



Antwerp, 26 February 2025

**Press release: One year after the launch of the Antwerp Declaration, 400 business leaders send urgent call to Heads of State to implement the Clean Industrial Deal following high-level meeting with Commission President**

One year after the launch of the [Antwerp Declaration](#), 400 business leaders have reunited in Antwerp to discuss the just published [Clean Industrial Deal](#) with Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen. Ahead of the European Council meeting in March, industry is now calling on EU Heads of State to take urgent action across all EU Member States without any delay.

Europe's industries are currently facing historical challenges: declining demand, stalled investments, reduced capacity, and EU gas prices at 4-5 times higher than its competitors. Between 2023 and 2024, Europe's manufacturing output – a sector employing over 31 million people – dropped another 2.6%. While for the chemicals industry – the industry of industries – Cefic's recent study emphasised the severity, with over 11 million tons of capacity announced to be closed between 2023-2024, affecting 21 major sites.

To overcome these challenges, back in February 2024, 73 business leaders presented the Antwerp Declaration to Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen and former Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo. The Antwerp Declaration lays out 10

**About ECEG**

ECEG, the European Chemical Employers Group, founded in 2002, is a recognised European Sectoral Social Partner, representing the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber and plastics industries in Europe. Our sector provides approximately 3.3 million direct jobs in more than 94.000 enterprises.

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concrete actions to restore the business case for investments, to implement Europe's sustainability ambitions and safeguard quality jobs in Europe. It is now signed by over 1300 signatories, including ECEG.

*"The Antwerp Declaration already represented an ambitious initiative aimed at showcasing the industry's commitment to Europe's transformation. It underscored the urgent need to enhance competitiveness, resilience and sustainability through 10 concrete actions. With the Clean Industrial Deal, concrete efforts from the European leaders are now required to improve the state of European industry and boost its competitiveness."* Eleonora Isopo, ECEG's Acting Director General.

As a matter of fact, the Antwerp Declaration remains an urgent call to revitalise Europe's industrial landscape. Europe's industries stand ready to do their part and continue supporting policymakers in building a competitive, resilient and sustainable future in Europe amid shifting geopolitics.

ECEG congratulates Cefic on its excellent leadership in coordinating this crucial initiative and strengthening the industrial coalition, united by a common vision for Europe's industrial future.



*Photo credits: Cefic*