

# Joint statement of ministers responsible for the internal market and industry on the Recovery Plan for Europe



The Ministers responsible for Industry and Internal Market recognised the severe impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the EU economy, jobs and society and therefore acknowledged the need to prevent future economic shocks, restore the Single Market and strengthen Europe's resilience.

They stressed that solidarity, convergence and close cooperation between the Member States and the EU institutions should be at the heart of the policies to initiate a sustainable recovery that accelerates the transition to a green and digital economy.

The Ministers highlighted the importance of the recently presented "Recovery Plan for Europe", which is expected to play a crucial role in leading the EU economy back on the path of growth and making it fit for the future.

They also recalled the need for a coordinated approach to deconfinement and recovery. The instruments provided in the Recovery Plan can only be successful when supported by an operational internal market and a collaborative and multi-level approach in the fields of industrial policy and SMEs, based on the policy objectives presented in the "March 2020 package". Furthermore, the significant investments required to relaunch the EU economy should be targeted at accelerating the green and digital transitions and at making the EU more resilient.

In this spirit, the Ministers:

- Welcomed the overarching objectives of the Recovery Plan for Europe, with a focus on supporting public and incentivising private investments;
- Highlighted that the re-establishment, strengthening and deepening of the Single Market in all its dimensions is a precondition for industrial competitiveness, and that restoring and reinforcing the Single Market will be one of the criteria for the success of the European economic recovery; called for the need to implement the Single Market enforcement action plan without delay and would additionally welcome more specific proposals to strengthen its resilience in the face of crises;
- Stressed the importance of both the green and digital transitions as drivers for European recovery and emphasized that the European Green Deal should be the EU growth strategy transforming the EU into a sustainable, climate-neutral and circular economy;
- Underlined that the acceleration of the digital transformation will be

an essential component of the EU's response to the economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

- Underlined the importance of strengthening the EU's economic resilience, while upholding the principles of an open economy including free and fair trade, and strategic autonomy across key technologies and value chains;
- Recalled that Important Projects of Common European Interest are one of the relevant tools for supporting strategic value chains at EU level; took note of the different strategic value chains highlighted in the Recovery Plan and await the Commission's work on a targeted approach, in consultation with the Member States and stakeholders;
- Took note of the Commission's analyses that identified 14 industrial ecosystems and look forward to the further examination of the concept and outcomes of the Commission's analyses; keenly await the decision on the mandate and tasks of the new multi-stakeholder dialogue in the field of industrial policy, such as the Industrial Forum mentioned in the industrial strategy;
- Emphasized the need to assist workers and SMEs in the transition to a green and digital economy; underlined the necessity to enhance the innovativeness of the economy by implementing a skills agenda for workers and increasing the cooperation and productivity of SMEs;
- Emphasized that free and fair competition and a level playing field should be ensured within the Single Market and globally, and reiterated the need to review the European competition framework to new technological and global market developments;
- Highlighted the continued relevance of the objectives of the "March 2020 package", which set out a new industrial strategy, an SME strategy, an action plan for Single Market enforcement, an analysis of remaining barriers to the Single Market and a new circular economy action plan;
- Called upon the Commission to follow-up the measures foreseen in the "March 2020 package", and to monitor and analyze the need for updates or further action, where necessary, including in light of the recovery;
- Stressed the continued relevance of the "February 2020 Package" which set out the digital strategy, the data communication and the white paper on artificial intelligence;
- Reiterated the importance to keep the competitiveness of the European economy under constant monitoring and review and the need for defining an indicator framework to benchmark the policy measures set up to stimulate and renew the European economy and strengthen its growth, recovery, resilience and green and digital transformation;
- Underlined that the Competitiveness Council should coordinate and monitor the industry and Single Market dimensions of the EU Recovery Plan and their implementation in a systematic manner, while putting SMEs at the heart of EU action.

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