

Brussels, 30 May 2017

Council Conclusions – a welcome push towards a future EU industrial policy strategy

Orgalime is pleased to see that the Conclusions adopted by the Competitiveness Council following its meeting on 29 May have once again called on the Commission to develop and to deliver a holistic EU industrial policy strategy.

“If we feel that the Commission is indeed being supportive in many areas of the rapid technological development that is taking place in industry, notably through digitisation, we miss the focus that an industrial policy with targets would give,” commented Adrian Harris, Director General of Orgalime. “This is the commitment that was given at the outset by the new Commission, whereby the re-industrialisation of Europe was seen as a top priority.”

Orgalime feels that the time for an ambitious EU industrial strategy is overdue. The 2008 crisis has clearly demonstrated that nations and regions with a strong industrial and industrial services base are quicker to overcome financial breakdowns, notably because many of the challenges facing our modern societies require solutions based on technologically innovative products and services. Since the financial crisis, 3.5 million jobs have been lost in manufacturing in the EU – while countries in other regions around the world have been putting industry at the very top of their political agendas. As a result, growth in manufacturing output and jobs has been far higher in these regions than here in Europe.

Orgalime has been persistent in its call for Brussels and Member States to place industry at the core of their economic policy. This is why, following the presentation of our [Vision Paper strategy](#) at the end of last year, we joined forces with some 127 other European manufacturing associations to issue a declaration in February 2017 calling on the European Commission to commit to, adopt and implement an Action Plan to pave the way for a real and tangible industrial strategy.

We are therefore pleased to see the Competitiveness Council once again reaffirming the essential role that industry plays in driving forward economic growth, employment and innovation in Europe. We welcome the fact that the Council has stressed that the Commission should remove unnecessary regulatory barriers and stimulate a growth-friendly regulatory environment for industry. For Orgalime, a joined-up approach that crosses over all policy areas is essential to achieving this – and this is what is still missing today.

We now look forward to the European Commission acting on these Conclusions: we are counting on it to pick up the call made by the Council to provide an EU industrial policy strategy comprising both medium- and long-term objectives, included in the framework of its 2018 work programme, and accompanied by an action plan developed both with Member States and stakeholders.

Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, speaks for 40 trade federations representing the mechanical, electrical, electronic, metalworking & metal articles industries of 23 European countries. The industry employs some 10.9 million people in the EU and in 2015 accounted for more than €1,900 billion of annual output. The industry accounts for over a quarter of manufacturing output and a third of the manufactured exports of the European Union.

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For Orgalime, as stressed by our President on the occasion of EU Industry Day earlier this year, this action plan should build firstly on the Internal Market, which has allowed EU industry to become stronger and more competitive; and secondly on the digitisation of our industry, which has to be accompanied by public policy actions that facilitate rather than hamper this new opportunity for Europe to build on one its major strengths – its manufacturing base. But digitisation is only one piece of the puzzle: if Europe’s Industrial Renaissance is to succeed, the action plan must focus on a joined-up policy that mainstreams industrial competitiveness across all policy areas, and particularly energy, environment, internal market, trade policies, and by continued dedicated investment of EU public money in industrial R&D.

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Notes for Editors:

Orgalime Vision Paper can be accessed at: <http://read.orgalime.org/PaperVision2016/>



The European Engineering Industries Association

ORGALIME aisbl | BluePoint Brussels | Boulevard A Reyers 80 | B1030 | Brussels | Belgium
Tel: +32 2 206 68 83 | e-mail: secretariat@orgalime.org
Ass. Intern. A.R. 12.7.74 | VAT BE 0414 341 438