

PRESS RELEASE

PARIS 10 JULY 2008

ENSURING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

On the occasion of the French Presidency of the European Union, the Groupe des Fédérations Industrielles (GFI - France) held today in Paris the first European Industry Day "Industries: an ambition for Europe" under the high Patronage of Monsieur Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic.

The Groupe des Fédérations Industrielles (GFI) together with the Alliance for a Competitive European Industry (ACEI) today called on the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States to work together with industry in order to define clear solutions to current and future challenges. GFI and the ACEI issued a joint statement outlining a number of key challenges requiring urgent attention.

According to Dr Jean-Marie Chandelle, Chairman of the ACEI, "In addressing the fundamental challenges of this new century, in particular climate change, European industry, with its potential for technological innovation, should play a key role. This will only be possible if the regulatory framework allows for industry's activities to be developed within the EU. It would be a nonsense if EU climate change policy were to lead to carbon leakage and a reallocation of wealth, a solution which would make no environmental sense."

The manufacturing industry plays an important and significant role in the EU providing direct employment to around 34 million people, with a combined turnover of over 6 trillion euros, as well as exports totaling around 1 trillion euros. Industry is a full partner of society, striving to ensure added value for consumers, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders in an increasingly complex and global society, with rapidly growing needs and expectations in terms of environmental protection, energy saving and sustainable use of resources. As such, it is essential that governments and other stakeholders be willing to work with industry to foster an innovation-friendly environment in Europe able to meet societal needs. "Together with the ACEI, GFI sets a high level of ambition to the public stakeholders in order to ensure a competitive and sustainable environment for the industries located in Europe. It's essential for the future" concludes Yvon JACOB, chairman of the GFI.

In the field of Sustainable Industrial Policy European industries have and continue to adapt their processes and products to meet the highest sustainability criteria. However, the European Union must increase its support for European industries ensuring its legislation is compatible with industry's ability to invest in and develop energy efficient technologies and products capable of meeting current and future challenges. In relation to providing solutions for environmental challenges, industry supports the EU's objective to act as a leader in worldwide efforts in field. Industry is the key solution provider for the climate change challenge, therefore the EU must also adopt a comprehensive, integrated strategy that sends a clear signal to industry, which allows a predictable and favourable investment and innovation climate.

European industry is also very concerned about the increasing volume of EU legislation with which it has to contend as well as the quality of some of the new legislation and its practical implementation at Member State level. As such, the EU needs to make a more concerted effort to ensure that legislation does not place an unnecessary burden on the European industry. In addition, industry calls for the goals of the Lisbon Agenda to be strongly reconfirmed, respected and reinforced by the EU and its Member States. The statement also highlights the need to ensure a level playing field in global markets, as well as to boost Intellectual Property Rights.

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