

Pandemic & Nonwovens industry response: Challenges turned into opportunities - A resilient and recession-proof industry?

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Comment by Jacques Prigneaux, Market Analysis & Economic Affairs Director

In the upcoming online version of OUTLOOK™20, a whole session is dedicated on the Nonwovens industry response to the pandemic. Jacques Prigneaux, Market Analysis & Economic Affairs Director at EDANA, reflects on what has been done by the association, its members and the industry.

- When did EDANA first become aware that Covid-19 might become a problem and what was your initial response?

Being understandably 'close to the coalface' on this topic we were engaged very early on, actively tracking supply chain issues and the challenges for authorities since March. EDANA was drawn into an instantaneous role as an advisor and facilitator to a wide range of public and private-sector players. Early in the pandemic, government and European Union officials who previously knew little about facemasks and nothing at all about the nonwoven fabrics that go into them needed to get up to speed overnight.

EDANA was proactive in flagging the issues, writing to the European Commission, requesting its support in working with Member States to ensure that all production facilities where these products are manufactured are kept fully operational in the interest of public health. EDANA has been recognized by the European Commission as the voice of industry on all issues relevant to the nonwoven-based face masks supply chain.

Over the last five months, EDANA has also been liaising with partner associations including MedTech Europe, ESF, and EURATEX to ensure sufficient supplies of essential public health equipment.

EDANA was also busy from the off working to see how supply could match up with demand. One of its first steps was to conduct a survey, subsequently updated, of meltblown lines with appropriate charging equipment, and meltblown manufacturers who might be able to adapt their machines to make the facemask grade, as well as surveying facemask operations requiring meltblown.

