



BREAKING NEWS: Two of Europe's biggest fridge makers tie the knot



Two of continental Europe's largest refrigeration manufacturers have agreed to merge their commercial operations in a move they claim will create a €400m (£350m) powerhouse targeting foodservice retail customers.

Italy-based Epta and Germany-based Viessmann Refrigeration Solutions said they had signed an agreement to create a joint venture that would allow them to build a new leading commercial refrigeration player in Central and Northern Europe.

Under the terms of the deal, Epta will own 70% of the shareholding while VRS will own 30%.

The companies will combine their respective commercial businesses, which includes all of VRS' professional refrigeration activities in Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and the Baltics, and Epta's activities in Germany, Poland, Denmark, Finland, and Norway.

The new entity will have consolidated revenues of more than €400m and over 1,600 employees. Once the deal has closed, Epta will fully consolidate the company into its group financial statements.

The firms said that by joining forces they will significantly strengthen their offering and presence in Central and Northern Europe, creating a one-stop shop provider of energy efficient and sustainable commercial refrigeration solutions for retail and F&B operators.

Marco Nocivelli, president and CEO of Epta, said the combined businesses will be able to offer the “broadest and most comprehensive” range of commercial refrigeration solutions and services in the market.

“Our combined expertise in the commercial refrigeration business is unique and we share similar values as family businesses,” he said.

“The new joint venture led by Epta represents a further step in our path to consolidate our status as a global player in the sector, thanks to an increase in production capacity and a strengthened international footprint.

“Within the scenario of ecological and digital transition, the creation of connections and the enhancement of network dynamics are a fundamental part of generating a sustainable future. This joint venture perfectly represents our strategy and our desire to continue investing in the future of the Group in all the areas in which we operate.”

Frank Winters, CEO of Viessmann Refrigeration Solutions, said the tie-up will create the ideal conditions for long-term profitable growth in a highly competitive market.

“Epta and Viessmann Refrigeration Solutions both strive for a positive impact with solutions that contribute to preserving the planet.

“We combine the best of both worlds: highly energy-efficient state-of-the-art solutions with scale and manufacturing power.

“The combination will allow unprecedented geographical coverage in Europe, which will benefit both local and international operating customers. Together, we co-create the best prospect for our customers, our employees, and for the generations to come.”

The closing of the deal is subject to customary conditions precedent, including approval by the antitrust authorities, expected in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Epta’s business activities in Western and Southern Europe, Middle East, Latin America, the US, as well as Asia Pacific and Oceania, are not affected by this joint venture agreement.

The transaction does not include VRS’s clean and cold room solutions activities.

VRS’ production site in Hof, Germany, the related sales companies and Viessmann Technologies will fully remain with the Viessmann Group.