



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

LV/LR/BL/ch
Brussels, 11 March 2025

To: Ministers of the
Competitiveness Council

[Letter sent by e-mail]

Urgent action needed to reinforce the Clean Industrial Deal

Dear Ministers of the Competitiveness Council,

As you prepare to discuss the future of European industry on 12 March, we urge you to recognise the urgency of the crisis unfolding across Europe's industrial sectors. Competitiveness cannot be considered separately from the fact that Europe is failing to invest at the required scale, jobs are disappearing rapidly, and without supporting framework and legally binding commitments, the Clean Industrial Deal risks becoming another set of vague promises rather than a real strategy to secure jobs and industry.

Key commitments in the Clean Industrial Deal—such as support for quality jobs, just transition, stronger social dialogue, social conditionalities, potential State Aid reform, and improved worker consultation—could help workers if properly and rapidly implemented.

Meeting these challenges is impossible under austerity. Following Mario Draghi's recent report, much political focus has been placed on deregulation and "simplification," yet little on mobilising the €800 billion investment he identified—much of which must come from public sources. From 2009 to 2024, the US government injected over five times more into the economy than the eurozone (€14 trillion vs. €2.5 trillionⁱ). The Clean Industrial Deal will fail without urgent action to close this public funding gap and tie investments to securing quality jobs.

The industrial crisis is no longer a distant concern—it is happening now. **The Clean Industrial Deal offers important steps for the future, but immediate action is needed for workers losing jobs today.** An average of 500 industrial jobs are disappearing daily, with at least 4.3 million at riskⁱⁱ.

That is why we **call for a "SURE 2.0" mechanism** to provide urgent financial support, preventing further job losses and ensuring a managed transition rather than economic instability. The original SURE programme saved 26.9 million jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic through an EU-wide job retention scheme. If this new scheme was in place, it would allow the EU to be ready for possible tariffs. This time, it should safeguard employment and industrial capacity amid high energy prices, geopolitical instability, and rapid technological change—while investing in worker upskilling and reskilling. SURE 2.0 is a vital opportunity to keep Europe's workforce and industries resilient.



The Clean Industrial Deal commitments does not stop the restructuring processes and the loss of industrial capacities already underway and leaves workers from a wide range of sectors behind. The so-called quality green jobs of the future are already disappearing. Audi's Brussels plant, despite public funding for EV production, has shut down. Northvolt, once seen as a flagship EU battery producer, has filed for bankruptcy while the Swedish government refuses to intervene. These are not isolated failures but warnings that Europe's industrial transition is unprepared for the scale of the challenge. There is a clear misalignment in the communication that needs to be addressed —while it acknowledges the importance of worker participation, collective bargaining, and social conditionalities, it simultaneously advances proposals like the 28th legal regime, which threatens these very rights.

Securing long-term industrial employment must be a priority to ensure Europe's manufacturing and heavy industry remain stable sources of quality jobs rather than victims of short-term, profit-driven restructuring or unfair competition with Europe's economic competitors. Public investment must go beyond restrictive debt rules to secure jobs and industrial capacity. The Competitiveness Fund promised under the Clean Industrial Deal will not be enough to deliver the protection and transformation of our industries. **This proposal should take the form of an [EU investment facility](#), financed through common debt, separate from the MFF.**

We urge you to act with the urgency and ambition this crisis demands.

Yours sincerely,

Ludovic Voet

ETUC Confederal Secretary

ⁱ [Forget the US — Europe has successfully put tariffs on itself](#)

ⁱⁱ [Europe's booming labour market needs to brace for change | articles | ING Think](#)