


Updated Industrial Strategy (Com. 2021 350 final)

EUROCHAMBRES highlights the need for a realistic industrial strategy that reflects the post-COVID-19 era. The strategy should address the remaining Single Market barriers and ensure a strong horizontal approach to SMEs, providing a clear path to green and digital transition.



On 5 May, the European Commission released an updated industrial strategy to address the vulnerabilities and dependencies of the Single Market laid bare by COVID-19. 'Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy' sets out policy priorities in three areas: strengthening Single Market resilience, dealing with Europe's strategic dependencies, and accelerating the twin transitions.

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes this revision of the 2020 Industrial Strategy, highlights the policy areas most relevant to European businesses and proposes a set of recommendations.

The updated Industrial Strategy should provide a roadmap to speed up industrial recovery. It is crucial that the timing and implementation of all the measures and tools underpinning the strategy are coherent.

The strategy must reflect the fact that the crisis is not yet over; recovery will take time and businesses require continued financial support (e.g., public funding and incentives) to absorb the impact of 2020-21 and rebuild their activities, supply chains and client base.

The Commission and Member States must ensure that the various plans for Europe's recovery are aligned, with the necessary regulatory framework and incentives for businesses.

EUROCHAMBRES appreciates the thorough analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic based on 14 industrial ecosystems. However, these ecosystems should not be treated in isolation. Indeed, a coordinated approach will enable industrial symbiosis and further integration of the Single Market.

The SME dimension of the Industrial Strategy is important, including opportunities to access finance and investment to enable SMEs and start-ups to embrace the twin transitions. EUROCHAMBRES calls for an update also of the March 2020 EU SME Strategy given the impact that COVID-19 has had on this vital element of the European economy.

SMEs should be at the centre of the strategy for industrial transformation, reflecting their added value in relation to innovation and competitiveness and the need to support the scale-up of entrepreneurial initiatives and smaller, early-stage companies.

Chambers understand the importance of the EU Green Deal goals and underline the need to assist businesses in this ambitious process. The European taxonomy and the strategy for financing the transition to a sustainable economy should encourage investments in a cleaner economy without limiting businesses access to finance or imposing undue administrative burdens.

The introduction of mandatory corporate due diligence risks imposing disproportionate burdens on SMEs, especially those that are part of large undertakings' complex international supply chains.

Technological development, research, and innovation should be a core priority of the digital transition. Chambers have a relevant role to play in bringing together strategic research and business and should thus participate in the development of National Common Industrial Technology Roadmaps.

It is also important to promote digital innovation, i.e. artificial intelligence, the internet of things, robotics and advanced technologies, and to safeguard cybersecurity in infrastructure.

Chambers play an important role in education, training, re-skilling and upskilling and equipping the European workforce with digital skills for this new phase of industrialisation is key. The Commission should accelerate the use of AI for the development of skills forecasting tools.



EUROCHAMBRES - The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe - 98% of which are SMEs - through 45 members and a European network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

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