

# **Editorial: COVID-19: addressing shortages of meltblown fabrics, face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE)**

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## **Abstracts**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) in European countries and the USA and, in turn, has exposed the heavy reliance of these countries on Chinese suppliers. Indeed, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that around 85% of all face masks used worldwide were manufactured in China, as were the majority of other PPE items, such as surgical gowns, scrubs, caps, shoe covers and disposable bedding. Moves have now been made by a number of individual European countries and the USA to ensure that they are never again totally reliant on imports of face masks or other PPE, whether from China or anywhere else. Such moves have included the implementation of government strategies and significant investments by a number of companies, including nonwovens manufacturers. In this report, Robin Anson discusses China's dominance and its impact on global supplies of PPE with particular reference to face masks. Also, he analyses responses to shortages of face masks and other PPE in EU countries and the USA, focusing in particular on the activities of some of the industry's key players, including 3M, Ahlstrom-Munksjö, Bosch, Braskem, Don & Low, Honeywell, Innovatec, Kolmi-Hopen, Lenzing, Mann+Hummel, Mondi, Oerlikon Nonwoven, Ontex, Palmers Textil, Reifenhauser Reicofil, and Sandler.

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