

## Ceemet Employers' Strategy Revision

### State of play

- The geopolitical and economic landscape has fundamentally shifted since the adoption of the current Ceemet strategy in October 2022. The war in Ukraine continues to reshape Europe's energy architecture and security infrastructure. The escalation of conflict in the Middle East has added more volatility to global markets, supply chains and energy prices. The return of a protectionist trade agenda led by the United States and now being replicated by other economies, is affecting the commercial attractiveness of European regional industrial goods, poses a direct and material threat to the MET sector's export-driven model. Taken together, these developments have shaken the relatively stable international order in which European regional industries have operated for decades.
- In this context, the European MET sector is navigating a set of compounding pressures: persistent labour and skills shortages as a result of a demographic decline, fragile and changing supply chains, the need to be more competitive and investment focused and the imperative to accelerate the twin transitions to a greener and digital economy. The rise of artificial intelligence is simultaneously creating opportunity and disruption in the workplaces. MET sector's strategic relevance has also grown sharply, as Europe's defence and security ambitions depend on our sectors' manufacturing capacity and resilience.
- The Von der Leyen Commission II officially took office on 1 December 2024, to serve a five-year term until 2029. The competitiveness and simplification narrative, reinforced by the Draghi report on European competitiveness, has created a clear momentum to place industry and employers' priorities closer to the centre of EU policymaking. This is a window of opportunity that must be seized **deliberately and strategically**. However, this rhetoric must be tested against legislative reality: the simplification agenda has yet to translate into a meaningful reduction of regulatory burden for employers on the ground.
- Indeed, despite the stated ambition to simplify, the volume of social legislation continues to grow. As Ceemet anticipated, the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) has generated a steady stream of legislative and non-legislative initiatives that

present significant challenges for employers. EU policymakers continue to push at the boundaries of, and frequently beyond, the competencies set out in the EU Treaties, with insufficient regard for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality or for the effectiveness of existing national solutions and systems. The gap between the simplification promise and the regulatory output remains one of the biggest challenges of MET employers.

- The Commission also continues to shift the burden of compliance and control for labour regulation onto employers through new and increasingly complex reporting duties, adding cost and administrative burden at a time when companies need a serious push to survive and offer both jobs and competitive products.
- Engaging in Brussels remains a demanding exercise for employers' organisations. The debate on social and employment matters continues to be shaped by a limited understanding of employers' operational realities and a disconnect from the impacts of policy on the real economy. The European Commission and the European Parliament's EMPL committee still too often fail to reflect - or straightforward ignore - the legitimate concerns of employers. At Member State level, policy continues to be driven by simplified public narratives, without adequate explanation of the difficult trade-offs that responsible policymaking requires.
- Trade unions remain better organised at European level, with more joined-up positioning, faster reaction times and a stronger collective voice. Their messaging, often simplified and emotionally charged, resonates more readily in the public discourse. While employers' organisations have become notably more collaborative and synchronised in their responses in recent years, the structural gap persists. Employers now find themselves requiring to define and respond to the needs of a complex and fast-moving changing workplace and employee relationships, with the need to explain the complex realities now on the regional economy from the pressure from geo-political changes. Therefore, the legal framework and the unintended consequences of well-intentioned proposals being placed on employers is now unprecedented. Closing this gap requires not only better coordination, but a fundamentally more proactive and strategic approach to shaping the narrative.
- The cost of a regulatory burden is now more visible than ever. For years, the cumulative impact of EU regulation on industrial competitiveness was difficult to quantify precisely even though it was widely felt by employers. That is changing. A growing body of research and impact assessments is now putting specific numbers on the cost of compliance, reporting obligations, and regulatory overlap. The picture that emerges shows how much resources the regulatory burden drains from investment, production and job creation.
- In the past years, the EU's protectionist policies have and continue to unfairly include also our allies, even those who have close trade and wider agreements. Instruments meant to

counter distortive practices have been applied without sufficient differentiation, penalising like-minded partners who uphold comparable standards and allow for reciprocal and equitable market access rules. This indiscriminate approach risks undermining the alliances Europe needs most at a time of strategic rivalry.

- For MET industries, the collaboration with aligned allies with whom we have a longstanding industrial cooperation base should be encouraged not hindered. The sector's value chains rest on decades of industrial cooperation, shared standards, joint innovation, and integrated supply networks. Restricting trade, supply chain and shared economic co-operation with these partners fragments proven ecosystems and weakens collective capacity to compete.

### **What do we have to do?**

Over the course of the current strategy, Ceemet has made meaningful progress in developing relationships with key stakeholders and in strengthening its profile in Brussels. However, the scale and pace of change across geopolitical, economic, technological and institutional dimensions demand that we move with bigger ambition. To reinforce the voice of MET employers effectively in this new environment, we need a sharper, more ambitious and more structured approaches, built around the following priorities:

- Conduct a critical reassessment of Ceemet's key interactions and influence channels in Brussels and across the network, identifying where impact has been achieved and where gaps remain.
- Map the new institutional and political landscape under the current Commission and Parliament, identifying emerging decision-makers, committees and advisory bodies where MET employers' interests must be represented.
- Based on the stakeholder mapping, develop a systematic and differentiated engagement programme, tailored to each audience, from policymakers and regulators to social partners, sectoral alliances and media.
- Deepen strategic collaboration with partner organisations, both within and outside the MET sector, to build broader coalitions and amplify common messages on competitiveness, simplification, and better regulation.
- Invest in stronger narrative and communication capabilities, moving from reactive defence to proactive agenda-setting, to ensure employers' perspectives reach decision-makers before positions are fixed.
- Identify resources needed within the Ceemet Secretariat and across the membership needed to deliver on these objectives.

Our current Employers' strategy, adopted in Berlin, runs from 2022 to 2027. In the left column of table below, you will see 'What we want to achieve' section of the current strategy. In the right column, you will see the Secretariat's analysis of to which extent the goals have been achieved.

This document is intended as the basis for a structured discussion with the Liaison Committee, with the aim of agreeing which objectives we will continue to pursue, which require revision, and what we want to achieve in each category going forward. On the basis of this discussion, the Secretariat will start the drafting of the new Employers' Strategy.

| What we wanted to achieve in 2022–2027 strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | To which extent these objectives have been achieved                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | What we want to do more of / differently / less in the 2027–2032 strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| European Commission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the policy thinking within key Directorates General (DGs) and with key Commissioners' Cabinets.</li> <li>• This should include the legislative process and the development of initiatives before proposals are released.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceemet is on the right track with this goal. We have met multiple times with the cabinets of several Commissioners, even though meetings with the EVPs still haven't happened and is on our agenda. We have, nevertheless, met with the Commissioners either in public format (consultations) or during events (for example, being on the same panel with EVP Mînzatu).</li> <li>• Overall, Ceemet pushes views on general topics, looks at the bigger picture and targets beyond DG EMPL.</li> <li>• We also have published or will publish Ceemet position papers long before packages have been announced, thus contributing to the legislative process early on. These include the papers on</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure at least one bilateral meeting per year with EVP Mînzatu.</li> <li>• Keep publishing position papers before packages are announced.</li> <li>• Feed systematically into the Commission Work Programme, impact assessments and calls for evidence.</li> <li>• Prepare early for the 2029 Commission with input to mission letters and priorities for the next mandate.</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Skills Portability Initiative, Quality Jobs Act, Union of Skills, and the Fair Labour Mobility Package.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| European Parliament                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular contacts with a wider number of MEPs in the EMPL but also other important committees for our sector, such as committees on Industry (ITRE), Economic Affairs (ECON), the Internal Market (IMCO), Trade (INTA) and Culture &amp; Education (CULT).</li> <li>Establish close relationships with key MEPs and assistants, such as the coordinators on committees.</li> <li>Regular contact with key policy advisors in the parliament's political groups.</li> <li>Organising more meetings with MEPs and company representatives.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ceemet has increased contacts and collaboration with MEPs from relevant committees (ITRE, IMCO, LIBE etc) and most notably the EMPL committee. With some MEP and their assistants, we have email exchanges and meetings when important files come up. However, despite our efforts to meet with some key MEPs since the beginning of the mandate, some (particularly from Renew Europe) remain out of reach. And Ceemet, out of principle, doesn't work with the far-right and the far-left, except when advised doing so by the members (on an ad-hoc basis).</li> <li>More work needs to be done to establish contacts with political groups' policy advisors.</li> <li>Organising meetings with MEPs and company representatives is another goal that so far has been untouched.</li> <li>LobbyNet has become more important for the strategy setting context, where national associations can if they want to</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve company representatives in MEP meetings on major files.</li> <li>Draft a Ceemet manifesto for the 2029 European elections, consult members in 2027–28 and launch it nationally through members.</li> <li>Keep targeting hard-to-reach MEPs and renew contacts after the 2027 mid-term reshuffle of committee chairs and coordinators.</li> <li>Build regular contacts with political group policy advisors.</li> <li>Use LobbyNet to let national associations target MEPs on major files.</li> <li>Suggest questions to MEPs for the 2029 commissioner hearings through engaging with Parties and their stakeholder consultations directly.</li> <li>Bring workers, apprentices, and plant managers as messengers, not only CEOs.</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | have a more active role in targeting MEPs or the Council on major files.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| EU Council & Member States                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the legislative process when it comes to Council discussions and approval of the Commission proposals. Work with Ceemet Members to highlight the impact at a national level.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceemet's relationship with PermReps has improved over the past year. We now have a PermRep Outreach plan, based on which we send invitations on a rotation basis and meet 2-3 of them per trimester for information, exchange, and lobbying purposes. We now have a tracking document with all the meetings with the PermReps, to make the process more structured.</li> <li>• We have met with the last three presidencies, with some even multiple times and before the Presidency agenda was fully set. Presidencies are not usually open to meeting stakeholders starting two-three months before the Presidency.</li> <li>• We have also met EPSCO and COMPET attaches from various countries on topics of simplification, better regulation, and even more specific files.</li> <li>• Some Ceemet members are also actively contributing to getting information from PermReps. From members' perspective, these contacts are uneven across the membership. Of course, Ceemet cannot</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define at which stage of each file Ceemet and national members act.</li> <li>• Plan joint action with national members ahead of the upcoming presidencies, particularly the Italian (2028) and Dutch (2029) presidencies, starting 12–18 months in advance.</li> <li>• Continue the PermRep outreach plan and meetings with EPSCO/COMPET attachés.</li> <li>• Meet each presidency before its agenda is set.</li> <li>• With the help of members, monitor transposition of recent directives and flag gold-plating.</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | handle all 27 PermReps, so greater coordination with members is needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>Other sector organisations</p> <p><i>From our industries</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a close working relationship with the key sectors and coordinated positioning on key policies.</li> <li>• Increase discussions on possible positions/initiatives and possibility of agreeing with joint positioning where relevant.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have built a stronger collaborative relationship with ACEA, Orgalim, SeaEurope in different formats. However, collaboration with ASD remains inexistent.</li> <li>• On joint positions, there haven't been enough overlapping themes. Organisations have also decided to have a stricter division of competences to make sure no one is overstepping their topics and there is no double contradicting messaging from the same sectors.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We remain top open to collaborate with other sectoral organisation from our industries in the scope of projects (such as Skills4ASD+, etc)</li> <li>• Respect the agreed division of competences to avoid contradictory messaging.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Other sector organisations</p> <p><i>From other industries or the services</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase our cooperation and make it even more systematic.</li> <li>• Lead the inner circle and develop greater cooperation.</li> <li>• Involve more sectors in the inner circle.</li> </ul>                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EEN and Inner circle have been functioning quite well over the past years. All organisations who are active in the social field are part of the group, and others who are not deal with social affairs only marginally.</li> <li>• Delphine Rudelli has been leading since 2022 systematic cooperation with other sectoral organisations.</li> <li>• There have been a lot of ad-hoc collaborative efforts, such as IORP, Pay</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase joint lobbying initiatives with other sectoral organisations.</li> <li>• Explore a podcast on social policy, possibly with the participation of other members of the Inner Circle or the EEI.</li> <li>• Continue leading the Inner Circle and EEN cooperation.</li> <li>• Keep employer presence in EU agencies' governing boards, wherever sectoral representation is</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Transparency Directive, Talent Pool, Subcontracting joint statements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEI definitely helps as it creates more organic touchpoints with other sectoral organisations, leading to increased information sharing.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | possible (e.g. ELA) and strengthen cooperation with the EESC.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Business Europe                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the importance and visibility of social topics within BusinessEurope</li> <li>• Improve joint advocacy</li> <li>• Improve joint lobby actions</li> <li>• Improve the image of “employers” in the “Brussels bubble”</li> <li>• Better position employers in the “Brussels bubble”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social topics definitely have more visibility and importance within BusinessEurope due to regular discussions with sectors and our active participation in their working groups.</li> <li>• Joint advocacy has improved on some topics (such as subcontracting and PTD), but we are still not there for systemic and systematic joint action.</li> <li>• As for the improvement of employers’ image in Brussels, it has mostly been done through the work of the EEI. We haven’t worked with BusinessEurope on this objective.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek stronger alignment with BusinessEurope and develop systematic joint advocacy and lobby actions.</li> <li>• Continue discussing BusinessEurope's potential membership of the EEI.</li> <li>• Work jointly on improving the image of employers in Brussels.</li> </ul> |
| Companies from our industries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work more closely with those member companies who have a presence in Brussels.</li> <li>• Develop a network with those who are willing to speak at events, join meetings with policy</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with Brussels-based companies is still “work in progress”. Even for companies that are based in Brussels, social issues are not a priority, either due to lack of awareness or simply deliberate</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise two Afterworks per year (e.g. January and June).</li> <li>• Map companies' production sites against key MEPs' constituencies. Whenever possible, frame files</li> </ul>                                                                                          |

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| <p>makers or get feedback from their company experts on our dossiers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further deepen the cooperation with Ceemet members to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the right experts in companies on very complex/highly technical topics</li> <li>○ high level representatives who are willing to appear at Ceemet events or in the media</li> </ul> </li> <li>• MEPs often aim to their re-election or they want to fulfill election promises. Therefore, need to identify member companies with important locations/production sites in the constituencies of relevant MEPs to install contacts.</li> </ul> | <p>prioritisation of other, more industrial files. Ceemet can work on the awareness aspect through inviting them to our events and organising once or twice a year Afterwork events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Afterwork organised on 18 June is the first step in a lengthy relationship-building process.</li> <li>• We don't organise a lot of public events, but once or twice a year when we do, we try to engage a member company.</li> <li>• As for identifying experts and high-level reps who would be willing to appear at Ceemet events or in the media, this still remains something to be worked on in later stages, after an initial contact is established.</li> <li>• Some field visits were organised by UIMM and Agoria for the CMRD file, but Ceemet wasn't involved. However, this is still a good objective, but it requires lots of information exchange with members.</li> </ul> | <p>around the risk of industrial jobs in MEPs' regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise field trips to company sites for MEPs and officials, together with members.</li> <li>• Involve companies in Ceemet lobbying meetings and events wherever possible or relevant.</li> <li>• Collect company case studies on the real impact of EU rules.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>IndustriAll Europe</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to move onto, what can seem at first, "more complicated" issues such as artificial intelligence, due diligence, etc .</li> <li>• Our messages are amplified and have more reach when they are aligned with iAll. Therefore, where possible, joint messages</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceemet published a statement with IndustriAll Europe on AI, as well as a joint statement on IORP, also with ECEG. During last Social Dialogue, we discussed QJR/QJA. But some topics are still quite polarising for both parties to agree on.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for better understanding of employers' positions, not only joint statements.</li> <li>• Encourage more member countries from employers to take part in the social dialogue.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                             |

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| <p>should be developed, even if this is only a few messages on a file.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceemet and IndustriAll Europe are working on a joint paper on VET and another potential joint paper is being discussed on Skills Portability Initiative.</li> <li>• We also worked quite actively in the scope of two projects linked to skills – TRIREME and ASD+ Skills. Project-based collaboration with IndustriAll Europe is productive.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue project-based collaboration on skills.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>National level: Communication with members</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the relevant person in each Ceemet member to participate in disseminating Ceemet work to national audiences, including political stakeholders, companies, and the media.</li> <li>• Ceemet members should be a channel for communicating positions and messages.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all members have representatives or are active within the Communication Working Group.</li> <li>• The channeling of messages from European level to national and vice versa needs to be improved. Ceemet has used some of the national messaging in its newsletter, giving an opportunity to various members to write Editorials for our newsletters.</li> <li>• However, a lot of members claim that they don't communicate on political files on their channels and mostly focus on campaigns or initiatives. This makes it a bit harder to increase the visibility of Ceemet positions on the national level.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish an annual Ceemet report.</li> <li>• Ensure that most members participate in the Communication Working Group.</li> <li>• Provide regular communication kits with simple and concise messages members can adapt nationally.</li> <li>• Continue offering members newsletter editorials and/or space to promote national best practices or success stories.</li> <li>• Showcase national collective bargaining results as proof that subsidiarity works, to support the narrative of 'respecting social partner autonomy'.</li> <li>• Produce a MET-specific estimate of the cost of social regulation.</li> </ul> |

Wider public advocacy  
(in the strategy, Increasing evidence base)

- Build a broad consensus for the establishment of an institute which can develop an evidence base for our topics and dossiers and a counterpart to the research/output of unions friendly or even union driven institutes such as ETUI.

- The European Employers' Institute, founded in Brussels in 2024, supports members in promoting social dialogue and shaping a business-friendly regulatory environment through research and studies on key workplace issues.
- The European Employers' Institute is currently working on two projects: AI@Work and Mind@Work.
- The European Employers' Institute works with researchers, academics, and practitioners to produce relevant studies. So far, research has been published on labour productivity, subcontracting, and an event was held to present the studies to a wider audience. Studies on the right to training and the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity are in the making.
- EEI is increasingly invited to join projects and speak at events to present its activities and studies.
- In January 2026, the EEI consists of 19 members:
  - 9 European organisations
  - 10 national associations

- Secure funding in the next MFF (2028–2034).
- Complete the AI@Work and Mind@Work projects.
- Publish more studies.
- Grow EEI membership and presence at events.
- Engage think tanks such as Bruegel, EPC and CEPS to reach policy audiences beyond lobbying.

