

Securing Europe's Industrial Future through Circular and Affordable Solutions

eumeps
The voice of the
European EPS Industry

With contributions from:

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BASF, BEWI RAW, De Vries Recycling, HIRSCH Servo Group, Isomo, Schlaadt, STS Polistiroli, Termolan.

A collective vision for Europe's industrial future

Featuring perspectives from the EPS sector and its European partners

Across Europe, industries are working to reconcile competitiveness and climate ambition. The Clean Industrial Deal represents an opportunity to align these goals, strengthening Europe's manufacturing base while advancing the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy.

This publication brings together voices from the Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) sector and its European partners. From construction to packaging, from raw material producers to recyclers, each contributor reflects on what is needed to keep European industry competitive, sustainable and resilient.

Europe's industrial transition can only succeed through cooperation across sectors, clear and predictable policies, and recognition of the essential role of industry in delivering both climate progress and economic stability.

Marion Walsmann, Member of the European Parliament, group of the European People's Party.



Marion Walsmann is a Member of the European Parliament for Germany and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI). A lawyer by training and former Minister for Justice, Finance, and European Affairs in the State of Thuringia, she has dedicated her career to strengthening good governance, legal certainty, and European cooperation.

Elected to the European Parliament in 2019 and re-elected in 2024, she contributes actively to discussions on competitiveness, digitalisation, and the Single Market. Her work focuses on creating a predictable regulatory environment that enables businesses to innovate and grow in Europe. She is also a board member of SME Europe, where she advocates for the needs and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises across the EU.

Through her engagement in the European Parliament, she supports initiatives such as the Clean Industrial Deal, recognising that Europe's green and digital transitions must be compatible with a strong industrial base and social cohesion.

European Parliament

Alan Moss, Vice-President Sales at BEWI RAW BV



Alan Moss is Vice President Sales at BEWI RAW, a leading European producer of expandable polystyrene (EPS) raw materials. With more than two decades of experience in the plastics and chemical sectors, he has held several management roles within BEWI and Unipol Holland, contributing to the development of sustainable materials and recycling solutions across Europe.

Throughout his career, he has focused on innovation, product stewardship and the integration of circular principles into industrial production. At BEWI RAW, he promotes a business model that combines local manufacturing, material recovery and carbon reduction to strengthen Europe's industrial resilience and competitiveness.

BEWI RAW

Virginia Janssens, Managing Director of Plastics Europe



Virginia Janssens is the Managing Director of Plastics Europe, the pan-European association representing plastics manufacturers. With more than a decade of experience in European public affairs and sustainability advocacy, she has played a key role in shaping industry engagement on circular economy and climate policy.

Before joining Plastics Europe in 2020, she served as Managing Director of EUROPEN, where she led initiatives to advance sustainable packaging and cross-sector collaboration.

Under her leadership, Plastics Europe has strengthened its focus on transparency, innovation and responsible production, supporting the transition towards a competitive, low-carbon and circular European industry.

PLASTICS EUROPE
Enabling a sustainable future

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Foreword

Europe's industrial sector is at a crossroads. The combined pressure of climate targets, rising energy costs, global competition and regulatory fragmentation is testing the resilience of our manufacturing base. At the same time, the European Commission's Clean Industrial Deal sets out an ambitious, yet essential, framework to reinforce the competitiveness of European industry while accelerating the green transition.

At EUMEPS, we believe this dual ambition is not only achievable, it is already underway. Across Europe, the Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) value chain is delivering tangible results in insulation, packaging, and recycling. From SMEs to global innovators, our members represent every step of the EPS lifecycle. They contribute to strategic objectives including energy savings in buildings, high recyclability in packaging, and the development of local, resilient supply chains.

But to scale these contributions, policy support must be grounded in pragmatism instead of ideology. Industries and technologies that deliver the best results for decades and where is no better and more environmentally friendly alternative in sight should be recognised, funded, and supported. Industrial strategies must be inclusive of materials that offer both sustainability and affordability. EPS is one of them.

This publication brings together voices from across the EPS sector to demonstrate how this material can support the goals of the Clean Industrial Deal. It also outlines clear policy recommendations to ensure that the EU's efforts result in practical outcomes for industry, workers, and citizens alike. EUMEPS stands ready to engage with policymakers, industry partners and civil society to build a Clean Industrial Deal that is both visionary and grounded. We want to ensure policies that empower European industries to lead by example.

Jürgen Lang
Director General, EUMEPS



"To succeed in the green transition, Europe must support materials that combine sustainability, performance, and affordability — like Expanded Polystyrene."

Preface

The Clean Industrial Deal arrives at a critical juncture for Europe. It is both a response to global industrial pressures and an opportunity to reaffirm Europe's leadership in sustainable manufacturing. The EPS industry is a clear example of what European policy should support: a sector rooted in local production, delivering high-impact solutions for insulation and packaging, while actively scaling its circularity and reducing emissions.

Representing the entire value chain from raw material producers to recyclers and converters, EUMEPS provides a unique perspective on what it takes to align industrial competitiveness with the green transition. Across Europe, the EPS industry comprises hundreds of producers and manufacturing sites, supporting tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs. It plays a vital role in local economies and industrial ecosystems, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, where production capacity and workforce engagement are especially significant. These figures reflect the social, economic, and environmental contributions that industries like ours make every day.

That is why it is essential to ensure that materials such as EPS are not overlooked in the implementation of EU strategies. From building insulation that lowers energy use and supports affordable housing, to protective and food safety packaging that enables circular logistics, EPS is part of the solution.

In this publication, we bring together views from the EPS industry, European policymakers, and key stakeholders.

Jakub Stefaniak
European Technical Affairs Manager, EUMEPS



"Promoting diversity is part of how we build stronger, more resilient, and more innovative industrial value chains."



European Parliament

Policy Perspective by MEP Marion Walsmann Group of the European People's Party, European Parliament

"The Clean Industrial Deal represents a vital opportunity to strengthen Europe's competitiveness while advancing our transition to climate neutrality. It brings together two essential objectives: a strong and innovative European economy and ambitious climate goals. These should not be seen as opposing forces, but as two interlocking gears driving Europe's future prosperity.
Decarbonisation must never mean deindustrialisation. Likewise, focusing on competitiveness must not imply rolling back Europe's green transition. On the contrary, both goals depend on one another.

We must think about competitiveness and decarbonisation together. That means creating the right framework conditions for businesses to innovate, invest, and grow within Europe. This requires affordable energy, predictable legislation, and a coherent long-term strategy that gives our industries the confidence to plan and invest.

As policymakers, we have a duty to make Europe's transformation achievable for all sectors and all citizens — in our workplaces, but also in our homes. Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) — known in Germany as Styropor — can play an important role in this context by providing energy-efficient and affordable housing through innovative insulation and renovation solutions. This could also make an important contribution to addressing Europe's housing crisis.

The Clean Industrial Deal can help ensure that Europe remains a place where industry thrives, high-quality jobs are created, and sustainable technologies are developed.
To achieve this, constructive cooperation between institutions, businesses, and citizens is essential — so that this transition strengthens, rather than weakens, Europe's competitiveness, innovation capacity, and strategic autonomy."

1 State of Play: A Fragmented Industrial Reality



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Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) is widely used in Europe for two main purposes: building insulation and protective and cold chain packaging. It is lightweight, cost-effective, durable, and fully recyclable. The EPS sector in Europe is mature and integrated, bringing together raw material producers, converters, recyclers, and national associations, thus forming a complete value chain.



However, despite its relevance to the EU's decarbonisation and circularity goals, EPS is often left out of strategic frameworks and funding opportunities. The Clean Industrial Deal offers a critical opportunity to correct this oversight.

Unequal Infrastructure and National Disparities

While EPS recycling rates exceed 70% in countries like Norway, Portugal, and Denmark, showing the technical feasibility of circular systems, other Member States still lack basic collection or treatment infrastructure. The absence of a harmonised EU framework leads to strong regional disparities, creating a two-speed Europe for circularity in EPS. It also impairs investment in innovation, as the return on such investments is highly dependent on national conditions.

Regulatory Imbalance and External Competition

European EPS producers operate under strict environmental and safety standards, ranging from REACH to product-specific regulations. However, increasing imports of polystyrene (PS) and styrene (the raw materials used to produce EPS) from third countries, where these standards are lower or poorly enforced, threaten to erode the competitiveness of EU producers.

The current regulatory asymmetry is unsustainable and penalises European manufacturers for compliance while rewarding non-European actors with easier market access and lower costs.

High Energy Prices and Vulnerability

Unlike globalised materials with offshore production, EPS is largely manufactured within Europe by SMEs using local inputs. This makes the sector particularly vulnerable to energy price volatility and regulatory uncertainty. While this local value chain brings clear benefits in terms of industrial resilience and sustainability, it also increases exposure to the current industrial and energy crises in the EU.

2 Key Contributions of EPS to the Clean Industrial Deal



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Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) plays an essential role in supporting Europe's competitiveness and achieving its climate and circularity goals. Its contribution is particularly relevant in three core areas: energy-efficient construction, circular packaging systems, and accessible, locally produced materials.



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A. Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation in Buildings

EPS is one of the most widely used insulation materials in Europe due to its proven thermal performance, durability, and cost-effectiveness. It enables significant reductions in heating and cooling needs — up to 60% in some cases — helping to lower energy demand and reduce emissions across the EU building stock.

- **Alignment with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD):** EPS contributes directly to achieving minimum energy performance standards and supporting national long-term renovation strategies.
- **Support for Affordable and Climate-Resilient Housing:** Thanks to its affordability, EPS makes energy-efficient upgrades more accessible, especially in regions affected by energy poverty.
- **Durability and Lifespan:** EPS insulation systems stand as long as the building stands without maintenance, offering a stable, long-term solution for decarbonising buildings.

B. Circular Packaging for Strategic Sectors

EPS packaging is critical to many value chains, notably for perishable goods and high-value appliances. Its lightweight nature reduces emissions in transport, while its protective qualities minimise waste during distribution. EPS is also 100% recyclable and already recycled in practice and at scale in several European Member States. Additionally, EPS is also recognised as recyclable in practice and on a large scale in certain countries and regions globally.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published a recent report "Plastic Pollution Science"[1], which states: "*An expert survey of members of the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment network found that while many polymers are theoretically recyclable, only a handful of packaging formats are proven to be recyclable in practice and on a large scale in certain countries and regions. These products are PET bottles, HDPE bottles and other rigid HDPE formats (e.g. pots, trays, cups), PP bottles and flexible PE monomaterials larger than A4, the latter only in a business-to-business context (e.g. pallet wrapping) and EPS for transport packaging (e.g. fish crates or protection of large items)*".

- **Preserving Cold Chains and Food Safety:** EPS ensures hygienic, thermally efficient packaging, particularly for fish and fresh produce. Their low thermal conductivity minimises the need for ice, reducing both water and energy consumption and allowing a higher payload of fresh food in transport. EPS packaging is also very common as best solution for transport in pharmaceutical and medical sector.
- **High Recycling Rates:** Countries such as Portugal, Norway, and Denmark achieve EPS packaging recycling rates of over 70%.
- **Investments in Innovation:** Ongoing projects across Europe are scaling up both mechanical and chemical recycling infrastructure for EPS, including from demolition waste in construction.
  For example, the **EPSolutely** initiative in Austria demonstrates how collaboration between industry and recyclers can close the loop for EPS waste from both packaging

1 https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45368/PlasticPollutionScience.pdf

and building applications, turning previously landfilled material into new high-quality raw material for reuse.

C. Affordability, Local Production, and Industrial Resilience

EPS production is highly decentralised across Europe, supporting thousands of local jobs and businesses. In Poland alone, there are more than 60 producers and around 100 manufacturing sites employing over 8,000 people, while in France, the EPS construction value chain represents over 30,000 direct and indirect jobs and more than 336,000 building companies using EPS solutions (source: AFIPEB).

Across Europe, the EPS sector is mainly composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), forming an integral part of the EU's industrial ecosystem.

- **Affordable Transition:** EPS offers one of the most cost-effective insulation and packaging solutions available on the market, critical for a just and inclusive green transition.
- **SME-Driven Value Chain:** The predominance of SMEs ensures local employment, short supply chains, and economic resilience at the regional level.
- **Resource Efficiency:** With 98% air content and only 2% raw material, EPS delivers maximum performance using minimal raw material, a clear advantage for material efficiency.



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3 Shared Perspective

Voices from the Industry and Stakeholders



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The Clean Industrial Deal can only succeed through cooperation across sectors. It requires the engagement of the entire EPS value chain, from raw material producers and converters to recyclers, together with European partner associations active in construction, packaging, and circularity. Their contributions reflect how current industrial and environmental policies are experienced on the ground and outline what is needed to keep European industry competitive, sustainable, and resilient.

European Policy & Partner Associations

CEFIC – Turning the Clean Industrial Deal into Action



The Clean Industrial Deal marked an important turning point for Europe. It demonstrated that Europe was not only listening to industry- European leaders were willing to engage directly and constructively with business. The handover of the Clean Industrial Deal at the 2025 European Industry Summit, in the presence of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Executive Vice-Presidents Teresa Ribera and Stéphane Séjourné, and Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra, showed that cooperation between policymakers and industry has become indispensable to Europe's economic and climate ambitions. The Summit, held exactly one year after the launch of the Antwerp Declaration, reaffirmed the power of working together under a shared purpose.

The Clean Industrial Deal is more than a political signal; it has triggered important steps towards restoring competitiveness for energy-intensive sectors such as chemicals. The Affordable Energy Action Plan, the Clean Industrial State Aid Framework, and the efforts to simplify legislation through the omnibus proposals represent important signals to bring energy prices down and reduce administrative complexity.

Yet despite these efforts, Europe's chemical industry continues to face severe headwinds. Plant closures and capacity reductions are becoming a weekly reality. We urgently need concrete, short-term measures that can halt this closures wave, combined with deeper structural reforms to secure the long-term viability of European industry.

Actions must address the combined burden of high energy prices and carbon costs, weak demand for low-carbon and circular products, and the urgent need to scale up innovation. Europe must prioritise enabling legislation that supports investment, radically simplify regulatory processes- particularly permitting - and ensure that rules create value and can be enforced fairly at Europe's borders. A balanced and coherent trade policy will also be essential for our competitiveness.

Despite today's challenges, we remain convinced that Europe can have a competitive, sustainable, and resilient industrial base: a Europe where companies can thrive, where the continent becomes an innovation hub for sustainable solutions, and where high-quality jobs remain on European soil. Europe is our home, and we are committed to staying and investing here.

A key lesson of the past year is that no association, no sector, and no policymaker can address these challenges alone. The Antwerp Declaration illustrated how powerful a united industrial voice can be. When industry associations come together with a common message and shared priorities, we can help build solutions that are both ambitious and realistic. This spirit of collaboration must remain the foundation of the Clean Industrial Deal.

For the Deal to succeed, it must move from vision to delivery, and fast. Europe cannot afford to lose more industrial capacity while solutions are still being discussed. We call on EU institutions and Member States to take swift, coordinated action that provides immediate relief for energy-intensive sectors and lays the groundwork for long-term competitiveness. Our message is clear: a thriving, sustainable, and resilient chemical industry is essential for a thriving, sustainable, and resilient Europe. We need urgent and decisive policy choices if we want a future for our industry in Europe.

***Marco Mensink**, Director General of CEFIC (European Chemical Industry Council)*

Plastics Europe – Competitiveness, Engine of Circularity

"The Clean Industrial Deal is Europe's moment to urgently restore competitiveness and reclaim global leadership in the race to climate neutrality and circularity.

Plastics are the backbone of Europe's strategic industries: from construction and agriculture to healthcare, mobility, defence, clean tech and packaging. But let's be clear: without a strong European plastics industry today, tomorrow's scaled circular transition will not happen in Europe. A resilient, competitive home market is essential not only to deliver Europe's sustainability goals but also to help ensure Europe's needed strategic autonomy and to avoid overdependence on imports.

Competitiveness is the engine of circularity. Circularity is the engine of our future competitive production model in Europe. Recycling, sustainable design, reuse and low-carbon processes cannot scale without an investable, financially healthy manufacturing base in Europe. Today's reality is a weakened competitive plastics value chain in Europe, stalled circularity, decarbonisation via deindustrialisation, with Europe losing its innovation and technological leadership in circular solutions.

We need a dedicated action plan for the plastics sector in Europe, co-created with policymakers and our stakeholders, to restore Europe's industrial competitiveness and to get us back on track with scaling up plastics green transition in and for Europe. Our industry is holding on by a thread and will not be able to hold off further closures for much longer. We need support with immediate impact on the ground, now. Without urgent political and policy action at all levels, Europe will lose its industrial base and downstream eco-systems, its innovation leadership, experience substantial job loss with over 1.5 million direct employees in the plastics sector, its ability to deliver a truly circular plastics system which is our only competitive production model of the future using homegrown feedstock, i.e. plastics waste.

Our industry needs clear, predictable legislative framework and rules, faster permitting procedures, affordable energy, stricter enforcement of the EU law at our borders, free and fair trade for plastics and plastics products and bold economic/fiscal incentives at the European and Member State level in order to scale up circular and low-carbon production and consumption. Decisions taken now will determine whether we restore our leadership in delivering the world's first circular plastics system, or see Europe further weakened and vulnerable, with no local industrial base while being overly dependent on imports in today's volatile geopolitical world."

***Virginia Janssens**, Managing Director of Plastics Europe*

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS EUROPE
LET'S BUILD AN EFFICIENT EUROPE

Construction Products Europe - Building a Competitive and Circular Europe

"With a housing crisis worsening in most parts of the European Union (EU); as winter nears, energy poverty will once again impact 48 million EU citizens who will be unable to keep their homes warm; as our Member States still negotiate the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of the EU to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); the construction industry can positively contribute and help resolve this crucial challenges. Indeed, our sustainability and circularity objectives remain unchanged and are aligned with the EU Clean Industrial Deal.

We want to accelerate our transition to a circular construction, offer housing solutions, and drive the energy renovation through the combined European Affordable Housing Plan, Housing Construction Strategy, and Circular Economy Act.

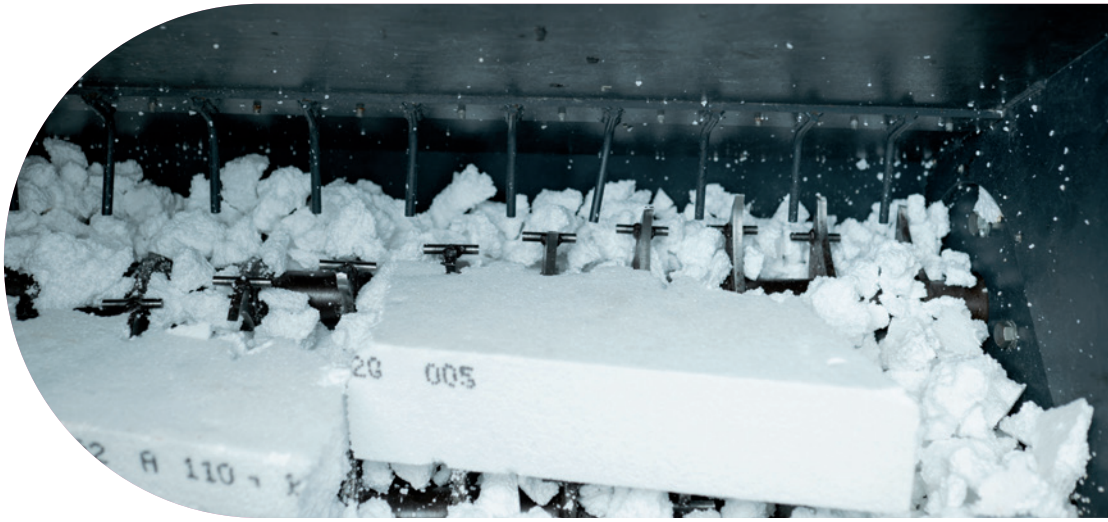
With investments in the sector reaching €1,683 billion in 2023, construction provides 18 million direct jobs and contributes 11% of the EU's GDP, making it the largest industry in the European Union (EU). To unlock the potential of the EU construction products industry, we need the European Institutions to recognise the importance of our competitiveness and sustainability targets. Let us build a competitive, circular, and affordable Europe together."

Christophe Sykes, *Director General*
Construction Products Europe



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European Plastics Converters (EuPC) – Affordable Energy, Clear Rules, Circular Growth



"The European plastics converting industry welcomes the vision of a Clean Industrial Deal, while also recognising that the initiative must reflect today's industrial landscape. Thousands of companies across Europe, most of them small or medium-sized, are working every day to keep production running despite very high energy prices, growing regulatory uncertainty, and stronger competition from imports. These firms form an essential part of Europe's industrial fabric and employ hundreds of thousands of people.

Right now, competitiveness is the biggest concern. In many countries, energy costs are still far above those of our global competitors. Some companies have already reduced production or postponed investments because of the uncertainty. If the goal of the Clean Industrial Deal is to strengthen industry, then affordable energy must be at its core. Without it, many converters will not be able to invest in the low-carbon and circular technologies that policymakers expect from them.

Clear and coherent rules are equally important. Businesses need to have a clear understanding of the direction that the future legislative landscape will take before they can make major investments. When rules differ between Member States, or when they undergo rapid changes, it becomes nearly impossible for businesses to plan for the future. We believe that harmonised and predictable regulation across the single market is essential to make long-term progress.

Another key element is demand. Europe can only achieve circularity if the market supports it. Converters are ready to use more recycled materials and to redesign products for recycling, but they need a stable demand for circular products. Consistent requirements on recycled content, fairer EPR fees, and public procurement that favours sustainable solutions can all help make circular plastics a real success story.

In practice, many converters are already contributing to circularity every day. They redesign packaging, use recycled feedstock, and help reduce energy use in construction and transport through lighter, more efficient materials. These efforts show that plastics can play a pivotal role in Europe's transition if the right framework is in place.

Finally, safeguarding Europe's strategic autonomy is essential. When converters are forced to move production abroad, Europe risks greater reliance on imports from regions that do not meet the same environmental standards. A strong and competitive plastics converting sector is therefore not only an industrial question, but also one of sustainability and resilience.

We remain committed to working with European institutions and all partners along the value chain to make the Clean Industrial Deal a real opportunity for industry, for jobs, and for Europe's circular future."

Federica Gallicchio, *Managing Director of European Plastics Converters*

European Association for ETICS (EAE) – Energy Efficiency as an Industrial Opportunity

“The Clean Industrial Deal is a unique opportunity to strengthen Europe’s competitiveness while delivering on its climate ambitions. In the building sector, our contribution is both immediate and measurable: energy renovation and insulation of the building envelope reduce CO_2 emissions, lower energy bills and improve living comfort for millions of Europeans.

ETICS systems are already a proven solution to help achieve these goals. By improving energy efficiency and reducing energy demand, they contribute directly to Europe’s decarbonisation and energy security. The Clean Industrial Deal should therefore recognise the building envelope as a strategic element of Europe’s industrial and climate strategy.

What the ETICS industry needs now is clear and consistent policy direction, long-term investment signals and stable regulation across Member States. With these conditions in place, we can accelerate renovation, support local jobs, and deliver tangible results for Europe’s citizens and the environment. Energy efficiency is not only a climate priority; it is an industrial opportunity for Europe.”

***Ralf Pasker**, Managing Director of the EAE*



Voices of the EPS Industry – From Innovation to Practice

BASF – Strengthening Europe's Industrial Base through Innovation

The Clean Industrial Deal is an opportunity to strengthen Europe's competitiveness while advancing its transition towards climate neutrality. As a key sector for Europe's low-carbon future, the chemical industry provides essential materials and innovations that make this transformation possible, from energy-efficient building solutions to advanced technologies supporting sustainable mobility and circular resource use.

Improving the energy performance of Europe's building stock will be central to meeting the EU's climate ambitions. A well-insulated building envelope reduces emissions, lowers energy demand and enables the efficient use of modern heating systems. To achieve these goals, European policy must remain technology- and material-neutral, focusing on performance and life-cycle sustainability rather than prescribing specific solutions.

The EPS industry has repeatedly shown its capacity to innovate. A clear example is the development of graphite-enhanced grey EPS, which significantly improves insulation performance and allows a reduction of material use by 20 to 40%.

The transition to a climate-neutral economy requires innovation-led transformation and an enabling framework that supports investment, ensures affordable energy, and maintains global competitiveness. The Clean Industrial Deal can help provide this foundation by combining industrial policy with climate ambition to ensure that Europe remains a centre for sustainable production, technological leadership and high-quality employment.

***Gregor Haverkemper**, Head of Marketing Styrenic Foams at BASF*



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BEWI – Addressing the Competitiveness Gap

"Europe's industrial future demands solutions that are both sustainable and competitive. At BEWI we manufacture EPS with a fully integrated business model that closes the loop: together with our partners, we collect and recycle used EPS back into high-quality new products.

Our ambition is to reduce reliance on virgin resources, cut CO_2 emissions and support the construction and packaging sectors with materials that meet high-performance standards and circular expectations. The creation of certified recycled EPS is a direct response to evolving regulations and market demands in Europe.

For the Clean Industrial Deal to succeed, we need a policy framework that supports local producers with predictable energy costs, stable regulation and clear demand for circular materials. With this support, industry like ours can deliver on both climate and industrial objectives, thus protecting jobs, strengthening Europe's manufacturing base and delivering sustainable solutions."

***Alan Moss**, Vice President Sales at BEWI RAW BV*

hetech group (HIRSCH Erlenbach Technology) – Setting Global Standards for Sustainable Industry

"As a global leader in particle foam processing technology, hetech supports the objectives of the Clean Industrial Deal by delivering high-performance and energy-efficient solutions that meet the highest European standards.

Low-cost imports from regions with weaker environmental and safety requirements continue to threaten Europe's industrial base. Our response is clear: technological excellence, sustainable design, and uncompromising quality.

Through innovation, circular manufacturing processes and a continuous reduction of CO_2 emissions, we demonstrate that competitiveness and responsibility can go hand in hand. Europe should lead not by lowering standards, but by setting global benchmarks for sustainable industrial excellence."

***Wolfgang Landler,** CEO HIRSCH Servo Group*



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STS Polistiroli – Learning from Practice

"The Clean Industrial Deal will only succeed if it connects industrial competitiveness with the daily reality of European households and businesses. From our experience in Italy, measures such as the 'super bonus' showed how policy can unlock renovation at scale, reduce emissions, and create value for society. In just a few years, the scheme generated billions in GDP, created jobs, and cut CO_2 emissions, all made possible thanks to insulation materials like EPS.

For SMEs such as STS Polistiroli, the lesson is clear: Europe needs predictable policies, stable investment signals, and recognition of the essential role of construction products in achieving energy efficiency. Without EPS, there would have been no Italian super bonus, and there will be no successful Energy Performance of Buildings Directive without EPS. Our industry stands ready to contribute to the Clean Industrial Deal with solutions that combine sustainability, affordability, and proven results."

Dr Luca Saccardi, *Sales Director of STS Polistiroli*

Termolan – Building Circularity Together

"The Clean Industrial Deal is an opportunity to reaffirm Europe's commitment to sustainability and industrial responsibility. At Termolan, we believe that the path to competitiveness lies in collaboration and in building a truly circular economy for construction materials. As a family-owned company, we have always worked with a long-term vision, producing insulation that contributes to energy efficiency and reduces the environmental impact of buildings throughout their lifetime.

To make this transition work, Europe must recognise that insulation is not a luxury but a necessity for achieving its climate goals. Stable and predictable policies are essential to support companies that invest in low-carbon production, recycling technologies, and sustainable design.

Circularity is not achieved by one actor alone. It requires cooperation between manufacturers, recyclers, policymakers, and builders. With the right framework, the Clean Industrial Deal can help ensure that European companies like ours continue to innovate and produce locally, delivering both environmental and economic value for the regions where we operate."

Paola Beduini, *President of Termolan*

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DE VRIES
RECYCLING

De Vries Recycling – Circularity in Action

“The Clean Industrial Deal can only succeed if circularity is put at the centre of Europe’s industrial strategy. As recyclers, we see every day that valuable materials are still being lost, even though the technologies and expertise exist to give them a second life.

For EPS, the solutions are already proven: we are able to collect, sort, and recycle the material at scale, turning it back into raw material for new insulation and packaging products. This not only saves resources and energy but also reduces Europe’s dependence on virgin raw materials.

What we need now is a predictable regulatory framework that recognises the role of recycling, and practical measures to strengthen collection and sorting across Europe. If the right market signals and conditions are in place, recyclers can deliver reliable circular feedstock to the plastics industry and make the Clean Industrial Deal a reality on the ground.”

Gerrit van Veen, *Managing Director of De Vries Recycling*



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Isomo NV – Turning Challenges into Circular Opportunities

“As a producer and converter of expanded polystyrene (EPS), Isomo NV experiences firsthand the impact of Europe’s industrial transition. The challenges are significant and pressing rising energy costs, increasing regulatory pressure, and competition from low-cost imports originating from regions with less stringent environmental standards.

These factors threaten not only the competitiveness of local converters but also the continuity of sustainable manufacturing within Europe.

However, this transition also presents opportunities. EPS is inherently suited for circular applications.

Thanks to advancements in sorting and recycling technologies, we are now able to reprocess substantial volumes of post-consumer EPS into high-quality new products.

This aligns perfectly with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Clean Industrial Deal.

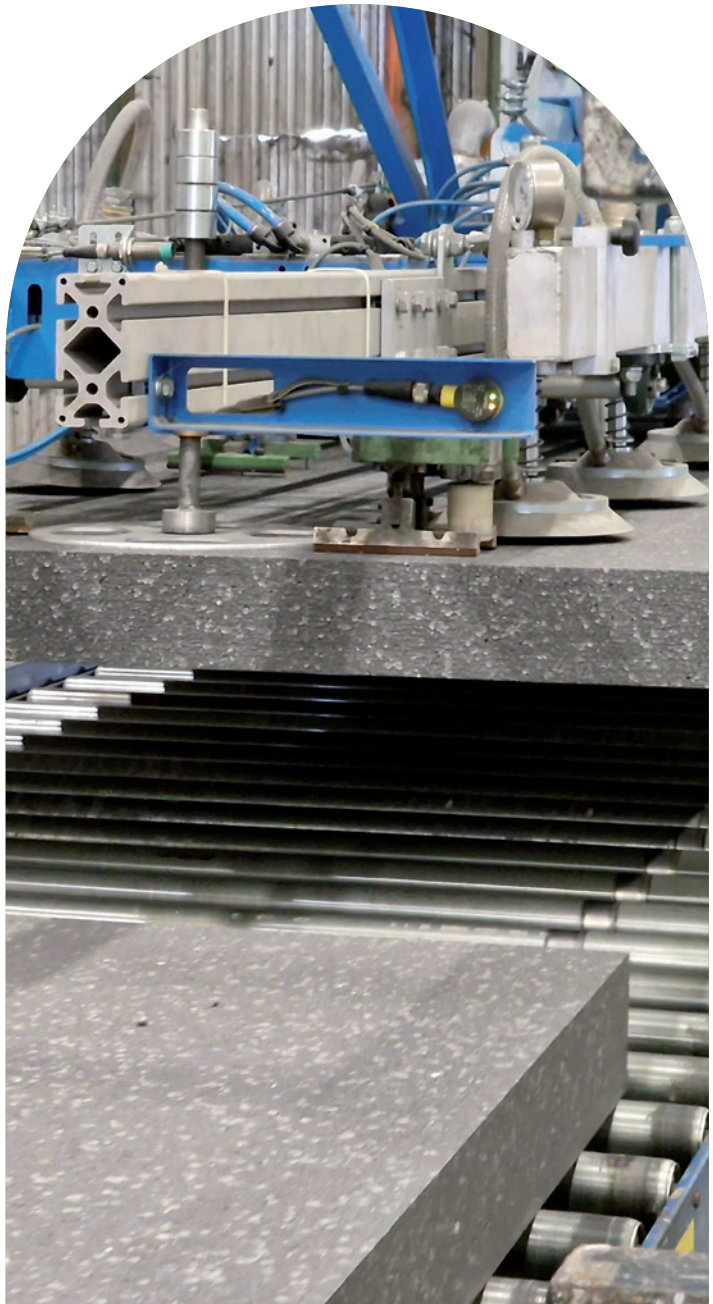
What we need is a policy framework that supports these efforts: stable energy pricing, clear and workable regulations, and a level playing field with respect to imports.

Only then can converters like Isomo continue to invest in innovation, circularity, and local employment.

We believe the EPS sector can play a key role in shaping a sustainable industrial future for Europe, but this requires collaboration between industry, policymakers, and partners across the value chain.

The Clean Industrial Deal is an opportunity to strengthen that cooperation.”

Thierry Vereecke, *Owner of Isomo NV*



Schlaadt Group – Bridging Competitiveness and Sustainability

“At Schlaadt Group, we have long recognised the dual challenge of competitiveness and sustainability facing Europe’s manufacturing base. Our decades of experience in producing EPS and other foam-based solutions for insulation, protection and packaging have shown that it is possible to reconcile high technical performance with resource-efficient processes.

The Clean Industrial Deal offers an important moment to embed that potential across the entire industry. For recyclers, converters and manufacturers alike, what matters most today is a stable regulatory framework, investment-ready infrastructure, and market conditions that favour locally produced, high-quality materials. Schlaadt Group already invests in recycling systems, advanced manufacturing and local production precisely because we believe this is the future.

What we need now is concrete support: consistent policies, predictable energy costs, and stronger links between policy and practice so that viable industrial solutions are not simply promised but delivered. With those elements in place, the Clean Industrial Deal can help ensure that Europe’s EPS industry remains a cornerstone of the transition to a sustainable, competitive and resilient economy.”

Jürgen Sohn, *Managing Director of HighCut and Recycling Schlaadt Group*



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4 Recommendations





Ensuring the Clean Industrial Deal delivers for Europe's materials and manufacturing base

To meet its industrial and environmental ambitions, the European Union must adopt a more inclusive and performance-driven approach to material policy. Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) is a European-manufactured, circular, and cost-effective solution that contributes to EU objectives in both packaging and construction.

However, it is often overlooked in strategic planning and funding schemes. EUMEPS puts forward the following recommendations to ensure the Clean Industrial Deal recognises and supports the full potential of the EPS industry:



1. **Recognise EPS as a circular material in EU industrial strategies**
EPS meets core circularity principles: it is recyclable, reused in several Member States, and produced largely by SMEs in Europe. It should be explicitly recognised in frameworks such as the Clean Industrial Deal, the Chemicals Industry Package or the Public Procurement Directive.

2. **Uphold technological neutrality**
EU policies must remain technology-neutral when defining "clean" or "green" materials and products. Performance-based criteria — such as CO_2 impact, recyclability, and durability — should be prioritised over material labels or perceptions.

3. **Ensure access to funding streams**
Recyclable and lightweight materials like EPS should be eligible under EU funding mechanisms (e.g. Innovation Fund, Horizon Europe, regional development funds) to support decarbonisation, circularity, and infrastructure modernisation.

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4. Support circular infrastructure across Member States

EU backing is needed to scale collection, sorting, and recycling systems for EPS — especially in countries where infrastructure is still developing.

5. Integrate affordability and resilience into Clean Industrial Deal metrics

Policymaking should consider not only emissions and recycling rates, but also affordability, availability, and local economic value. EPS plays a key role in making energy-efficient housing accessible to all — supporting just transition goals and reducing energy poverty.

6. Reinforce market surveillance and fair trade

To preserve European competitiveness, imported materials must meet EU environmental, economic, health and safety standards. Market surveillance should be strengthened, and measures taken to prevent unfair competition from substandard or unregulated products.



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4 Conclusion
Towards a fair, resilient and climate-smart industrial policy



The Clean Industrial Deal is an opportunity to reaffirm Europe's leadership in sustainable manufacturing — but this leadership must be inclusive and grounded in real industrial strengths.

The EPS sector, rooted in European value chains and driven by innovation, has shown that it can contribute to energy efficiency, circularity, and affordable solutions for citizens and businesses alike. Yet too often, materials like EPS are excluded from strategic frameworks due to outdated assumptions or a narrow focus on specific technologies.

A stronger, greener Europe will require:

- A level playing field for European manufacturers;
- Circular infrastructure that leaves no Member State and Industries behind;
- And a performance-driven approach to material and product policy.

With the right political choices, Europe can retain industrial excellence, build affordable and energy-efficient housing, and ensure that circular, local solutions are part of its climate transition. EUMEPS and its members are ready to play their part — and call on policymakers to unlock the full potential of our sector in shaping the industrial future of Europe.

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