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PRESS RELEASE

Strategic Dialogue opens path towards an EU Refining Strategy for a resilient and competitive refining sector

Brussels, 28 October 2026: FuelsEurope welcomes today's launch of the European Commission's Strategic Dialogue on European refineries, and the recognition of refining as a strategic sector for Europe's citizens, economy, energy security and defence. The announced joint roadmap for the transformation of the sector, dedicated technical follow-up for short-term measures and the Commission's political support for designing a Refining Strategy mark a constructive start towards securing the sector's future.

The high-level dialogue was chaired by European Commissioners Dan Jørgensen and Andrius Kubilius, bringing together the refining and fuels industry with representatives from the European Union Military Committee, NATO, and other stakeholders. The discussions focused on two priorities: measures to optimise fuel production in Europe in the short term, and how to maintain a resilient and competitive European refining industry able to transform to meet Europe's future sustainable fuel and product needs.

FuelsEurope particularly welcomes the Commission's recognition of the strategic role of European refining for citizens, businesses, defence, security and Europe's strategic autonomy. Commissioner Kubilius was unequivocal: "*Defence without fuels is not possible*," and the defence community stressed that Europe needs domestic production capacity at a time when military demand for fuels is increasing.

Another key outcome of today's first ''Strategic Dialogue'' is the announcement by Commissioner Jørgensen of a joint roadmap for the transformation of the sector, the technical follow-up and the political support of the Commission.

Ready to act now, while securing Europe's future

European refiners confirmed their readiness to work with the Commission and Member States to identify technically feasible and safe options to maximise available production capacity in the short term.

The industry has already demonstrated its ability to respond. European refineries increased jet fuel production by 22% in March 2026 and by 30% year-on-year in May, according to IEA figures. Further increases may be possible, although technical and operational limits remain, and provided enabling conditions are put in place by member states and local authorities alongside OEMs' support.

FuelsEurope therefore welcomes the Commission's intention, announced during today's dialogue, to establish dedicated technical workstreams, bringing together experts to examine the short-term measures that can be taken forward.

Short-term action must go hand in hand with strengthening Europe's long-term resilience

FuelsEurope highlighted during the meeting that Europe has already lost 20% of its refining capacity since 2009 with 35 refinery closures. Further closures should be prevented as they would increase reliance on imported fuels and products, while also eroding the industrial base Europe needs to produce renewable and low-carbon fuels in the future. FuelsEurope stressed that competitiveness is therefore a precondition for both resilience and the transition.

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From Strategic Dialogue to European strategy

The Commission's own concept note for the dialogue recognises the two sides of this challenge: how to increase and sustain European production capacity in the short term, and how to preserve refining in Europe as a viable business in the longer term, including the production of alternative fuels and feedstocks for chemicals, and other industries.

For FuelsEurope, the next phase must now translate this political recognition into action.

Europe needs an approach that protects the competitiveness of its refining industry while creating the conditions for investment in its transformation. That means ensuring an effective carbon leakage protection, securing broader access to sustainable feedstocks, creating long-term markets for renewable and low-carbon fuels, and developing derisking instruments for major industrial investments.

FuelsEurope therefore welcomes the commitment made today to continue this first Strategic Dialogue with future high-level meetings, alongside the technical workstreams.

Liana Gouta, Director General FuelsEurope, said: "*Today was a strong and constructive start. Europe has recognised that refining is not an industry of the past. It is strategic to EU citizens, our economy, our security, our defence, and our transition."* She furthermore stressed*: "Our industry is ready to contribute immediately to strengthening Europe's resilience. But we must look beyond the immediate pressures. European refining is a sector at risk, and without competitive refineries today, there can be no transformation into the renewable and low-carbon production hubs Europe needs tomorrow*."

Liana Gouta concluded: *"Today's commitment to a joint transformation roadmap, dedicated technical workstreams and a further Strategic Dialogue gives us a clear path forward. Our industry stands ready to play its full part in developing the ambitious European Refining Strategy announced by President von der Leyen. Together, we must now turn political recognition into concrete action that strengthens competitiveness, safeguards critical industrial capacity and unlocks investment in Europe's refining transformation*."

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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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