STATEMENT

Let’s adapt and complement the Industrial Accelerator Act

Brussels, 27 August 2026

In recent years, the EU industry has experienced significant challenges due to a number of factors, including geopolitical tensions, intensified international competition, the energy crisis, labour shortages, and high costs of production. Consequently, the companies have had to make difficult decisions regarding relocation, restructuring, and scaling back investments. In light of this, the European Commission presented, on 4 March 2026, the “Industrial Acceleration Act” (IAA), a proposal aimed at establishing a comprehensive framework to strengthen Europe’s industrial base and accelerate the transition to a resilient, competitive, and climate-neutral economy. Through the IAA, the European Commission aims to place industrial transformation at the heart of Europe’s economic and security priorities by encouraging industrial investment, advancing decarbonisation in strategic sectors, and strengthening technological leadership. This initiative comes at a critical juncture.

Against a backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions and increasingly fierce global competition, the need for a strong, innovative, and competitive industrial base has become imperative. In this context, Ceemet calls for the adoption of an adapted Industrial Accelerator Act and urges the Commission to address a series of interconnected priorities. The most immediate of these is the regulatory and administrative environment in which European companies operate. It's undeniable that without getting the basics right, no amount of industrial strategy will deliver results. Therefore, Ceemet recommends to:

1. Enhance market integration

It is worth noting that the Industrial Accelerator Act adopts an integrated market approach, recognizing that **industrial development in Europe is also strengthened through closer economic integration with our partner countries**.

This approach should be based on fair conditions in both directions, ensuring that closer market access, investment and regulatory cooperation deliver mutual benefits and balanced commitment for all partners.

In this way, fostering regional value chains, improving market access, and promoting collaboration across borders enhance industrial competitiveness while supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It reflects a shared commitment to building a more integrated and resilient market.

To account for the vulnerability but also the ongoing opportunity in certain value chains (e.g. automotive), a pragmatic approach should be developed in consultation with the relevant sectors.

2. Build a business-friendly environment

In an ever-changing global competitive landscape, it is essential for European industries to regain their competitiveness. For Ceemet, the cornerstone of this strategy lies in the adoption of proportionate EU regulations that are SME-friendly. Despite announcements for omnibus and simplification, additional plans containing new legislative proposals are emerging.

In this context, simplifying administrative procedures and reducing regulatory complexity are essential to strengthening Europe's industrial resilience and competitiveness. In addition to ensure that administrative procedures are genuinely simplified, the EU should also prioritise the effective implementation of existing legislation before introducing new layers of regulation, apply a "One In, One Out[1]" to reduce cumulative burdens.

Alongside regulatory simplification, accelerating the digitalisation and merging of administrative procedures also offer a practical and pragmatic way to support companies' competitiveness and facilitate transformation. A simpler regulatory framework is a necessary condition for competitiveness, but it is not sufficient on its own. Europe must also ensure that its trade and procurement policies actively support the industrial base they are meant to protect, rather than undermining it.

3. Ensure strategic public procurement

Strategic public procurement should strengthen Europe's industrial resilience while preserving competitiveness and limiting administrative burdens. In clearly defined strategic sectors, EU preference rules, targeted government procurement and investment protection can support European industry and reinforce strategic autonomy, including digital sovereignty. At the same time, permitting procedures should be accelerated and harmonised across all sectors to remove barriers to investment. Public procurement rules must remain proportionate, flexible and accessible,

1 [Position paper] Better regulation as a driver of EU competitiveness, Ceemet, 23 February 2026

particularly for SMEs, by building on existing social requirements rather than introducing additional obligations.

4. Continue to invest in skills

If the EU wants to maintain the EU industries, the Commission needs to support industries investing in its workforce. The latest Eurobarometer survey shows that nearly half of European SMEs (46%)[2] still struggle to find workers with the necessary skills. Nearly 80% of SMEs are struggling to find workers with STEM skills. [3] Europe must retain and develop its talent.

Social policies must focus on the effective implementation of its Union of skills by strengthening vocational education and training (VET) systems[4] and promoting apprenticeships as a leading career path offering practical workplace experience. At the same time, sustained investment in STEM digital and financial literacy — starting in early education and supported by improved teacher training — is essential to prepare future generations for a rapidly evolving labour market.

Conclusion

Europe's industrial acceleration will depend above all on the establishment of essential framework conditions for European companies, such as reducing administrative burdens, advancing digitisation and simplification, ensuring access to affordable energy, and upskilling and reskilling their workforce. Only by addressing these fundamental factors can Europe fully unlock its industrial potential and secure a sustainable and competitive future. The EU must protect its industry with effective tools, a strong and consistent commitment to administrative simplification, the fight against unfair competition and addressing skills needs. The effectiveness of its action will only be possible by working in close collaboration with the social partners.

---

2 European Union, Barriers for European SMEs in recruiting workers from outside the EU, June 2026
3 European Commission, Boosting STEM participation in tertiary education: a persistent challenge, 20.03.2026
4 MET industry perspective on Union of Skills, 22 July 2025