

PRESS RELEASE

Europe's business leaders meet President von der Leyen, urge swift action to advance strategic priorities

Brussels, 16 September 2025: A delegation of Europe's industrial and tech leaders from the European Round Table for Industry (ERT) met with European Commission President von der Leyen yesterday evening to exchange views on implementation measures to restore Europe's economic growth and competitiveness, one year on from the Draghi Report and in the light of the President's State of the European Union address.

Jean-François van Boxmeer, ERT Chair commented *"We value these opportunities for dialogue with President von der Leyen, on this occasion one year on from the Draghi Report. Our exchange provided a timely opportunity to take stock of progress and identify priorities for action in the coming months. We are encouraged by much of what the President announced in her State of the European Union last week. The Commission should now shift up the gears to deliver tangible actions. National governments must also show that they now grasp the urgency of this moment and act in the European interest, including by being willing to form coalitions of the willing to forge ahead on policy actions to restore competitiveness and complete the Single Market."*

The leaders exchanged on the key elements identified by ERT that are required to restore competitiveness in order to generate growth:

1. **Single Market:** ERT is a vocal champion for the EU Single Market as a unique source of prosperity and resilience. It is heartened by the commitment to set out a Roadmap to 2028 to renew the dynamic of Single Market integration and deliver the promised gains in capital, energy, telecoms, the 28th regime and more. The starting point is the rapid removal of existing barriers – so that national governments understand that Single Market rules are being enforced.
2. **Simplification:** Reducing administrative burden, compliance costs and reporting obligations by simplifying and harmonising the regulatory framework will enable companies to reach scale faster and attract more investment. ERT welcomes the Omnibus exercises and urges the EU institutions to send clear signals, going beyond the 25% reduction in the reporting requirements.
3. **Competition Policy:** the business community believes that the need to move from words to actions on overhauling existing doctrines on competition including the merger guidelines to respond to global realities, is both urgent and overdue.
4. **Trade:** Following the deal agreed between the EU and U.S. in July, swift implementation is now of the essence. Beyond the US, the EU must also strive to diversify its trading flows and relationships with open markets around the globe by focussing on the other 83% of EU trade. ERT supports agreements such as the EU-Mercosur and Mexico FTA and looks forward to progress in ongoing negotiations with India.

5. **Innovation:** ERT welcomes the ambitious and pragmatic R&D&I support foreseen in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), as well as work to deliver the 28th regime and the announcement of the Scaleup Europe Fund. Europe's technology leadership across key sectors is essential for future competitiveness. Our future prosperity and sovereignty are underpinned by Europe's entire industrial and scientific ecosystem where partnership and collaboration are key enablers for innovation.
6. **Digital:** Boosting the adoption of digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) is critical for Europe's future growth and productivity. Simplifying the European digital regulatory framework is paramount and ERT looks forward to release of the European Commission's digital omnibus.
7. **Security & Defence:** European security is a broad objective requiring a holistic approach. A deeper Single Market for the defence industry will bring significant benefits. It is time to build on SAFE and EDIP. Readiness 2030 will only guarantee our security if it becomes an engine for the creation of economies of scale for European value chains and dual use innovation. Europe's leadership in evolving defence-relevant technologies will be the key to developing credible deterrence and to develop a globally competitive industrial ecosystem.
8. **Energy:** In spite of the welcome initiatives stemming from the Clean Industrial Deal, manufacturing is still under massive pressure in the EU due to the high cost of energy, slow permitting processes and the lack of modern grid infrastructure. An increasingly unstable geopolitical context has exposed the urgent need to reduce unhealthy dependencies. Avoiding industry leakage and supporting the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries are essential to the decarbonisation trajectory.

Background

The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) brings together the Chief Executives and Chairmen of major European headquartered multinational companies, covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT strives for a strong, open, and competitive Europe as a driver for inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity. Companies of ERT Members are situated throughout Europe, with combined revenues exceeding **€3 trillion**, providing around **6 million** direct jobs worldwide - of which half are in Europe - and sustaining millions of indirect jobs. They invest more than **€120 billion** annually in R&D, largely in Europe.

The ERT has a longstanding tradition of high-level engagement with European institutions and Heads of State & Government across the EU. Such meetings are the occasion to highlight cross-sectoral industry priorities¹ in support for EU efforts to deliver on its competitiveness strategy. Europe's industry is a major contributor to economic growth, employment, innovation and infrastructure.

¹ In recent surveys of the ERT Membership of, 80% said if the Draghi Report was implemented in full, their companies would invest in the EU as a priority. Details [here](#).

² Visit ERT's Single Market section, featuring stories, technical analyses and links to the Single Market coalition-led compendium of 100+ obstacles [here](#).

Composition of ERT Delegation

1.	Jean-François van Boxmeer	Chair Chairman	ERT Vodafone Group
2.	Ilham Kadri	Vice-Chair Chief Executive Officer	ERT Syensqo
3.	Nils Andersen	Chair	ASML
4.	Leonhard Birnbaum	Chief Executive Officer	E.ON
5.	Estelle Brachlianoff	Chief Executive Officer	Veolia
6.	Michel Demaré	Chair of the Board	AstraZeneca
7.	Claudio Descalzi	Chief Executive Officer	Eni
8.	Aiman Ezzat	Chief Executive Officer	Capgemini
9.	Guillaume Faury	Chief Executive Officer	Airbus
10.	Belén Garijo	Chair of the Executive Board & CEO	Merck Group
11.	Christel Heydemann	Chief Executive Officer	Orange
12.	Roy Jakobs	Chief Executive Officer	Royal Philips
13.	Thomas Leysen	Chair of the Board	dsm-firmenich
14.	Dimitri Papalexopoulos	Chair	TITAN
15.	Benoît Potier	Chairman	Air Liquide
16.	Patrick Pouyanné	Chairman of the Board and CEO	TotalEnergies
17.	Kurt Sievers Semiconductors	President & CEO	NXP
18.	Jim Snabe	Chairman	Siemens
19.	Jonathan Symonds	Chair	GSK
20.	Jacob Wallenberg	Chair	Investor
21.	Oliver Zipse	Chairman of the Board of Management	BMW Group
22.	Anthony Gooch Gálvez	Secretary General	ERT
23.	Joakim Reiter	Advisor to the Chair Chief External and Corporate Affairs Officer	ERT Vodafone Group

Note to Editors:

A full list of the Membership of ERT is accessible [here](#).