reduction in the service with consequences also on health services.

Our industry is making strides to reduce its energy consumption and become more and more sustainable and ETSA's appointment as [European Commission Climate Pact Ambassador](#) accents this point, as we are an industry which is proudly inherently circular. However, due to the critical nature of the service we provide, we require a considerable amount of energy to keep services, **particularly hospitals and care homes** stocked with lifesaving material as well **as clothing and bed linens for the patients themselves.** These supplies are essential to the functioning of services necessary and for the well-being of European citizens. This crisis is indeed abating the laundry and textile services industry throughout Europe.

We call on the Czech Presidency, Commission and Parliament to come together and issue a price cap and thank the Commission for the announced energy package and state aid revision. It is urged that the industrial laundries sector at European level be included among the sectors with high energy and gas consumption in order to benefit from aid or essential business provided to European citizens will be seriously at risk.

About ETSA:

ETSA represents today industrial laundries, rented textile services, detergents, machineries and national textile services associations across Europe, both large and small textile services companies. We employ over 135,000 people in Europe, with an estimated total market turnover of 11 billion EUR.

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ETSA National Associations

