



European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME

Confédération Européenne des Associations de Petites et Moyennes Entreprises

Avenue de la Renaissance 1

B-1000 Bruxelles

Fon: + 32 2 739 62 64

info@european-entrepreneurs.org

www.european-entrepreneurs.org

CALL FOR A “BRUSSELS ACCELERATOR ACT”

to the

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

and the

COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

gathering on Sept. 24th 2026

Dramatically rising energy costs, an untamed increase of bureaucratic burden and overwhelmingly unfair competition from China put the very existence of Europe's Industry at risk.

Our call to [Save our European Industry of December 2025](#) and our recent quest for more growth, pronounced last Wednesday, Sept. 2nd 2026, in Brussels at our SME2B Business Forum Europe, should no longer be seen as some good-will proposals, but as an alarm clock ringing loudly.

The ground truth leaves no room for doubt:

- Manufacturing employment in the euro area fell for **38 consecutive months**, a decline that only came to a halt in August 2026; industrial output has not grown for three years.
- Manufacturing stands at **14.3% of EU GDP**, while the Commission's own target is 20% by 2035: before growing, Europe first has to stop the decline.
- European energy-intensive industry pays electricity prices **more than twice US levels and about 50% above China's** (IEA), a structural gap that the 2026 energy shock has widened again.
- The EU's goods trade deficit with China reached a record **EUR 197bn in the first half of 2026 alone**: Europe now imports EUR 3 from China for every EUR 1 it exports there.
- On the ground, the situation of our companies is deteriorating fast: only in France, net job creation by e.g. Mid-Caps collapsed by **66% in a single quarter** (Q2 2026), with manufacturing destroying jobs; **21 French mid-caps were acquired in that same quarter, more than half by foreign buyers**; In 2025 alone French Mid-Caps counted **179 plant closures against 116 openings**, the worst balance since 2013.

The **most important stability factor for European societies**, the 35 million companies of Europe's *Mittelstand*, guaranteeing 3/4 of the employed people in Europe, will not be able to continue to deliver as before if nothing changes.

Therefore, in sending you our [15 detailed proposals for more growth](#), we accompany these proposals with **3 priority demands** which we would appreciate to hear from you confirmed during the next weeks:

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President: Sen.a.D. Christoph Ahlhaus • Co-President: Jorge Portugal • Vice-Presidents: Cristian Camisa, Eva Svobodová, Tomasz Zjawiony, Sylvie Grandjean, Theodor Grassos • Treasurer: Stephan Blahut • Honorary President: Maurizio Casasco • Secretary General: Stefan Moritz

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1. Simplification must be immediate and felt on the shop floor

Stop all new European legislation that causes more costs to European companies until 2030, and suspend contradictory legislation like PPWR until final clarification. Thoroughly focus on reducing legislation by fulfilling the second part of the “One in, two out”-principle, i.e. **eliminating twice as many rules, regulations, delegated and implementing acts and directives as those introduced between end of 2024 and today.** Counting a “25% reduction of bureaucratic burden” based on the legislation in force in 2023 is already overcome by over 3.000 new legal acts that entered into force since 2024 until today.

2. Energy costs must be reduced urgently and through short-term emergency measures

Do everything possible to reduce Energy costs in Europe in the short-term, in the first place – with an emergency measure – reducing the ETS costs to an average of not more than 40€/tonne. The current auctioning systems has become a “CO2-Tax” at 80-90€/tonne and growing, and comes on top of the steep rise of fuel prices since the Iran war. This is already a sufficient “**price signal**” and represents a **heavy competitive disadvantage**, automatically inducing companies to look for cheaper solutions with renewables, electrification and efficiency. Any further “*self-defeating legislation*” is detrimental and will only alienate more and more companies from the European Union. A return to a functioning **market-based cap-and-trade system** as was the case before 2019, reintroducing immediately trade with **international carbon credits** under articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Climate Agreement also in Europe, seems to be the best solution to us. **Decarbonisation is possible, if done with the market and with the companies** that would benefit from trading allowances or respectively would have lower costs while transitioning towards net-zero.

3. Companies must be supported to compete on an equal footing in international markets

Take immediate action to re-establish full reciprocity with China and with other unfairly competing countries: the IAA and a European Preference will optimistically enter into force in 2029, and it will apply only to public tenders and subsidies. Hoping to increase the GDP-share of European manufacturing to 20% by 2035 is clearly in vain, if we don't intervene before protecting our companies from unfair competition also in the private sector. This can be done through **tariffs**, by **including downstream products into CBAM**, and by **protecting our companies against hostile takeovers from non-European acquirers** in industries that are of critical relevance to the security architecture of our continent and to the social fabric of our societies. We must ensure that today's business difficulties do not become tomorrow's dependencies.

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Time is the decisive variable. The SOTEU by President Ursula von der Leyen, the Competitiveness Council of September 24th and the European Council at the end of 2026 are natural deadlines to give the competitiveness agenda substance without delay. To ensure a sustainable future for our SME and Mid-Caps the actions outlined in our proposal must be addressed before the end of this year, and executed at the speed our competitors have made the norm.

This is what we call a **“Brussels Accelerator Act”**: not one more text, but a change of pace. Europe’s Mittelstand stands ready to deliver its promise of contributing to our common wealth, with social and environmental responsibility and economic ambition; it asks its institutions to match that ambition with speed.

Signed between Sept. 9th and 11th in Berlin, Rome, Paris, Vienna, Katowice, Prague, San Sebastian, Lisbon and Bucharest by

Christoph Ahlhaus

President European
Entrepreneurs CEA-PME,
Executive Chairman of Der
Mittelstand. BVMW e.V.
(Germany)

Cristian Camisa

Vice-President European
Entrepreneurs CEA-PME,
President of CONFAPI (Italy)

Frédéric Coirier

Co-President of Mouvement
d'Entreprises de Taille
Intermédiaire METI (France)

Peter Lieber

President of the Austrian Business
Association ÖGV, Vice-President
of VÖSI – Austrian Software
Innovators Association (Austria)

Tomasz Zjawiony

Vice-President European
Entrepreneurs CEA-PME,
President of CCI Katowice
(Poland)

Josef Jaroš

President of the Czech Association
of SME - AMSP ČR
(Czech Republic)

Isabel Busto

President of the Enterprises
Association of Gipuzkoa ADEGI
(Spain)

Jorge Portugal

Co-President European
Entrepreneurs CEA-PME,
Executive Director COTEC Portugal

Ioan Lucian

President of the National Union of
Romanian Employers UNPR
(Romania)

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