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From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry)
Subject:	Presidency flash note for the meeting of the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) on 16 March 2026

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PRESIDENCY FLASH NOTE

7th WP ON COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH – INDUSTRY

Monday, 16 March 2026, 10:00

Dear Colleagues,

Καλημέρα!

Firstly, the CY Presidency would like to thank all Member States for their constructive engagement, flexibility and helpful comments on the targeted amendments to the Critical Raw Materials Act during the preparation of the compromise text. Your contributions were, quite literally, critical to achieving this outcome. Following COREPER I approval on 4 March, the mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament was endorsed. Trilogues will begin once the European Parliament has adopted its position, marking an important step towards advancing the EU's strategy on critical raw materials.

Furthermore, the Commission finally tabled the proposal on the Industrial Accelerator Act. While the proposal itself took some time to accelerate its way to us, it has now landed with the CY Presidency and is expected to keep the Industry Working Party fully engaged in the months ahead.

Proposal for a Regulation on establishing a framework of measures for accelerating industrial capacity and decarbonisation in strategic sectors (Industrial Accelerator Act)

Presentation by the Commission – Exchange of views

During the morning session, the Commission will present the proposal for the Industrial Accelerator Act, establishing a framework of measures to accelerate industrial capacity and decarbonisation in selected strategic sectors, adopted on 4 March 2026. The proposal aims to strengthen the competitiveness, resilience and supply chains of EU manufacturing and introduces an industrial objective for manufacturing to represent at least 20% of EU GDP by 2035. It covers in particular energy-intensive industries, net-zero technology manufacturing and the automotive value chain. The proposal includes measures related to permitting

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procedures, demand-side instruments, "Made in EU" requirements in public procurement and support schemes, foreign direct investment conditions, and the designation of industrial manufacturing acceleration areas. Finally, it also introduces amendments to existing Union legislation, notably the Net-Zero Industry Act, the Single Digital Gateway Regulation and the Construction Products Regulation.

Industrial Accelerator Act – Impact Assessment Report

Presentation by the Commission – Exchange of views

In the afternoon, the Commission will present the Impact Assessment Report accompanying the Industrial Accelerator Act, outlining the broader political and economic context underpinning the proposal. It highlights the importance of the EU manufacturing sector, which employs around 30 million people and generated €2.5 trillion in value added in 2023, while noting the decline in the EU's share of global industrial value added from 20.8% in 2000 to 14.3% in 2024. The report also underlines the challenges posed by higher energy costs, global overcapacity and increasing strategic dependencies, as well as the need to strengthen the business case for industrial decarbonisation, given that manufacturing accounts for around 26% of EU greenhouse gas emissions.

Commission's intention to enter into a multilateral non-binding instrument called Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE) on behalf of the EU

Examination

At the beginning of the afternoon session, the Working Party will first examine the Commission's intention to enter into a multilateral non-binding instrument called Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE) on behalf of the EU. The Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) launched in 2022 will be rebranded into FORGE, as announced by US Secretary of State Rubio on 4 February 2026 during the Ministerial Conference on critical

minerals. In view of this meeting, the Commission had informed Member States about the US intention in a note shared on 30 January 2026. The Commission, together with the other MSP partner countries, provided comments and suggestions on the Guiding Principles that are now ready for endorsement by FORGE partners. Given the adjustments made in terms of structure and content, an updated Council mandate, building on the one received in 2022 for the MSP, is required for the Commission to continue representing the European Union within the new framework of FORGE, still via a non-binding instrument.

We look forward to engaging in productive discussions and to accelerating progress in the Working Party.

With warm regards,

CY Presidency Industry WP Team

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