

Fostering innovation whilst ensuring competitiveness: The only paradigm for a successful transition of EU industry

Brussels, 25 April 2019: The ninth edition of the High Level Meeting of the Refining Forum which gathered representatives from the Institutions, Member States, Civil Society and Industry concurred that the refining industry has a critical role to play during the energy transition. It is key in ensuring security of supply, whilst developing innovative low-carbon technologies to achieve the climate objectives. Therefore, maintaining the global competitiveness of the industry to attract investments is essential. Participants also agreed to continue the dialogue in the Refining Forum for the future.

Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete underlined in his opening remarks at the ninth High Level Meeting of the Refining Forum *“low-carbon technologies for the transition of the refining industry already exist today”*. He added *“investments are needed to reduce their cost and deploy them at scale”*.

Member States also stressed the importance of innovation and technological developments to enable EU industry to become carbon neutral, and that these elements were an integral part of their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), in particular with regards to the development of alternative fuels to reduce CO₂ emissions in transport. Finally, Member States reaffirmed the critical role of the refining industry in ensuring security of supply, and the importance of the Refining Forum as a discussion platform.

Following up on the statement of DG Grow *“a climate neutral economy will not happen without a vibrant industry”*, Koen Coppenholle, Director General Cembureau, stated on behalf of the Alliance of Energy Intensive Industries (EII), *“Energy Intensive Industries are at the basis of all low-carbon technologies”*, he added *“Our sectors are engaged in becoming sustainable, but sustainable is not only environmental, it is also economical and socially acceptable. A competitive industry in the EU is one that can invest and get return on these investments”*.

Guido Nelissen, from IndustriAll, the Federation of Trade Unions, underlined that *“energy intensive Industry jobs contribute to the social cohesion of Europe”* and called for a flanking industrial policy where access to sustainable finance for all industrial sectors engaging in a low-carbon transformation is paramount.

Lukasz Kolinski, Head of Unit at DG Energy, concluded on behalf of the Commission *“Whilst change is unavoidable and happening, it is essential to maintain the competitiveness of European economy.”* He added *“the Commission’s Long Term Strategy, A Clean Planet for All, recognises the importance of technological developments and the need for multiple low carbon technologies such as hydrogen or synthetic fuels”*. He furthermore stressed the significant challenge of global competition and the need for a level playing field where international trade partners fulfil their climate commitments, in order to attract investments for EU industry.

John Cooper, Director General FuelsEurope, reminded the role of the refining industry in supplying energy for most of transport and petrochemicals. He stated *“the industry’s long-term strategy, as outlined in the Vision 2050, is to develop at scale a number of low-carbon technologies to supply low-carbon liquid fuels and low-carbon feedstock for petrochemicals. But we need a policy framework to deliver our Vision 2050”*.

He underlined *“investment will not come like that, we need to be competitive. The policy challenge associated with climate neutrality may have been underestimated”*.

John Cooper welcomed the dialogue taking place in this Forum and the support of Member States for maintaining this platform. He thanked the

Commission and Commissioner Arias Cañete for organising this 9th edition of the Refining Forum, and called for a continuation of the Forum under the next Commission.

- Ends -

FuelsEurope, the voice of the European petroleum refining industry

FuelsEurope represents with the EU institutions the interest of 40 companies operating refineries in the EU. Members account for almost 100% of EU petroleum refining capacity and more than 75% of EU motor fuel retail sales.

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