

Antwerp 2.0: A dialogue that matters to bridge the gap to industrial competitiveness

Brussels, 26 February 2025: One year ago, the Antwerp Declaration was presented by leading associations and CEOs to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the former Belgian Prime Minister. This declaration stressed industries' commitment to Europe's sustainability goals and issued an urgent call to enhance competitiveness, resilience, and security of supply amid challenging economic conditions.

A year later, the need to enhance the competitiveness of European industries is more pressing than ever. In response, the European Commission has published its communication "*The Clean Industrial Deal: A Joint Roadmap for Competitiveness and Decarbonisation*". It acknowledges industries' calls for action and aims to bridge the competitiveness gap between Europe and other major economies.

At today's Antwerp 2.0 event, 400 business leaders of EU industries and associations had the opportunity to share their views and requests with the European Commission's President Ursula Von der Leyen, Belgium's Prime Minister Bart De Wever, and other leading Commission officials. Luis Cabra, President of FuelsEurope and Deputy CEO of Repsol, represented the fuel manufacturing industry. He emphasised the key enablers needed for the successful implementation of the Clean Industrial Deal, and stated: "*We urge policymakers to recognise the industry's critical role in ensuring a competitive, sustainable, and secure industrial transition.*"

A clear regulatory framework that fosters innovation and private investment is essential

to close the EU's competitiveness gap. The fuel manufacturing industry has been investing for many years in low-carbon technologies. Disappointingly, the Clean Industrial Deal fails to include our sector within those for which a Strategic Action Plan will be developed, and which rely on our products and feedstock such as the chemical, aviation, maritime and road sectors. Investors need the necessary business case to unlock the sector's full investment potential. Technology neutrality must guide regulatory improvements to drive meaningful and sustainable progress.

Energy security remains a defining challenge. Liana Gouta, Director General FuelsEurope commented: "*The fuel manufacturing sector is committed to ensuring a reliable and resilient supply of renewable and low-carbon fuels, produced and distributed within Europe through an established, efficient logistics network.*"

Moreover, social consensus is key to achieving climate goals. The transition must safeguard affordable mobility and home heating, stable jobs, and reliable public services, ensuring that the shift towards sustainability remains

economically and socially viable.

The publication of the Clean Industrial Deal and the Antwerp 2.0 event mark the alignment of a structured, action-driven dialogue and we hope that this is just the beginning of identifying and including all strategic sectors, crucial to achieving the EU

climate goals. Europe's clean industrial future must be inclusive, innovative, and secure. The Fuel Manufacturing industry stands ready to participate in the dialogue with the Commission, to be a key partner in driving this transformation forward.

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FuelsEurope, the voice of the European fuel manufacturing industry. FuelsEurope represents, within the EU institutions, the interest of 40 companies manufacturing and distributing conventional and renewable fuels and products for mobility, energy and feedstocks for industrial value chains in the EU.

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