

Manifesto of Cities for Sustainable Industry

The role manufacturing activities are playing in European economies has resurfaced at the top of the EU policy agenda. Some time ago, the Union set the goal of raising the contribution of industry to GDP to as much as 20% by 2020. Now, the European Commission has taken a further step forward with the elaboration of a new Industrial Strategy for a globally competitive, green and digital Europe.

The urban nature of European industry

Industry and cities are historically and intrinsically coupled. Industry was mostly born and thrived near urban centres and it helped to boost the growth of cities and the process of urbanisation in Europe.



Europe has always been the home of industry. For centuries, it has been a pioneer in industrial innovation and has helped improve the way people around the world produce, consume and do business. Based on a strong internal market, the European industry has long powered our economy, providing a stable living for millions and creating the social hubs around which our communities are built.¹

However, the share of manufacturing in GDP and employment declined drastically in the last third of the 20th century in many EU countries. Many manufacturing sites closed, downsized, or moved to lower-cost locations.

All this process, industrial development and restructuring has left some scars in urban areas. From the social point of view, deindustrialisation caused an increase in

unemployment (both long-term and structural), higher levels of social issues and the out migration of skilled population. This had had an economic impact too, with a de-multiplier effect, loss of jobs, lower disposable incomes, decline in property prices, loss of local tax base, so less spending on services. The environment of central areas suffered too, with dereliction of buildings, land and water pollution, reduced housing maintenance. European industrial cities have made considerable efforts to reverse this situation and improve the quality of life.

In this new scenario, cities must play a central role in the implementation of the Industrial Strategy and be an active part in promoting Europe's industrial renaissance.

The new European strategy for a globalised industry

On 10 March 2020, the European Commission presented 'A New Industrial Strategy for Europe', laying out a plan for how the EU's world-leading industry could lead the twin green and digital transitions, drawing on the strength of its traditions, its businesses and its people to enhance its competitiveness. The implementation of the strategy has been somehow disrupted by the COVID-19 and the Commission updated the strategy in May 2021 to reflect this fact.

The new EU Industrial Strategy offers a new and disruptive approach to its preceding industrial policy by setting out range of actions to support all players of European industry, including big and small companies, innovative start-ups, research centres, service providers, suppliers and social partners. European cities, where all these actors coexist and interact, cannot remain oblivious to this transformation.

Industry is in our DNA and is still a major generator of wealth and quality employment. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the territorial (local) approach and dimension of industrial ecosystems and technological leadership.

Through this manifesto, we, the Mayors of the signatory cities, wish to show special support for our industry, leader in innovation and sustainability, and demand from the EU a frank commitment and support that contributes to the goal of a strong and climate-neutral industry, in the framework of the European Green Deal to a transition to a low-carbon economy, while strengthening its competitiveness on a level playing field in the global market.

¹COM(2020) 102 final



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— Common challenges and objectives

European industrial cities face common challenges and objectives:

- 1 On the one hand, urban sustainability and environmental restoration, with a view to achieving climate-neutral cities. This includes the reclamation of brownfield sites or the improvement of industrial neighbourhoods, but also the transition to low-carbon industry.
- 2 Strengthen the role of SMEs in the industrial strategy, through the support of InvestEU financial instruments and the development of new economic activities related to industry.
- 3 Industrial culture and tradition. Industry is deeply rooted in the social tissue of our cities and has framed our culture and social values. We want to build on our industrial traditions to become more dynamic and creative.
- 4 Increase efforts to attract new investment and industrial innovation. Advanced materials and new manufacturing processes are changing industrial value chains and are offering new opportunities for industrial development in Europe.
- 5 Need for a thorough review of the European state aid framework to achieve a gradual transition to low-carbon or carbon neutral processes.

Co-operation will enable us to tackle with confidence the achievement of these objectives, which will contribute to the common aspiration of achieving a strong, in an increasingly sustainable urban environment.

— Our ambition

Next decade will be crucial to achieve the objective of a climate-neutral economy.

Ensuring transition does not leave anyone behind, whether people, workers or territories.

We want to take an active role in European institutions and forums and make our voice be heard. We have experienced and overcome the ups and downs of recent decades. We have implemented innovative policies and become more resilient.

We want to put our experience at the service of all to help Europe achieve the goals of the *New Industrial Strategy for Europe and the Green Deal*.

— Our commitment

The signatory cities of this Manifesto commit ourselves to support the transformation towards sustainable industry, to foster cooperation between our cities and key actors in the sector, to establish mutual exchange and learning relationships, and to support urban and industrial projects that promote the EU's sustainability objectives, in order to build a competitive and climate-neutral Europe:

- We are strongly committed to boosting innovation and industry, to prepare our cities for a greener, smarter and more resilient economy, to create the appropriate environment for a vibrant and inclusive society.
- We will support the modernisation of infrastructure and the conversion of our industries to make them sustainable, using resources more efficiently and promoting the adoption of clean technologies and industrial processes.
- We will work as facilitators for our companies and R&D institutions to develop their own projects, aimed at achieving the European Union's objectives presenting our cities as laboratories to foster the green and digital transition.