Joint Statement by seven European highly Industrialized regions on the Industrial Accelerator Act

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The seven signatory regions to this joint declaration, as highly industrialised territories, welcome the European Commission's ambition to accelerate Europe's industrial capacity and decarbonisation in strategic sectors. A competitive Europe requires instruments to support a more resilient, innovative, and sustainable industrial model that can compete in an increasingly complex global environment. At a time when global competition for industrial investment is accelerating, Europe's industrial competitiveness increasingly depends on its ability to accelerate permitting, reduce administrative fragmentation, and shorten investment timelines.

We therefore support the objectives of the European Commission and share the need to strengthen Europe's industrial base, a base in which our regions play a central role. Taken together, the seven signatory regions account for a significant share of Europe's industrial value added. More importantly, they represent some of Europe's most deeply industrialised territories, where EU industrial policy translates directly into investment decisions, production capacity, skilled employment, strategic value chains, and technological deployment. Europe needs industrial regions to win the global industrial race.

In this context, we strongly support the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) as a key instrument to advance Europe's industrial transformation and strategic autonomy.

However, we are convinced that the success of the Act will largely depend on the meaningful involvement of regions in both its final design and its effective implementation. Europe will not succeed in the global industrial race if industrial policy remains disconnected from the territories where industrial capacity is actually located.

There can be no truly effective European industrial policy without industrial regions at the centre of its governance and delivery. Industrial policies ultimately materialise in specific territories, where regional authorities act as operational actors with direct responsibility over many of the enabling conditions for industrial investment. Without a genuine multilevel governance approach, there is a significant risk of fragmentation, administrative bottlenecks, and reduced effectiveness.

Local and regional authorities account for approximately 45% of public procurement in Europe, making them one of the Union's main levers to support European industry and to strengthen the "Made in Europe" objective underpinning the Industrial Accelerator Act.

Moreover, local and regional authorities are best placed to understand the productive fabric of their territories, with a detailed knowledge of industrial ecosystems, value chains and market realities. This proximity to industry provides substantial added value when identifying priorities and ensuring the effective implementation of the IAA.

Regional authorities work directly alongside companies on a daily basis, supporting industrial projects and understanding with precision the practical challenges, investment needs, and regulatory obstacles they face.

At the same time, regional and local authorities are responsible for implementing many policies that directly shape industrial activity, including permitting procedures, land management, environmental compliance, access to strategic infrastructure, and skills development, among others.

They also play a decisive role in attracting and anchoring foreign investment in European territories, facilitating the integration of strategic projects into regional industrial ecosystems, and prioritising investments that reinforce local value chains and Europe's industrial sovereignty.

Despite this reality, the current approach of the Industrial Accelerator Act remains excessively focused on Member States, which may ultimately limit its effectiveness and implementation capacity. Given the strategic role of industrialised regions, regional authorities should not only be consulted but should play an active role in the governance and implementation of the Act. This is, fundamentally, a question of efficiency, effectiveness, and delivery capacity — and in any case, this act should not undermine or modify the internal institutional constitutional share of competences of each member states.

For this reason, the seven signatory regions propose five concrete measures to strengthen the role of regions within the framework of the Industrial Accelerator Act:

- **First, strengthening operational capacity.** The establishment of a regional-level strategic project manager or coordinator should be explicitly foreseen to accelerate, manage, and monitor permitting and administrative procedures for strategic projects within the scope of the Act and the proposed one-stop-shop mechanism. Such a regional operational interface is essential to ensure proximity, responsiveness, and implementation efficiency. Relying exclusively on a single national coordination structure risks creating bottlenecks that would run counter to the IAA's very objectives of simplification and acceleration. The Act should explicitly recognise regional authorities as implementation partners within the one-stop-shop architecture.
- **Second, ensuring regional participation in industrial governance and policymaking.** Industrial regions should be formally involved in the governance structures that define industrial investment priorities, identifying strategic sectors and interregional value chains, and designation of industrial manufacturing acceleration areas. Regions have consistently demonstrated their ability to mobilize around strategic

sectors by fostering industrial ecosystems, facilitating collaboration across value chains and accelerating investment. The IAA should therefore build on the experiences and networks developed through European sectoral initiatives involving regional authorities such as the ARA (automotive), ECH2A (hydrogen), ESRA (semiconductors), ECA (chemicals), among others.

A stronger territorial dimension in governance is essential to unlock the full potential of the Act and ensure that industrial policy reflects Europe's economic realities on the ground.

- **Third, empowering regions to attract and integrate strategic foreign investment.** Regional development and investment agencies should be formally recognised as implementing partners within the IAA framework, in coordination with national authorities, to facilitate the integration of foreign investment projects into regional industrial ecosystems by connecting investors with local companies, talent pools, research centres, and innovation actors. This role should be acknowledged and reinforced to go beyond purely administrative facilitation and contribute actively to strengthening European value chains, technological capacity, and industrial ecosystems. Regional authorities could also contribute to assessing and aligning foreign investments with regional and European industrial priorities. Where an investment subject to the Act's conditions is located in a region holding statutory industrial competence, that region should be a mandatory consultee in the assessment process, with a formal opinion right, ensuring that investment decisions affecting regional industrial ecosystems are not taken without structured regional input.
- **Fourth, strengthening SME participation in industrial transformation.** Recent European and national funding instruments have proven effective in mobilising large industrial investments, but their impact on SMEs, which form the backbone of many industrial regions and value chains, remains more limited. Regional authorities are best placed to mobilise and support these companies, reinforcing Europe's industrial resilience and strategic sovereignty alongside the attraction of foreign investment.
- **Fifth, anchoring skills and talent in industrial transformation.** Industrial manufacturing acceleration areas should take into account human-capital development. Regional authorities play a fundamental role on vocational training, higher-education and reskilling ecosystems on which strategic sectors depend.

Only through genuine multilevel governance and close cooperation between European, national, regional, and local authorities will Europe be able to deliver an industrial policy that is both ambitious and effective.

Without a strong territorial dimension and the active involvement of industrial regions, Europe risks undermining its own capacity to compete in the global industrial race, and the Industrial Accelerator Act will fall short of its full potential.

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