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PRESS RELEASE

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Joint declaration by VCI and IG BCE Corona crisis: Joining forces in the chemical sector

Germany is undoubtedly in the midst of one of the most difficult crises in its history. The Mining, Chemical and Energy Industries Union (IG BCE) and the companies in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry are seeking to close ranks in this difficult situation. The German Chemical Industry Association (VCI) and the IG BCE have issued a joint declaration stating

"We bear social responsibility and want to do everything we can to help solve the crisis and mitigate its social and economic consequences. This also includes exemplary health protection in our companies.

Today, the Federal Council is paving the way for comprehensive packages of measures on an unprecedented scale: this applies to the extensive economic aid package, which we welcome as a right and important step. At the same time, the Infection Protection Act will be amended this week: In times of epidemic, it gives the Federal Ministry of Health comprehensive authority to take measures to ensure the basic supply of medicines, medical devices, narcotics, aids, laboratory diagnostics, protective equipment and disinfection.

All these products originate from the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Therefore, our industry is systemically relevant: Starting with the basic material, the entire value chain of the chemical-pharmaceutical industry must be preserved. In order to keep the healthcare system functioning, the chemical-pharmaceutical industry must ensure that:

- employees are allowed to reach their workplace even in the event of curfews,
- the supply of raw materials in our supply chains is guaranteed,
- transport for the products listed in the Epidemic Law and their supply chains is secured.

Every effort must be made to preserve the approximately 465,000 jobs in companies in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry. Especially for the for medium-sized industrial companies, but also for large corporations, the short-term focus is on liquidity, extended short-time working regulations - which in our industry, incidentally, include a collectively agreed increase to 90 percent by our own efforts -, tax deferrals and postponements of due dates, guarantees and interest-free loans. Much of this is taken up by the German government in its package of measures. More will have to follow.

As an industry, we are fully committed to providing advice and assistance. This is also reflected in the enormous voluntary commitment of very many employees and companies. The industry initiative for the supply of disinfectants is just one example of many. The employees and companies in our industry stand alongside the political decision-makers and the many helpers in the professional groups that are now particularly important. They deserve special thanks. Together we can and will overcome the current crisis. We want to make our contribution."

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The VCI represents the economic policy interests of around 1,700 German chemical companies and German subsidiaries of foreign groups vis-à-vis politicians, authorities, other sectors of the economy, science and the media. In 2019, the industry had a turnover of 193 billion euros and employed around 464,800 people.

With more than 600,000 members, the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union (IG BCE) is the third largest union in the German Trade Union Federation. Its areas of organization include mining, chemicals/pharmaceuticals, energy, oil and gas, glass, rubber, ceramics, plastics and non-metallic materials, leather, paper, environment, water and utilities.