

Joint Statement of Energy Intensive Industries Following the Event at the European Parliament, “How to Address the Competitiveness of Energy-Intensive Industries in the EU” hosted by MEP Giorgio Gori

Industry leaders from across Europe gathered at the European Parliament on 26 March to discuss the urgent challenges facing energy-intensive industries (EII). Against the backdrop of soaring energy prices, regulatory fragmentation and difficulties in navigating the permitting framework, this high-level dialogue highlights the need for immediate and structural measures to reinvigorate Europe’s industrial competitiveness. Without urgent and decisive action, the EU risks accelerating deindustrialisation, losing valuable jobs and innovation, increasing dependence on materials, and weakening its strategic autonomy.

The Energy Crisis: A Threat to EU Industry and Economy

The ongoing energy crisis poses a significant threat to the EU’s industry and economy, with EII’s facing severe consequences from prolonged high energy prices. While the European Commission’s Affordable Energy Action Plan is a step forward, it is unclear whether it will deliver the immediate relief needed to prevent further industrial decline. Urgent and tangible measures with regards to energy prices and to protect against the risk of carbon leakage, as well as emergency measures on ETS are essential to ensure the survival and global competitiveness of European EIIs, which form the backbone of the economy by supplying critical materials for infrastructure, innovation, defence, health, and the green transition. The indirect carbon costs must be tackled as well and their compensation extended to all energy intensive sectors. The crisis has already led to production cutbacks, temporary shutdowns, and irreversible plant closures, with production declining by 10-15% since 2021 and rising imports from countries with lower energy costs shifting Europe’s industrial landscape.[1]

Structural Reforms to the EU ETS and Energy Markets

Beyond short-term relief, Europe must implement structural reforms to ensure that decarbonisation policies do not disproportionately harm its industries and overall prosperity. The ongoing reforms to the ETS and energy markets must be designed with a pragmatic and industry-friendly approach that enables EU companies to invest in decarbonisation without impacting their global competitiveness, all while ensuring attractiveness to invest into the industries operating in the EU Single Market. Failure to act swiftly and effectively will result in further deindustrialisation and loss of strategic autonomy for the EU.

Decarbonisation and Industrial Resilience Must Go Hand-in-Hand

Today’s discussions reaffirm a shared commitment to strengthening Europe’s industrial competitiveness while advancing the energy transition. However, to secure the future of EU’s energy-intensive industries, urgent action is needed. We call for immediate measures to lower energy prices and to protect against the risk of carbon leakage, assertive trade policies to protect EU industries, emergency measures on ETS, as well as an ETS reform that balances decarbonisation with competitiveness. Easier access to funding and a real reduction in regulatory costs are essential to restoring investment and confidence. The EU must act now to prevent further deindustrialisation and ensure a strong, competitive, and resilient industrial base.