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PRESS RELEASE

European Council puts refining in the spotlight, but a short-term framework is not a strategic approach

Brussels, 19 October 2026: The European Council's recognition of the strategic importance of Europe's refining industry is an important and positive step, particularly in the context of the Strategic Dialogue announced by Ursula von der Leyen on 6 October. However, short-term measures alone will not be enough. Europe needs an EU Strategy that safeguards its existing refining capacity, strengthens strategic autonomy, not only in the short, but also in the long-term. In addition, European refineries' capacity to invest in their transformation is also a pillar of Europe's present and future autonomy, resilience and climate ambition, which cannot be overlooked in this Strategy.

During the European Council meeting of 15 October, the 27 Heads of State have called for a short-term framework to optimise the capacity and efficiency of EU refineries, as part of their response to high energy and fuel prices. This comes shortly after the President of the European Commission announced a Strategic Dialogue on refining. Together, these developments are an opportunity to put refining firmly at the heart of Europe's competitiveness, energy transition and security agendas.

The Strategic Dialogue must look beyond the immediate crisis.

Liana Gouta, Director General FuelsEurope, said "*The European Council's recognition that Europe needs a robust refining sector is a strong signal. But addressing today's pressures without securing tomorrow's industrial capacity would be a strategic mistake. Europe must create the conditions for its refineries, not only to continue supplying energy products today, but also to invest, transform and remain competitive for decades to come*."

European refineries provide essential fuels and products for transport, industry and defence. They are also investing in their transformation. Renewable and low-carbon fuels and products made in Europe, using sustainable biomass and recycled CO_2, can increasingly replace conventional products. This directly supports the Heads of State's ambition to deploy renewable and low-carbon energy sources, as a way to strengthen resilience and reduce strategic dependencies, while delivering the abundant and homegrown energy needed to power the economy of the future, as clearly stated in the latest EUCO conclusions.

Maintaining this industrial capacity is also critical for Europe's security across the economy, for businesses and citizens. In addition, Europe's defence sector cannot afford to lose its domestic refining capacity. And it cannot protect critical infrastructure, strengthen defence readiness or ensure military mobility without reliable access to essential fuels and products produced in Europe, both today and in the decades ahead.

The Strategic Dialogue must therefore go beyond short-term measures. Not only should it secure viability and international competitiveness of the EU refining industry, but it should also create the

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conditions for transformative investment, innovation and decarbonization, while securing Europe's refining capacity throughout its transition.

Liana Gouta concluded "*Europe has a choice: either allow a strategic industry to decline and become increasingly dependent on products made elsewhere or create the conditions for that industry to remain competitive and successfully transform in Europe. Strategic autonomy cannot be secured by allowing critical industrial capacity to disappear or relocate. The Strategic Dialogue announced by the President of the Commission could become the ideal platform to address all above issues.*"

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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 & feedstocks for industrial value chains in the EU.

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