



The Antwerp Call to Alden Biesen

To the Members of the European Council,

In one of the most demanding times in European history, we need clarity, resolve, and a strong sense of purpose. We need a bold agenda to strengthen Europe while upholding our core values. Ahead of your retreat in Alden Biesen on competitiveness, we ask for leadership, bold action and courage. Let us be clear. There is no resilient, nor safe, nor strong Europe, without a strong European industry.

The current geopolitical shocks must serve as an opportunity for Europe. The change is permanent. Nostalgia will not solve our problems and our structural dependencies. Global competition is ruthless.

European citizens want high-quality jobs for future generations in Europe. SMEs, the backbone of European industrial and business fabric, struggle everywhere. Global companies allocating capital for the 2030s need to decide today and often find Europe un-investable. Europe's industries and businesses face persistently high energy and carbon costs, as well as unfair trade practices. The pace of site closures and job losses across vital sectors is unprecedented.

The Draghi Report has not been implemented. The situation is worse than a year ago, and the next five years will be the most challenging for Europe's industry in many decades. The Letta Report on the Single Market showed its fragmentation, and is the first obstacle you need to overcome. You need to strengthen the Single Market in a new socioeconomic context.

Europe must change. You must take action.

This is not a new Antwerp Declaration. **This is a call for urgent and bold action from Antwerp to Alden Biesen.** From the European Industrial Summit, we urge you to take measures that show the urgency is felt in times of crisis. With your leadership the COVID-19 crisis was overcome, and measures could be taken that were not deemed possible before. We need the same approach for industrial competitiveness. We urge you to move from diagnosis to delivery, and from plans to results, with a single objective: **Save our industry. Not next year, not next week, but today.** We need Alden Biesen to deliver joint actions that achieve results in 2026, a package of Emergency Industrial Policy Measures.

According to the Antwerp Declaration Monitoring Report, around 83% of the KPIs monitored for the EU have shown no significant improvement. Electricity prices still remain higher inside Europe than in its competing countries. Carbon costs are unique to Europe, and the system is designed to increase costs year-on-year. Over the next decade, China aims to add the equivalent of an entirely new high-tech sector to its economy and will decarbonise industry at speed. The United States continues to deploy an assertive industrial strategy, and far-reaching trade measures to reboot manufacturing across the country.

While the situation is dire, the outcome is not inevitable. We can overcome, if you act. We ask you to turn the Clean Industrial Deal into outcomes felt on factory floors in 2026. **We call for bold action in three key areas of the Antwerp Declaration:**

Bring energy and carbon costs down

The costs of energy in Europe are simply too high to compete and are not only driven by commodity prices but also by regulatory charges.

Support fair global trade and improved access to finance

Free trade agreements or other types of agreements should secure vital supplies for industry, enable access to new markets, and increase exports. The EU should look at all policy instruments against unfair competition to ensure a real level playing field for EU industries both on the domestic and international markets, including carbon leakage protection.

Be proud to buy products made in Europe

Lead the way through public procurement and private buyer initiatives endorsed by the EU. Empower consumers (businesses and private) to choose net-zero and circular products, based on transparent product and environmental carbon footprints, supporting high quality jobs in Europe.

We ask you to raise your voices to leverage, enforce, revive and improve the Single Market.

This European Council meeting in Alden Biesen should be remembered as the moment the EU turned ambition into action: when we cut energy and carbon costs, delivered lower emissions through innovation and new investments, created demand for clean products, restored the conditions for private investment, made a truly functional Single Market, and made trade a driver of growth and quality jobs rather than vulnerability.

European industry is not asking for protection from change—we are asking for the conditions to lead the change.

