



EU INDUSTRY DAYS 2023

4 - 6 OCT ——— MÁLAGA

Summary of discussions

#EUIndustryDays



EU INDUSTRY DAYS 2023

4 - 6 OCT ——— MÁLAGA

PARTICIPANTS

- **1,200** participants
- **600** onsite participants
- **600** online viewers
- **68** nationalities

SESSIONS

- **42** sessions
- **>200** speakers
- **22** Commission-led sessions
- **20** Stakeholder sessions

SIDE ACTIVITIES

- **16** exhibition stands
- **7** initiatives at Meet-the-Experts Corner
- **140** matchmaking meetings booked

EVENT COVERAGE

- **>181 958** social media impressions
- **10 126** website views



EU Industry Days 2023 Summary Report

The 2023 edition of the EU Industry Days, the EU's flagship event dedicated to European industry, took place in Malaga, Spain, on 4-6 October, gathering industry leaders, policymakers, SME representatives, entrepreneurs, researchers, and civil society.

Over the course of three days, around 1200 participants from 68 different countries joined the event – 600 onsite and 600 online – to listen to over 200 speakers in 42 different sessions, 22 of which were led by the European Commission, with the remainder organised by stakeholders.

In addition to the main sessions, there were a number of side activities. Physical participants were able to visit 16 exhibition stands presenting EU-funded projects and participate in seven initiatives in the Meet-the-Experts Corner, which offered not only networking opportunities but also valuable insights into EU funding and business advisory programmes. A total of 140 matchmaking meetings were organised.

The Industry Days enabled stakeholders to convey their views and feedback directly to EU policy makers on key industrial priorities:

- **Drivers of the green and digital transition**
Speakers discussed in depth the implementation of the Green Deal Industrial Plan and the Net-zero Industry Act, as well as the acceleration of the EU's digital transition. A wide array of plenary sessions delved into the role of public and private financing streams, the outlook for the upskilling and reskilling of the EU's labour force, and the measures needed to unlock the full potential of the Single Market.
- **Open strategic autonomy**
The event also served as a platform to discuss different aspects of the EU's open strategic autonomy, by zooming in on the Critical Raw Materials Act, on our evolving relation with China, our digital sovereignty, and the diversification of our supply chains, with speakers strongly calling for the EU to curate and establish strategic partnerships with like-minded countries.
- **Ukraine's integration into the Single Market**
Finally, the EU Industry Days also offered Ukrainian and EU stakeholders the opportunity to share their views on the linkages between Ukrainian and EU businesses and to reflect on some important steps that have been taken in this regard, including the negotiations to conclude the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products.

This report provides a detailed summary of the insights that were voiced across the different sessions and highlights the key findings from each of them. To complement the report, the recordings of all the event sessions are available on [DG GROW's Youtube channel](#).

Plenary and Parallel Sessions

Day 1 – 4 October

9:00-9:15 Welcome Session	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maive Rute, Deputy Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission• Jorge Paradela, Minister for Industry, Energy and Mining, Government of Andalusia• Francisco de la Torre, Mayor of Malaga

Maive Rute introduced the event with a forward-looking vision for European industry that is sustainable, digitally transformed, resilient, and creates high quality jobs, and underlined the importance of a unified approach. Jorge Paradela expressed Andalusia's commitment to be a leader in clean transformation and cleantech and stressed the importance of proactive measures. Francisco de la Torre signalled Malaga's active support for the green and digital transformation and positioned the city at the forefront of these initiatives.

9:15-9:35 Keynote speeches – Opening of EU Industry Days	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video statement by Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Market• Francisco Antonio Blanco Ángel, Secretary General of Industry and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism of Spain

Commissioner Breton argued that recent geopolitical shifts have exposed Europe's vulnerabilities and highlighted its overdependence on certain global players and supply chains. He advocated a European strategic response that does not replicate China's large-scale subsidies or the US's "America first" policy. He highlighted EU efforts to build industrial capacity, diversify technological diplomacy, and boost economic growth through combined public-private initiatives. Francisco Antonio Blanco Ángel underlined the essential relation between industrial growth and autonomy and argued for a strong EU industrial policy. He praised the value of the Single Market but warned against putting it at risk through a subsidy race. He also appreciated the steps taken by the EU, such as the Net Zero Industrial Act, and underlined the challenges that need to be faced, including in relation to the proposed Sovereignty Fund.

9:40-10:30 High-level roundtable: EU Industry Leading the Way to Success	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Maive Rute, Deputy Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission• Mikael Staffas, President and Chief Executive Officer of Boliden SA• Xabier Viteri Solaun, Global Chief Executive Officer of Iberdrola Renewables

- **Alejandro Abellán García de Diego, Director General for Coordination of the Single Market and other European Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain**

Prominent industry leaders such as Mikael Staffas and Xabier Viteri Solaun discussed the future path of EU industry. The discussion revolved around the expected consequences of the Green Deal Industrial Plan and how EU industry can lead in net-zero technologies. The discussions covered upcoming legislation such as Net Zero Industry Act and Critical Raw Materials Act and underlined the need to develop sustainable business opportunities within the EU. Challenges such as the unpredictability of energy prices, the EU's increasing vulnerability on commodities and administrative delays in the mining sector were mentioned. Several strategies were proposed to address these challenges: a broader expansion of wind energy production across the EU; a strategic, forward-looking approach to the commodity value chain; and the need for synergies between policy makers and industry. The latter is crucial to promoting a unified, competitive and sustainable framework for the EU's industrial future.

10:55-11:15 Fireside chat: Stories of Transformation – Energy-Intensive Industries

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Speakers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Joaquim Nunes de Almeida, Director, Mobility and Energy Intensive Industries, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Martin Pei, Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer at SSAB |
|-----------------|---|

The chat showed that the steel industry is a significant emitter in the EU and that there is an urgent need for sustainable ways to reduce this footprint. While countries like Sweden are making progress with low-carbon steel processes, not all of Europe is following, highlighting the need for a unified policy. Martin Pei from SSAB presented the advanced low-carbon steel production achieved with HYBRIT technology, which uses hydrogen instead of coal. While this works well in resource-rich Sweden, the challenge is to spread such practices across Europe. Policy makers are keen to support green technologies and look to companies like SSAB as role models. Rapid adoption of green technologies in steel production is crucial.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Unlocking the future: Bio-based materials and their potential for European industry

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Speakers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Maarit Nyman, Senior Expert for Bioeconomy, Chemicals & Cosmetics, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Lisa Maltagliati, Deputy Head and Director for Corporate Affairs at Stora Enso • Mikael Muegge, COO and Senior Manager at RTDS • Aleksandra Lobnik, Co-founder of IOS and Full Professor at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Maribor • Lidia Garcia, Head of Research and Development at Tecnopackaging SL. |
|-----------------|--|

The session gave voice to bio-based industries to present their use cases on the substitution of fossil-based raw materials by bio-based ones and highlighted the environmental, climate and competitiveness-related advantages of bio-based products and materials. The use cases presented

illustrated the role of bio-based industries as a driver of green, digital and resilient transition strengthening the EU's open strategic autonomy and reducing industry's heavy dependence on fossil and imported raw materials. An important topic was the carbon footprint of traditional processes and the urgency of reducing it. The potential of a bio-based economy was explored by presentations of innovative solutions such as bio-based battery materials, packaging from agricultural waste, chemical textile recycling, and bio-based fertilisers. The importance of cross-sectoral cooperation to share knowledge, information and best practices was stressed. Finally, the need for a coherent supportive policy framework and adequate financial support to foster the growth and innovation of the bio-based industry in the EU were emphasised.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Helping SMEs to go digital: European Digital Innovation Hubs and other networks

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Gaspard Demur, Deputy Head of Unit for Digital Transformation of Industrial Ecosystems, Directorate-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission • Antonio Saravia, Spanish Digital Toolkit, Red.es • José Antonio Adame Siles, Andalucía Agrotech DIH • Silvia de la Maza, Digital Transformation Accelerator • Víctor Lopez Mielgo, CESEAND consortium, Enterprise Europe Network • Cecilia Warrol, Program Director for Produktion2030, Swedish Association of Engineering Industries
-----------------	---

The session centred around the challenges SMEs face in their digital transformation. A key theme was the challenges SMEs face in accessing finance to fund digital transformation, in training their work force, combined with the challenge of navigating the available funding sources from the EU to the local level. SMEs, which vary in size and capabilities, often lack specialised teams to manage access to information and funding, further increasing the challenge. Different networks offer services to help SMEs in that process of digitalisation, notably European Digital Innovation Hubs, EEN and Clusters. Communication and in depth cooperation remains a challenge for the networks. Proposed solutions include better dissemination of information through recommendations and ambassadors, structured financial access with timely procedures, offering workforce training, and engaging educational institutions to support budding entrepreneurs and researchers. The overall goal is to ensure that even the smallest companies, also in traditional sectors, have the resources and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Protect your intellectual property – new opportunities for businesses in the EU in the area of intellectual property

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Claudia Martinez Felix, Deputy Head of Unit for Intangible Economy, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Robert Pocklington Vicente, Intellectual Property Consultant and Advisor at the Latin America IP SME Helpdesk • Katarina Kompari, Intellectual Property legal specialist in the Legal Department, European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)
-----------------	--

The session dealt with a new type of IPR, the geographical indications (GIs) for craft and industrial products which will enter into force on 16 November. This new GI scheme will benefit not only producers but also regions and the traditional know-how and jobs associated with these products. The SME Fund, a collaboration between the Commission and the EUIPO, was set up to support SMEs in the field of IP by offering financial assistance in the form of vouchers. In addition, the IP Helpdesk for SMEs provides a comprehensive service to ensure that SMEs efficiently navigate the finer details of IP both in the EU and also in third markets. The focus of the session was on raising awareness of these services within the SME support networks such as the Enterprise Europe Network to maximise their benefit to the industry.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Enhancing Workforce Development for Your Enterprise: The Role of Higher Education

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Vito Borrelli, Team Leader, Higher Education and Erasmus+, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission • Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit for Industrial Forum, Alliances, Clusters, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Gunnar Kassberg, Deputy Director of the SEPT Competence Center at Leipzig University
-----------------	---

This session highlighted the important role of higher education in training business-relevant skills, with a focus on addressing the digital skills gap, which affects one in four Europeans. Vito Borrelli promoted the Erasmus programme as a way to provide companies with innovative ideas through internships. Mariella Masselink presented the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs initiative, which helps budding European entrepreneurs. Gunnar Kassberg highlighted the traineeship activities of the Arqus European University Alliance, which aims to match international students with local SMEs. Another focus was the skills shortage in areas beyond programming, such as quality assurance managers and requirements engineers.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Integrating regional smart value chains for strategic autonomy

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Elena Kostadinova, Policy Officer, Smart and Sustainable Growth, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission • Oliver Ziegler, Senior Project Manager at VDI/VDE Innovation + Technik GmbH • Eric Amaral Garcia, Programme Assistant, Smart and Sustainable Growth, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission • Kristiina Jokelainen, Coordinator of the Thematics Smart Specialisation Partnership on Mining • Dr. H.C. Santiago Cuesta-López, General Manager of the National Iberian Sustainable Mining and Raw Materials Cluster and Foundation ICAMCyL • Magdalena Cymerys, Policy Officer, Innovation Policy and Access to Finance, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
-----------------	--

The session showed that Europe has asymmetries in innovation, with the North/West leading the way and EU cohesion policy has the tools to address such asymmetries and support industry in industrial transition. The mining industry provided an example of social acceptance of mining in different EU Member States and progress in terms of permitting and collaborative practices. A 15-member Partnership of EU Regions for Mining has been established in recognition of the central role of EU regions in the mining/commodities sector. Regional cooperation is seen as a way forward. With the Regional Innovation Valleys initiative, EU cohesion policy and innovation policy are working together to address the challenges identified and to engage with industrial stakeholders.

13:20-14:20 Parallel session: Industrial PERTEs as a tool for the transformation of key industrial sectors and the promotion of collaboration among companies – Session organised by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Maria Muñoz Martinez, General Director of Industry and SMEs • Vicente Milanés, Innovation Manager at Renault • Andrés Pascal, Innovation Director at AINIA • José Francisco Fernández, General Secretary of PYMAR
-----------------	---

Organised by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the session highlighted industrial PERTEs (Strategic Projects for Economic Recovery and Transformation), a new collaboration tool from the Spanish Recovery Plan. Focusing on electric vehicles, advanced agriculture, and the naval industry, speakers underscored PERTEs' goals: growth, job creation, and enhanced cohesion. The electric vehicle initiative aims for a wholly Spanish-produced EV with workforce reskilling as its primary challenge. In agriculture, introducing innovation to a traditional sector has proven challenging. The naval PERTE, with 95 participating companies, grappled with coordination and ensuring grant guarantees.

13:20-14:20 Parallel session: SMEs Growing Internationally in Digital Markets – Session organised by the Andalusian members of the Enterprise Europe Network

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Víctor Lopez Mielgo, Coordinator of the CESEAND consortium, Andalusian member of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) • Álvaro Marinetto, Development and Customer Success Director of Foreworth • José Luis Garcíá Gómez, CTO of Novelingo • Suleiman Mohamed Mimun, COO of Algorath
-----------------	--

The session focused on SMEs that have successfully adapted their business models through digitalisation and international growth thanks to their cooperation with the EEN. The discussion, led by an EU partner from Spain, offered an insight into the crucial role of EEN in supporting SMEs' global expansion. Three IT company owners shared their challenges, such as the discrepancy between the standards of large companies and SMEs. Increasing the technology budget for SMEs was highlighted as an important solution. The central role of EEN in securing funding, optimising resources, improving efficiency and expanding into new markets was widely recognised by the speakers.

13:20-14:20 Parallel session: Engineering Industries in Ukraine: Catalysts for Reconstruction and Integration – Session organised by SERCOBE and Orgalim

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by María Eugenia Diaz, Director of Sector Strategy Department, Sercobe • Jaime Castro, Sales Director, Electra Molins • Malte Lohan, Director General, Orgalim, Europe's Technology Industries • Maria de los Ángeles Arroyo, Managing Director, PREMATECNICA • Ilhor Ivanchenko, Head of the Economic Department at the Embassy of Ukraine in Spain
-----------------	---

The session focused on the crucial role of European technology industries in Ukraine's reconstruction and integration into the Single Market, inspired by a painting by Angel Uranga illustrating cooperation between Spain and Ukraine. Despite the challenges posed by the conflict, Ukraine's ambition to integrate with the EU remains strong, highlighting the urgent need for modernisation in areas such as clean production and Industry 4.0. The session highlighted Ukraine's potential in green energy and mining, the need to comply with EU standards, and the importance of respecting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The focus was on the involvement of SMEs, women and young people in reconstruction, as well as on cooperation between stakeholders from Ukraine and the EU in developing reconstruction plans.

13:20-14:20 Parallel session: For a resilient, sustainable, and responsible supply chain for critical raw materials – Session organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Sophia Reisecker, EESC member and Head of European & international affairs at GPA union • Isabelle Barthès, Deputy General Secretary, IndustriAll Europe • Diego Francesco Marin, Policy Officer for Raw Materials and Resource Justice, European Environmental Bureau • Michael Pinter, EESC delegate and Director of EU Affairs & REACH at U. S. Steel Košice s.r.o. • Sandra Parthie, INT Section President, European Economic and Social Committee and Head of Brussels Office of IW Köln, Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft
-----------------	--

The workshop focused on the sustainable sourcing of raw materials, which are crucial for Europe's strategic autonomy and its green and digital transformation, and highlighted the EU's dependence on third countries for these materials. The urgent need for actionable strategies was stressed, as well as the need to speed up licensing procedures without jeopardising workers' rights. Concerns were raised about the lack of funding for Net Zero Industry Act and Critical Raw Materials Act, and the need for the EU to develop its own economic model. Cooperation between EU Member States is essential to strengthen Europe's position in the global extractive sector. The importance of engaging mining companies in local ecosystems and promoting fair global partnerships, especially with South American, Asian and African countries, was also highlighted.

13:20-14:20 Parallel session: A win-win for the enterprises and the planet? How energy community cooperatives are creating a more resilient and energy-independent future for European enterprises – Session organised by CECOP

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Diana Dovgan, Secretary General, CECOP • Giorgio Nanni, Coordinator of the Environment and Energy Department, Legacoop Nazionale • Carlos Beracierto, Deputy Director, cooperative KREAN • Andreas Brieger, Director for Sustainable Development, SME United
-----------------	--

The session emphasised the urgency of the transition to renewable energy after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The role of Energy Community Cooperatives (ECCs) as a potential solution was discussed. Panellists argued that there are regulatory hurdles for SMEs, especially in countries like Spain. Concerns about energy distribution and local resistance to renewable projects were also raised. The need to inform SMEs and make regulatory changes, as well as to involve citizens more, was stressed. Diversified energy sources were presented as a solution for steady supply.

14:25-15:00 In conversation: Single Market @30 and Beyond	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Enrico Letta, former Prime Minister of Italy and President of the Jacques Delors Institute • Bianca Dragomir, Director of Cleantech for Iberia • Vladimír Dlouhý, President of Eurochambres • Hanne Bregendahl Pihl, Head of Unit at North Denmark EU-Office and Coordinator of Enterprise Europe Network Denmark

The Single Market was highlighted as the EU's most important integration achievement. The importance of the Single Market for prosperity in the EU was stressed. To remain competitive, the EU needs to increase the efficiency of its twin transition, simplify rules within the Single Market and address over-regulation. Comparisons with the US showed that EU procedures are more complex. Rapid deployment of clean technologies is crucial for the green transition in the EU. It was stressed that bridges need to be built within the EU and SMEs need to be informed about the opportunities. In addition, problems such as lack of enforcement and overregulation should be targeted.

15:05-15:55 Plenary session: European Year of Skills 2023 – Bringing in the Skills the Industry Needs	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Joost Korte, Director-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European • Isabelle Barthès, Deputy General-Secretary of IndustriAll European Trade Union • Dirk Vantghem, Director General of Euratex, Lead for Pact for Skills for Textiles • Laith Altimime, President of SEMI Europe, Lead for the European Chips Skills Academy • Caroline Viarouge, Chief Executive Officer of EITManufacturing

The session focused on the urgent shortage of skilled workers in the industry and emphasised the need to further upskill the EU workforce to ensure competitiveness and facilitate an inclusive green transition. The green transition is transforming employment sectors, with industries such as textiles

facing the challenges of global competition and digitalisation. With many sectors facing ageing and a low proportion of women, the EU has allocated €65 billion for skills development. Panellists called for a sound industrial strategy to create attractive roles for new talent and ensure accessible training. They saw immigration as a solution, but with possible disadvantages for countries that lose talent. Initiatives such as the European Chips Skills Academy aim to address diversity and skills gaps.

16:25-16:40 Fireside chat: Stories of Transformation – Batteries Made in Europe

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Maive Rute, Deputy Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Taavi Madiberk, CEO & Co-Founder of Skeleton Technologies
-----------------	---

This chat focused on the crucial role of batteries in achieving the EU's 2050 carbon neutrality target. Taavi Madiberk stressed the need for a unified energy storage policy in the EU and joint efforts with countries such as Japan and South Korea. Mr Madiberk also emphasised the importance of EU-specific standards for recycling, CO2 emissions and battery longevity. He also argued that in addition to environmental sustainability, financial viability is crucial. He felt that there were opportunities for EU leadership in sectors such as the automotive industry and electricity grids.

16:45-17:35 Plenary session: Insights from the Leaders – The Road Ahead for EU Industry

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Francisco Antonio Blanco Ángel, Secretary General of Industry and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism of Spain • Óscar García Maceiras, Chief Executive Officer of Inditex • Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE • Rafael Sueiro, Chief Financial Officer of Radisson Hotel Group
-----------------	---

This session brought together prominent industry representatives to explore the practicalities of the green and digital transformation in Europe. Rafael Sueiro identified global sustainability awareness as a key challenge, while Óscar García Maceiras shed light on the synergy between online and physical retail shops, even in an era of rapid digitalisation. Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl stressed the symbiotic relationship between the green and digital transformation and stressed the need for stronger cybersecurity and supply chain expansion, especially given potential vulnerabilities related to over-reliance on China. All participants raised concerns about the fragmented situation within the Single Market.

17:40-18:40 Parallel session: Leveraging the EU's market scale: How a deeper Single Market could boost the EU's global competitiveness – Session organised by Task Force 1 of the Industrial Forum

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Ray Pinto, Director for Digital Transformation Policy at DIGITALEUROPE and Philippe Adriaenssens, Policy Director at European Round Table for Industry • Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute and former Prime Minister of Italy • Wouter Baljon, EU Government Affairs Lead at ASML
-----------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Veronica Tovsak Pleterski, Director for Single Market Enforcement, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs • Eva Chamizo Llatas, Director for EU affairs, Iberdrola
--	--

On the 30th anniversary of the Single Market, panellists highlighted its declining political priority and the problems caused by legal fragmentation. This lack of harmonisation affects competitiveness and makes it difficult to attract investment. Solutions proposed by industry included: promoting uniform procedures, introducing performance indicators for harmonisation, speeding up administrative tasks and continuing efforts towards tax harmonisation. Enrico Letta called for industry leaders to advocate for these changes at the national level and referred to the crucial role of Member States in strengthening the Single Market.

17:40-18:40 Parallel session: Industry-led pragmatic approaches on skills for a competitive and climate-neutral EU – Session organised by the European Clusters Alliance	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, DIH Coordinator and Cluster Manager at AgriFood Lithuania • Carolina Garcés, Project Manager - Internationalisation and Innovation at Cluster Mobile Heights • Antonio Novo, President of the European Clusters Alliance • Francisco Vico, Full Professor at the University of Málaga • Torsten Urban, Head of Education, Training and Medical at the Kunststoff-Institut Lüdenschied

This session addressed the paradox of high unemployment coupled with unfilled jobs in a rapidly digitalising world. Executive resistance to change, the slow response of higher education institutions to changes in ICT curricula and the shortage of skilled workers affecting competitiveness were the main topics. Proposed solutions included the CIRCNET project, which bridges education and the plastics industry, and Step2Lab, which supports the reintegration of young ex-prisoners. The discussion highlighted interdisciplinary cooperation, sustainable enterprises and the potential of clusters in foresight and education. The need to involve more women in the technology industry and the importance of balancing industry-oriented training with holistic education were also highlighted.

17:40-18:40 Parallel session: Innovation in European Manufacturing: Leading the Way to Sustainable Competitiveness, Circularity, & Net Zero Emissions – Session organised by EFFRA, CECIMO and Vanguard Initiative 3D Printing	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Andrew Lynch, Chief Innovation Officer at IMR • Nicholas Deliyannis, Policy Coordinator and Work Programme Sherpa, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission • Riikka Virkkunen, Professor of Practice at VTT and member of the Board of Directors at EFFRA • Estela Sánchez, CEO at Dicomol • Blanca Garro, CEO at Reinforce 3D • Bart Maeyens, Head of 3D-Printing at Signify • Wim de Kinderen, Programme Director for European Affairs at Brainport Development

The session underlined the essential role of manufacturing in achieving the EU's strategic autonomy, especially in the context of the twin transition. The focus was on promoting innovation in manufacturing to support this.

17:40-18:40 Parallel session: Redefining resources: Navigating the raw materials demand-supply hold in allocating funds for the green transition – Session organised by Euromines	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Mawhinney, Lead Advisor in Innovation & Competitiveness Department, European Investment Bank • Niklas Johansson, Senior Vice President Communication and Climate, LKAB • Nanna Maria Norlund Handler, Senior Project & Export Finance Manager, FLSmidth • Raffaele Rossi, Head of Market Intelligence, SolarPower Europe • Laura Casuscelli, Senior Trade and Competitiveness Advisor, WindEurope

The session addressed the complicated balance between supply and demand in promoting the green transition, focusing on the role of the mining sector in relation to renewable energy. Major challenges included political and financial barriers at global and European levels, establishing fair pricing, social responsibility, and managing risks related to bottlenecks in the global supply chain. Although current legislative initiatives show potential, hurdles such as slow approval processes and insufficient funding remain a major problem. An overarching problem is the expected shortage of raw materials, which are essential for electrification. Panellists argued that an immediate change in the pace and approach of the mining industry is necessary. Proposed solutions include short-term support for manufacturers, long-term strategies such as resilient auction designs, streamlined permitting processes, and innovative financial instruments.

17:40-18:40 Parallel session: Solar manufacturing rising under Europe’s Green Industrial Plan: opportunities and challenges – Session organised by Solar Power Europe	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joaquim Nunes de Almeida, Director for Mobility and Energy-Intensive Industries, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Pascal Richard, Cofounder, Board member and Strategic Adviser, CARBON • Jochen Hauff, Director Corporate Strategy, Energy Policy & Sustainability, Baywa • Laura Miranda Perez, Oxford PV, Head of sustainability and government affairs

The session highlighted the challenges in European solar energy, with falling module prices despite a market surplus and the need to scale up European production. The focus was on both sustainability and economic resilience in the face of increasing dependence on non-European sources. Possible solutions included the adaptation of the EU framework for state aid, the introduction of resilience auctions, and the establishment of a bank for solar production. The EU's commitment to strengthening the solar sector was demonstrated through numerous initiatives. The importance of uniting Europe in this area was stressed, with a short-term focus on promoting prices for European-made products and a long-term vision based on innovation, sustainability and social inclusion.

Day 2 – 5 October

09:05-09:55 Plenary session: Financing Net Zero

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Frederic Lucenet, Global Head of Manufacturing and Services, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development• Ricardo Mourinho Félix, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank• José Carlos García de Quevedo, President of the Instituto de Crédito Oficial• Elena Bou, Co-founder, Executive Board Member and Innovation Director of EIT InnoEnergy• Nicolas Brien, Greentech Entrepreneur and Chairman of the European Startup Network
-----------------	---

The plenary session focused on financing the transition to Net Zero energy, highlighting the significant investment needs for low-carbon technologies. Ricardo Mourinho Félix pointed out that the financial sector is increasingly focused on a green transition due to stakeholder demands and estimated the need at EUR 400-600 billion. He argued that public funding alone is not enough and stressed the importance of private investment. José Carlos García de Quevedo of ICO, which bases its strategy on NextGenEU, signaled the double challenge of investing in the green transition and supporting SMEs at the same time. Elena Bou pointed to the slow public procurement processes in the EU and highlighted the inconsistent funding, with a focus on technology start-ups rather than industrial companies. Nicolas Brien noted a growing interest in funding Net Zero innovation, but pointed to the preference for software over key hardware solutions due to lower costs. Recommendations included public funding to catalyse private investment, targeting promising projects, legal certainty and faster approval processes to accelerate investment.

10:00-10:50 Parallel session: Plenary session: Industries of the Future, Made in the EU

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Kerstin Jorna, Director-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission• Candela Sancho, Chief Executive Officer of Detektia• Ester Baiget, Chief Executive Officer of Novozymes• Dr. Juha Vartiainen, Co-Founder and Global Affairs Officer of IQM• Michiel Scheffer, President of the Board of the European Innovation Council
-----------------	---

The session emphasised the transformative power of deep tech innovations in reshaping the technological landscape and the importance of moving these innovations from the labs to the EU. While talent exists, there is a skills gap in areas such as quantum computing and biotechnology. Challenges include slow adoption of biotech solutions, limited access to funding for micro start-ups, lack of venture capital, and an unstable regulatory environment. The adaptability of the workforce to change and the lack of matching talent to industry needs were also discussed. The importance of

streamlining regulatory procedures and speeding up approvals to accelerate the twin transition was highlighted.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Wind energy: The key delivering technology for a Green Deal 'Made in Europe' – Session organised by Wind Europe

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Phil Cole, Director of Industrial Affairs at WindEurope • Tim Dawidowsky, COO and Chief Sustainability Officer, Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy • José Luis Blanco, CEO, Nordex • Rafael Solis Hernandez, Public Affairs and Community Relations Director, EU & LATAM, EDPR
-----------------	---

The session highlighted the central importance of wind energy for European energy targets, which are to be increased from 17% to 43% of electricity consumption by 2030. Although this goal is laudable, panellists argued that several obstacles stand in the way of its realisation. These include lengthy licensing procedures, unfavourable pricing structures, supply chain challenges, China's dominance in production due to overcapacity, problematic auction systems leading to depressed prices, and legal obstacles that unsettle investors. Tim Dawidowsky highlighted the 'U's leadership in the wind sector and stressed the urgency of accelerated permitting, improved investor confidence and increased investment. Proposed solutions include redesigning auctions, improving grid infrastructure, developing de-risking strategies for key components, creating an equitable electricity market structure, and drafting specific industrial policies tailored to the sector.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: For the many, not the few: bolstering European strategic autonomy through better ICT standards uptake – Session organised by the European Digital SME Alliance

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Alexander Chourreau, Tech Policy Officer, European DIGITAL SME Alliance • Emilia Tantar, Chief Data and Artificial Intelligence Officer, Black Swan LUX • Justina Bieliauskaite, Innovation Director, European DIGITAL SME Alliance • Petko Karamotchev, CEO and Co-founder at INDUSTRIA
-----------------	--

This session highlighted the central role of ICT technologies in reducing emissions in various sectors. A key challenge highlighted was the perceived complexity of standards, especially among SMEs. Many overlook the strategic importance of standardisation for their competitive advantage, with external regions investing significantly in standardisation, which impacts the entire downstream ecosystem. The lack of coherent standards leads to fragmentation, higher costs and lower demand. The aim of the discussion was to highlight the importance of standardisation in strengthening EU competitiveness, especially for SMEs. Solutions were proposed to address these challenges: ensuring that standards are affordable and user-friendly for SMEs, and strengthening SME participation in the standardisation process, either directly or through representation by standardisation experts or SME associations. The focus was on making SMEs aware of the crucial importance of standardisation for their future competitiveness.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: New geopolitics of the twin transition: addressing Europe's raw materials dependency risk – Session organised by Eurometaux and European Aluminium

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Giulia Forgnone, Senior Public Affairs Senior Manager at European Aluminium and Chris Heron, Communication & Public Affairs Director of Eurometaux • Guillaume Pitron, Journalist • Chris Heron, Communication & Public Affairs Director of Eurometaux • Laura Casuscelli, Senior Advisor for Trade and Competitiveness at WindEurope • Miguel López-Quesada Gil, President for Spain and European Corporate Affairs Director, Alcoa • Ryan Parkin, CEO and Managing Director, Infinity Lithium • Peter Handley, Head of Unit for Energy Intensive Industries, Raw Materials, Hydrogen, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission
-----------------	--

This session highlighted the vulnerability of the EU in its green transition due to commodity dependencies, with disruptions such as China's export restrictions highlighting the challenges. Panellists argued that the Critical Raw Materials Act has set important targets, but there needs to be clarity on funding sources. The conversation highlighted the need to balance the cost of production in Europe with improved security and sustainability. Key solutions include ensuring competitive energy prices, developing effective policies, promoting social engagement and simplifying permits for industry players.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Renewable and Low-carbon fuels for the EU's Energy Security – Session organised by FuelsEurope and NATO

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Marta Yugo, Secondary Transformation Circular Economy Range Manager, Repsol • John Cooper, Director General, FuelsEurope • Nicolas Jeuland, Fellow expert 'Low Carbon Fuels and Aviation Environmental Impact', Safran, and Reserve Officer (Col) for the French Army - Fuel Logistic Agency • Philippe Van Exem, Civil Co-Chairman NATO Petroleum Committee, NATO • Axel Volkery, Acting Head of Unit for Sustainable and Intelligent Transport, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission • Paolo Guglia, Innovation and Policy Manager, Fincantieri
-----------------	--

Amid geopolitical challenges, the EU is facing energy security vulnerabilities, highlighting the need for robust, decarbonised energy frameworks. The discussion revolved around FuelsEurope's projection that liquid fuels will decline and be replaced by low-carbon variants, and the need to accelerate their production and distribution. Philippe Van Exem stressed the importance of European-produced renewable fuels, especially in the defence sector. Nicolas Jeuland focused on sustainable aviation fuels, while Paolo Guglia advocated for the decarbonisation of maritime transport. Axel Volkery highlighted EU action and pushed for financial sector involvement. Panellists felt that the solution is to put the EU at the centre of the renewable liquid fuels landscape and make the transition from conventional fossil fuels to renewable alternatives.

11:20-12:20 Parallel session: Decarbonising with Carbon Capture and Storage: A Pathway to Green Transformation and Industrial Competitiveness – Session organised by Zero Emissions Platform (ZEP) and Global CCS Institute

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Eve Tamme, Chair of the Zero Emissions Platform (ZEP) • Guloren Turan, General Manager of Advocacy and Communications of the Global CCS Institute • Aniceto Zaragoza Ramírez, Director General, OFICEMEN • Eadbhard Pernot, Policy Manager for Carbon Capture, Clean Air Task Force • Stijn Santen, Chairman of the ZEP Network Projects, Zero Emissions Platform
-----------------	--

This session highlighted the importance of carbon capture and storage (CCS) for the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries. Despite their potential, current CCS capacities in Europe remain behind targets. The Spanish cement industry's roadmap was pointed out and the implementation time of 7-8 years for these large-scale projects was underlined. While the US and China are actively investing in CCS, there are 70 ongoing projects in Europe. The Net Zero Industry Act initiative was positively received, but panellists felt that there is an urgent need for more funding and a consolidated European CCS strategy. Stijn Santen expressed optimism that Europe will take a leading role in CCS due to its cooperative approach.

13:45-14:10 Fireside chat: Stories of Transformation – The EU's Digital Sovereignty	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Kerstin Jorna, Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Peter Wennink, President and Chief Executive Officer at ASML

Peter Wennink outlined ASML's three core values: embracing technological challenges, building strong European collaborations and caring for all stakeholders. He argued that Europe needs to strengthen its digital sovereignty by leveraging its strengths and systematically addressing societal challenges. Mr Wennink pointed to the beginning of deglobalisation and called on Europe to find its niche and use the Single Market. Looking at the unified European response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, he stressed the need for a common approach. He advocated rules-based trade with China and mutual understanding with the US, and stressed the importance of controlled immigration and early education supported by business, citing ASML's "Mad Science" programme as an example.

14:15-15:05 Plenary session: Reshaping Alliances – Strengthening Strategic Independence and Rethinking Links with China	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Maria Martin Prat, Deputy-Director General for Trade, European Commission • Vidmantas Janulevicius, President of the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists and Chairman of BOD Group • Bernhard Kluttig, Director-General for Industrial Policy at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany • Davide Cucino, President Emeritus and Brussels Representative of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China and Vice President – Head of European Union Affairs, Fincantieri • Alicia García Herrero, Chief Economist for Asia Pacific at Natixis and Senior Fellow, Bruegel

The session looked at how to refocus the EU's relations with China. It noted that the EU is seeking to balance economic and security concerns, with a focus on reducing dependencies and strengthening sovereignty. Panellists discussed the interdependence of global economies and expressed concerns

about China's politicisation of the economy given its lack of economic transparency. China's strategy to make itself indispensable through digitalisation, decarbonisation and accumulation of critical raw materials was also mentioned. They noted that for the EU, the path to "green and clean" is complex due to fossil fuel dependencies and that the EU strategy includes economic security, de-risking and understanding key risk areas. They felt that this requires coordinated risk analysis, monitoring and mitigation without centralising the process. Some argued that the EU's investment in China should be recognised and that the EU needs to maintain its competitive advantages, especially in innovative sectors, focussing on its strength in the Single Market, global partnerships and ensuring that EU research is translated into market innovation. The EU's fundamental legal principles and rules were highlighted as a benchmark for global practices.

15:10-16:00 Plenary session: Building Resilience through Sustainable and Trusted Connections	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Antonio Andreoni, Professor of Development Economics at the Department of Economics of SOAS University of London • Christophe Yvetot, Head of UNIDO Brussels Office, United Nations Industrial Development Organization • Gianpiero Nacci, Director of the Climate Strategy and Delivery Team, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development • Elina Kamenitzer, Director Operations Support Department, European Investment Bank

Panellists spoke about the central role of the EU in trade and development and stressed the need to ensure economic security while respecting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions underlined the importance of co-industrialisation and long-term partnerships based on mutual trust and benefit. The Global Gateway Initiative was highlighted as an important mechanism to improve connectivity and facilitate trade, mobilising EUR 300 billion of investment by 2027. Panellists argued that faced with challenges such as broken value chains, both EU members and partner countries could benefit from shared knowledge, technology and investment opportunities. They felt that the EU's future engagement in these partnerships requires a balance between adopting EU standards and taking into account the specific circumstances of partner countries to create a mutually beneficial business ecosystem.

16:35-17:35 Parallel session: Building strong industrial ecosystems for EU-Ukraine integration – Session organised by EEN-Ukraine consortium, Ukrainian Cluster Alliance, and the European Business Association	
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Vasylieva, Head of Capital Projects, Metinvest • Olena Fesenko, Head of the International Innovation Cooperation, Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Protection Department, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine • Valery Krasovsky, CEO and Co-Founder, Sigma Software Group • Olga Trofymova, Co-founder and Head of Internationalisation, Ukrainian Cluster Alliance • Olga Shubina-Kurulenko, Head of Export Support Center, Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and EEN Ukraine Consortium Coordinator • Svitlana Mykhailovska, Deputy Director, European Business Association

The ACAA (Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance) was highlighted as crucial for Ukrainian companies to enter the EU Single Market. Panellists felt that security instruments are

essential for safe market entry. They argued that despite the challenges since 2014, Ukrainian companies have shown remarkable resilience and many of them are aiming for global expansion. The Olga Trofymova of Ukrainian Cluster Alliance noted that it has significantly boosted international relations and connected thousands of companies. Speakers highlighted Ukraine's potential in iron ore and IT and called on the EU to recognise Ukraine's value-adding capabilities. They called for strategic partnerships and recognition of Ukrainian know-how, not just financial support.

16:35-17:35 Parallel session: Future-proofing the EU: The role of digital technology in supply chain resilience – Session by DIGITALEUROPE

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Ray Pinto, Senior Director for Digital Transformation Policy, DIGITALEUROPE • Claus Holzkecht, VP Customer Data Office, Technology & Innovation, SAP • Sara Cattaneo, Chief Procurement Officer, ABB • Amaryllis Verhoeven, Head of Unit for Digital Transformation of Industry, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission
-----------------	--

Experts discussed the potential of cloud computing and advanced software solutions. Speakers highlighted issues such as complex procurement processes, inefficient manual management and problems with global supply chain visibility. Solutions presented included ABB's supply chain collaboration tool, which aims to streamline the procurement-to-pay process, and SAP's cloud service, which promotes networks between suppliers and buyers. Amaryllis Verhoeven presented upcoming digital transformation initiatives such as the Digital Product Passport and the potential of blockchain, emphasising the need for simplicity in implementation.

16:35-17:35 Parallel session: Harnessing the Power of Standardisation for Business Success – Session organised by CEN and CENELEC and Orgalim

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Giovanni Collot, Communications Project Manager, CEN and CENELEC • Matthias Bölke, Vice President Strategy Industrial Automation, Schneider Electric • Patrick Cox, CEO, TREE • Albert Casas, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa Area Manager, International Department, Unex
-----------------	---

Experts discussed the central role of standards in the economy. They highlighted the benefits that standards offer, from building confidence in the Single Market to their efficient translation into practical applications when developed with industry participation. However, challenges such as language barriers make their application difficult in some regions. As industry gears up for digital transformation, panellists said that the need for new digital skills is becoming clear, especially in light of increasing cybersecurity concerns. Suggested solutions included working with standards bodies and streamlining the standards development process. The discussion concluded with an emphasis on the importance of sensor calibration for quality assurance in the digital age.

16:35-17:35 Parallel session: The role of advanced materials in enabling the Critical Raw Materials Act and the Net Zero Industry Act – Session organised by EMIRI, the Energy Materials Industrial Research Initiative and AMI2030, the Advanced Materials 2030 Initiative

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Philippe Jacques, Managing Director, EMIRI and coordinator of AMI2030 • Teodor Kuzov, Project Officer, Joint Research Centre, European Commission • Dr. Oscar Miguel Crespo, Deputy Director, Cidetec Institute for Energy Storage • Dr. Maryam Ghardan, Founder and Managing Director, PLANCK TECHNOLOGIES • Nicholas Deliyankis, Policy Coordinator in the ‘Prosperity’ Directorate, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission • Christophe Moriceau, Senior Vice-President for Advanced Research, MICHELIN
-----------------	--

This session explored the potential of advanced materials to improve the efficiency of Net Zero technologies. Panellists argued that Europe is currently struggling with challenges in advanced materials innovation, with only 15% of patents filed in this area. They said that other problems include supply chain diversification, linking materials to sustainability, and small companies facing barriers to commercialising their ideas. Proposed solutions include a unified strategy that focuses on collaboration between academia, policy makers and industry. A shift to full recycling, the use of digital tools, bridging innovation and commercialisation gaps and strengthening European production capacities were seen as essential. In addition, motivating individuals to engage in scientific research, ensuring coherent regulation and expanding funding opportunities are seen as crucial to Europe's progress in this area.

16:35-17:35 Parallel session: The hydrogen economy as a driver for industrial excellence and decarbonisation in the Baltic Sea Region and the Iberian Peninsula – Session organised by the Spanish Hydrogen Association, and the H2 Cluster Finland, H2 Cluster Estonia, and BalticSeaH2 hydrogen valley

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated by Susanna Kupiainen, Communications Coordinator, CLIC Innovation • Javier Brey Sánchez, President of the Spanish Hydrogen Association • Pia Salokoski, Coordinator for the Hydrogen Cluster Finland and Head of Energy at CLIC Innovation • Sven Parkel, General Manager, Estonian Hydrogen Cluster • Simo Säynevirta, Head of ABB Green Electrification ecosystem and Chair of Hydrogen Cluster Finland
-----------------	--

This session was led by hydrogen organisations from Spain, Finland, Estonia and other parts of the Baltic Sea Region and emphasised the changing energy landscape from wasteful linear systems to integrated, circular systems. Challenges such as the slow adaptation to cleantech policies, the significant need for infrastructure investments and the hesitant attitude towards hydrogen solutions were highlighted. However, proactive efforts are underway: 40 partners from 9 Baltic states are establishing a €25 million EU-funded Hydrogen Valley, Finland aims to lead Europe's hydrogen economy by 2035, Estonia is focusing on green hydrogen production, and Spain is building on two decades of hydrogen development. The aim is to foster regional cooperation and ensure a functioning hydrogen value chain, societal acceptance and clear market regulations.

Day 3 – 6 October

09:05-10:15 Plenary session: Trial and Error – The Heartbeat of Young Entrepreneurship

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Kerstin Jorna, Director-General, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission• Angela Ivanova, CEO of LAM'ON• Ruslana Pokotilo, CEO of 0412 Atelier• Juan Vicén Balaguer, Co-founder and VP for Institutional Relations, Zeleros• Felipe Molina, Product and Business Development Manager, rightmart GmbH• Vladan Grigorijevic, CEO of Cubexlab
-----------------	--

The session reflected on the main challenges that the young entrepreneurs face when trying to build their businesses and develop their ideas. Many of them highlighted difficulties with attracting private investors and positively noted the support through public funding. In terms of public support, Juan Vicén Balaguer called for a dedicated funding for disruptive start-ups which are operating beyond traditional industries. He also noted that the fact that EU regulated the hyperloop industry had a very positive effect in terms of getting recognised as a sector. Angela Ivanova highlighted the importance of having a conducive environment in the ecosystem. The speakers also emphasized the importance of persistence and adaptability for business growth and highlighted the role of collaboration in developing their business and the industrial ecosystem.

10:40-10:55 Keynote speech

Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister of Economy and Trade Representative of Ukraine, Ministry of Economy of Ukraine
----------------	--

Taras Kachka emphasized the critical role of the industry in Ukraine's economic recovery and resilience. Ukrainian officials were committed to protecting their economy, countering aggression, and aligning with the EU. He stressed Ukraine's integration into the EU Single Market and highlighted the relocation of over 800 industrial companies during the war, ensuring business continuity. He highlighted the country's capacities in steel production, machine building and digital sector as well as in the defence sector. He advocated for business-to-business and industrial cooperation that would expedite Ukraine's integration into the EU, seeking support in terms of knowledge and financial assistance to achieve EU's industry goals.

11:00-12:00 Plenary session: Ukraine and the Single Market

Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated by Jakub Boratynski, Director for Networks and Governance, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission• Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister of Economy and Trade Representative of Ukraine, Ministry of Economy of Ukraine• Gennadyi Chyzykhov, President of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
-----------------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Derevyanko, Executive Director of European Business Association Ukraine • Paula Pinho, Director for Just Transition, Consumers, Energy Efficiency, Innovation and Energy Security, Directorate-General for Energy, European Commission • Sofia Bournou, Senior Adviser, International Relations Department, BusinessEurope
--	--

The session provided an overview of past and future EU commitments to support Ukraine, mainly the macroeconomic assistance and the upcoming Ukraine Facility that will provide predictable financial support to Ukraine over the 2024-2027 period. The Ukrainian speakers highlighted the determination of all actors in Ukraine to advance with the needed reforms, develop effective market surveillance, and adopt EU standards. All speakers underlined the enormous resilience of Ukrainian businesses and underscored that there is an enormous potential for collaboration in a number of areas such as energy and digital sectors, agriproducts, and raw materials that would benefit the Ukrainian and EU economies. They agreed that a continuous dialogue between business communities is essential to advance reforms and build successful collaboration between both sides.

12:05-12:15 Keynote speech

Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johan Hanssens, Secretary-General of the Department of Economy, Science and Innovation of the Flemish Government
----------------	---

Johan Hanssens presented the priorities of the upcoming Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2024. One of the central themes to shape the Belgian Presidency in 2024 is the transformation of EU industrial challenges into opportunities. The priority theme ‘The Europe of the Future’ will focus on ensuring that the EU leads in the way in industrial sustainable practices, fosters innovation, addresses strategic dependencies, and creates an environment in which businesses can thrive. A supportive regulatory framework is expected to be established, with a focus on the Net Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act.




12:20-12:30 Key takeaways of the EU Industry Days

Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerstin Jorna, Director-General, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission
----------------	---

Kerstin Jorna summarised key takeaways from the event, emphasising that “Europe is a continent of opportunities”. She highlighted the role of the Single Market as providing benefits like removing borders, rule of law, predictability and social partnerships. Clean tech markets have amazing growth outlooks, with ambitious targets set for renovating buildings, electric vehicles, wind, electrolyzers, heat pumps, and batteries. Another key takeaway was the call to advance with the Capital Markets Union: essential for industrial policy. She added that the Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine exposed dependencies on energy imports and showed that diversification of supply and ramping up renewable production is critical for EU’s security and competitiveness. At the same time, she remarked on the strong links between Ukraine and the Single Market and stressed the importance of increasing cooperation in this regard. She concluded that Europe has a talented, highly educated workforce and high entrepreneurship rates. Skills gaps exist, especially in clean tech, but new models are being developed to address them.

Exhibition – List of projects present

	<p><u>AI MATTERS</u></p> <p>The AI-MATTERS network aims to boost the uptake of AI in the European Manufacturing industries and brings together a consortium of major organisations from eight European countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain) to create a world-class reference network of testing and experimentation facilities for manufacturing. AI-MATTERS’ overarching objective is to strengthen Europe’s positioning and leadership in the uptake Artificial Intelligence systems. By bringing robotics and other advanced technologies to real-world environments, and at a scale, the consortium aims to create leap transformations of the European manufacturing system. The network, with a total budget of 60M€, is co-funded by the European Commission under the Digital Europe Program and sources at national/regional level and will be operational in 2024.</p>
	<p><u>AMULET</u></p> <p>The Advanced Materials & manufacturing United for LightwEighT (AMULET) project is a HORIZON 2020 project that aims to exploit the innovation potential of SMEs through a cross-sectoral, funded knowledge exchange. The goal of AMULET is to create new value chains by fostering the penetration of advanced lightweight materials in different fields through cross-regional and cross-sectoral knowledge exchange in four sectors: automotive, aerospace and aeronautics, energy, and building.</p>
	<p><u>BOHEME</u></p> <p>The technological development of a new class of bioinspired mechanical metamaterials – artificially designed materials with properties not found in nature – is the aim of the EU-funded BOHEME project. Drawing on research from various disciplines (from biology and mathematics to ocean engineering and materials science), it is assuming that the working principle behind metamaterials is already exploited in nature and that through</p>

	<p>evolution this has led to optimised designs for impact damping. BOHEME will take a disruptive approach for applications over various wavelength scales, from non-destructive testing to noise reduction to low-frequency vibration control (including seismic) to coastal protection or energy harvesting from ocean waves.</p>
	<p><u>C2C-NEWCAP</u> C2C-NewCap is a Portuguese start-up that develops supercapacitor-based solutions. Its EU-funded HYCAP project supported pilot production lines implementation, supply chain development and market release of the first commercial version of the start-up's first product, GO-START. GO-START is a hybrid energy storage system (supercapacitor + battery) for EU heavy-commercial vehicles. GO-START complies with all industry standards in terms of voltage and size for easy adoption, being the first supercapacitor-based solution that can be directly installed in the battery compartment of the vehicle battery for direct replacement of lead-acid batteries (first plug and play solution). GO-START eliminates the need for idling during resting periods by having enough energy density; has increased reliability, ensuring cranking even after battery misuse and depletion; has increased lifetime, to decrease maintenance and product replacement; and is safe (no flammable or toxic materials).</p>
	<p><u>CATCHER</u> Building on previous work that successfully established the viability of converting atmospheric humidity into electricity, the EIC-funded CATCHER project now intends to develop this highly innovative concept. The project will utilise an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach involving research teams and businesses across the EU and Ukraine to optimise and scale up power conversion that will ultimately be suitable for incorporation into the power grid. This ground-breaking technology represents a brand new renewable energy source. It not only integrates with EU programmes on renewables and sustainability, but it also bolsters the EU's reputation as a global renewable leader.</p>
	<p><u>EU4BUSINESS</u> The international cooperation programme "EU4Business: SME Recovery, Competitiveness and Internationalisation" is co-financed by the</p>

European Union and the German Government and is implemented by the German federal company “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH”. The programme aims to support Ukraine’s economic resilience, recovery and growth, create better conditions for the development of Ukrainian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and support innovation and exports. The programme provides Ukrainian SMEs with support through the development of industry clusters and their member companies, cooperation with city councils of territorial communities, providing services through professional business support organizations and business schools, participation in international conferences, trade missions, matchmaking events, etc. The programme started in April 2020. More than 20,000 participants have used the help, the vast majority of them are business owners and managers.



GENAQ

GENAQ invests in the development and manufacturing of air to water technology. The Atmospheric Water generation replicates the natural process of rain, condensing the humidity present in the environment thanks to refrigeration technology. The company's mission is to provide access to quality drinking water in a sustainable way, even in places where there is no previous water source: all that is needed is air and access to a power source. GENAQ is part of the KEYTER INTARCON Group, an industrial group with more than 35 years of experience in industrial refrigeration and climatization. GENAQ began as a EU-funded R&D project and in 2018 it developed the first Atmospheric Water Generation (AWG) prototype. Since then, the company has kept developing and upgrading a complete portfolio of Air-To-Water solutions, and has successfully completed projects in over 65 countries around the world. GENAQ's goal is to make AWG technology a viable water solution, constantly improving energy efficiency and quality standards, thus bringing high-quality drinking-water to places where there is no water, or it has no quality, or it is too expensive. <https://genaq.com/>



JHT

Redefining what is technically feasible. To achieve this, JHT relies on the application of Additive Manufacturing. Laser-based powder bed fusion (LPBF) in particular enables completely new designs and products. The best example: the vacuum roller "VacuFL3X". Unlike conventional vacuum rollers, the VacuFL3X-roll, which is made of stainless-steel, has complex internal pipes that interconnect the vacuum-zones without leaks. Arranged symmetrically to the center, this allows webs of different widths to be handled in an energy-efficient and sensitive manner. In addition, the wrap angle can be adjusted to a new web run – tool-free. An add-on is the temperature control of the shell by fluids, which adds flexibility to the coating process. A combination of active vacuum zones and simultaneous temperature control is only possible because of Additive Manufacturing (AM). Nevertheless, AM requires the roller to be segmented: the build volumes of 3D-printers are limited, so larger rollers cannot be manufactured in a single piece. With the help of two cooperating partners, a hybrid joining concept was developed in which the stainless-steel segments are joined with adhesive and a laser beam weld. A third cooperating company was subsequently involved in order to be able to map Additive Manufacturing in larger quantities.



NEXGEN SIMS

The EU-funded NEXGEN SIMS project supports new technologies, methods and processes that will enable more sustainable and efficient carbon neutral mining operations. A key aspect of the project is to develop autonomous carbon neutral mining processes. This includes the use of battery-electric mining equipment, full utilization of 5G for optimal connectivity and positioning, autonomous material handling, AI-powered traffic and fleet control and collaboration among machines. The project is also focusing on safety and the mine worker of the future, e.g., by developing autonomous mine inspection technology. The project is coordinated by mining equipment and service supplier Epiroc and the other project partners are mining companies Agnico Eagle Finland, Boliden, KGHM Polska, K+S and OZ Minerals; services and system suppliers AFRY, Combitech,

	<p>Ericsson, KGHM Cuprum and Mobilaris MCE; business developer LTU Business and universities Luleå University of Technology and RWTH Aachen University – all based in Europe, except for OZ Minerals (Australia). NEXGEN SIMS builds on the successful H2020 EU-sponsored SIMS project, which played an important role in advancing sustainable mining operations, partly through the use of battery-electric machines.</p>
	<p><u>PLATFORM-ZERO</u></p> <p>The EU-funded Platform-ZERO project is developing a new industrial process-monitoring platform for third-generation PV using AI to revolutionise the production process and impactfully reduce defects and costs. To achieve its goals, the project will develop novel sensors and methods for in-line industrial inspection that will improve the quality of third-generation PV and reduce its environmental impact by minimising the waste of energy and valuable materials during production.</p>
	<p><u>RECREATE</u></p> <p>ReCreate is an EU-funded project focused on the reuse of precast concrete elements through the reassembly process for the development of new buildings. ReCreate pushes towards circular construction by investigating the systemic changes needed in the whole ecosystems of construction and demolition. The reuse of precast structural components retains the secondary material at its highest value. The key objective of ReCreate is to innovate and develop novel technological solutions and processes for the deconstruction and reuse of buildings. ReCreate will help to develop the EPDs for the reuse of precast concrete components to make the LCA and LCC for other buildings possible.</p>
	<p><u>SISAI PILOT</u></p> <p>SisAl Pilot is a 4 year innovation action project funded by Horizon 2020 (GA 869268) and it aims to demonstrate a patented novel industrial process to produce silicon (Si, a critical and strategic raw material), enabling a shift from today's carbothermic Submerged Arc Furnace (SAF) process to a far more environmentally and economically sustainable alternative: an aluminothermic reduction of quartz in slag that utilizes secondary raw materials such as aluminium (Al) EoL scrap and dross, as replacements for carbon reductants used today. SisAl Pilot represents a path-breaking approach,</p>

	<p>and a strong contribution to “circularity” through industrial symbiosis where the Al industry will act as both a raw material supplier and end user to the Si industry. Across sectors, SisAl Pilot will give substantial reductions in material yield losses, enhanced valorisation of waste- and by-product streams (SiO₂ fines, Si skulls, dross, scrap etc), at a 3 times lower energy consumption and radically lower emissions of CO₂ and harmful pollutants, at a considerably lower cost. Featuring enhanced valorisation of waste and by-products streams, lower energy consumption, and reduced emissions of CO₂ and harmful pollutants, it is described as a path-breaking approach. It also has a strong contribution to ‘circularity’ in which the aluminium industry will act as both a raw material supplier and end user.</p>
<h1>SkillLab</h1>	<p><u>SKILLLAB</u> SkillLab, a start-up firm in Amsterdam, wants to “democratise” the career guidance process, as one of the social enterprise’s founders, Karim Bin-Humam, puts it. With a mobile app and software powered by artificial intelligence, the company helps jobseekers identify their skills and shows them how their talents can be used in a new job market. SkillLab signs contracts with governmental employment services and other organisations to improve its service to clients.</p>
<h1>SURE5.0</h1>	<p><u>SURE 5.0</u> The economic crisis caused by the pandemic have led to supply chain problems and a strong inflationary pressure, demonstrating the fragility of traditional economic sectors, especially in the manufacturing industry. This turbulent environment urges the companies, specially SMEs, to adapt and transform themselves permanently, so they can enhance their competitive advantage in the future. In this context, 11 european partners joined forces to launch the SURE5.0 project “Supporting the smes SUSTAINABILITY and RESILIENCE transition towards industry 5.0 in the mobility, transport & automotive, aerospace and electronics European ecosystems”, funded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe programme. The SURE5.0 project aims to support European SMEs working on these industrial ecosystems, to advance in their digital transformation process while becoming more human-centric, sustainable and resilient.</p>



TURBO





Wind turbines are already part of everyday European life and are an essential element of the strategy to meet the Green Deal targets. Wind turbine blade (WTB) size is steadily increasing with the largest new offshore blades >100 m in length. Composite blades are manufactured using resin infusion and coating processes. Even using modern manufacturing methods, these are subject to defects which result in re-work, scrap and repair. TURBO will reduce defect formation through better simulation, NDT and process control. The project will demonstrate its results in the fabrication of full size WTB sections at the Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy factory in Aalborg, Denmark. The workplan also includes full lifecycle analysis, environmental assessments and production efficiency analysis to quantify the project benefits.



ZELEROS

Zeleros is a European hyperloop pioneer, developing advanced e-mobility systems to enable fully electric and automated travel of passenger and cargo. From hyperloop trains to automated container movers, intralogistics or energy storage solutions for heavy duty vehicles, the company has evolved fast since its foundation in 2016 to become an innovation powerhouse of 60 people based in Valencia with an international vision.

Meet the Experts Corner – List of initiatives present

<p><u>Enterprise Europe Network</u></p> <p>The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is a network created by the European Commission that brings together more than 600 organisations in 60 countries to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe. It aims to improve the competitiveness and growth of SMEs by facilitating their access to commercial, technological and innovative opportunities inside and outside the European Union. It provides personalised advisory services, fosters business collaboration, helps identify funding and support programmes, promotes internationalisation and provides information on intellectual property and regulations. In short, the EEN is a single point of contact for European SMEs seeking to improve their position in the global marketplace.</p>	
<p><u>Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs</u></p> <p>Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries. The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with the experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small firm. The host benefits from fresh perspectives on his/her business and gets the opportunities to cooperate with foreign partners or learn about new markets.</p>	
<p><u>European Digital Innovation Hubs</u></p> <p>European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are one-stop shops supporting companies and public sector organisations to respond to digital challenges and become more competitive. EDIHs support companies to improve business/production processes, products, or services using digital technologies by providing access to technical expertise and testing, as well as the possibility to 'test before invest', providing innovation services, such as financing advice, training, and skills development that are central to successful digital transformation, and helping companies tackle environmental issues, in particular the use of digital technologies for sustainability and circularity.</p>	
<p><u>InvestEU</u></p> <p>The InvestEU programme provides the European Union with crucial long-term funding by leveraging private and public funds in support of Europe's sustainable recovery. It helps to mobilize private investments for the EU's top policy priorities, such as the green, and digital transition, innovation and social investments and skills. The InvestEU programme brings together the multitude of earlier EU financial instruments, making access to finance and investments in European companies and projects simpler, more efficient and more flexible. The InvestEU programme consists of three components: the InvestEU Fund, the InvestEU Advisory Hub and the InvestEU Portal. The InvestEU Fund is implemented through financial</p>	

partners that will invest in projects, benefitting from the protection of EU budget guarantee. The €26.2 billion EU budget guarantee backs the investments of financial partners (the “implementing partners”), increasing their risk-bearing capacity and thus allowing to mobilise at least €372 billion in additional investment.

IP SME Helpdesks

Aiming to support IP capacity building along the full scale of IP practices, IP SME Helpdesks provide free-of-charge, first-line support to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on IP management, protection and enforcement covering six different regions: China, Europe, India, Latin America, South-East Asia and Africa. The European IP Helpdesk additionally assists SMEs and researchers participating in EU-funded research and innovation projects in dealing with IP issues related to these specific programmes.



TRIS DATABASE

The ability to foresee and adapt your business model and production processes to national rules in the countries where you operate is essential to ensure your success. National technical measures can have a great influence on your business and the internal market as a whole, that is why market and legislative transparency are essential to ensure the good functioning of the single market and allowing all actors within it to benefit from the EU freedoms. The Technical Regulations information System (TRIS) is a tool implementing Directive 2015/1535- the Single Market Transparency Directive. It is a collaborative tool where draft rules affecting the composition, marketing, disposal, etc. of products and information society services are notified before being adopted. The Commission and other Member States and other participating countries can react and influence the notified national rules and stakeholders such as businesses, industry and NGOs can express their views. Come meet our experts to discuss how the TRIS system can be beneficial to you, how you can influence draft national rules and to protect yourself and your business from rules adopted in breach of EU law.



CLUSTERS

Clusters are groups of firms, related economic actors, and institutions located near each other and with sufficient scale to develop specialised expertise, services, resources, suppliers and skills. Together, SMEs can be more innovative, create more jobs, and register more international trademarks and patents than alone. There are over 1500 clusters located in more than 200 EU-27 regions. Clusters account for almost 25% of total EU employment. The European Commission uses clusters actively to implement EU priorities. It does so primarily through the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), but also other actions like Euroclusters, European cluster partnerships, and many others.



