



Open Letter

Europe's Automotive Industry Needs Urgent Action—Not Another Diagnosis

On 12 September, the President of the European Commission will convene key stakeholders to discuss the future of Europe's automotive industry. As trade union leaders representing millions of workers across this vital sector and its supply chains, we urge the EU to move beyond analysis and deliver urgent, strategic action.

The automotive industry is facing a perfect storm. Production has dropped by 20% in just four years. The transition to clean mobility, while essential, is proving more disruptive than anticipated. On the shopfloor, anxiety and anger are becoming the norm. Without bold intervention, this toxic mix could threaten the future of one of Europe's most strategic industries.

Europe's car industry is also losing ground globally. While domestic demand can help, it cannot replace the 4.5 million vehicles exported in 2024. A fair and strategic trade agenda is needed—one that secures market access and rebuilds supply chains for key components like batteries and semiconductors.

Decarbonisation is non-negotiable. But the transition must be just. Climate legislation must be fit for purpose and adapted when necessary. The upcoming EU "Progress Report" on CO₂ emissions must lead to pragmatic solutions—addressing infrastructure gaps, affordability, supply chain resilience including investments in battery production —and delivering guarantees for workers.

Boosting demand must be the first priority. Legislative tools—such as corporate fleet regulations and public procurement—should be used to accelerate the uptake of clean vehicles. Bridging the affordability gap is essential. Many Europeans simply cannot afford a new car, and solutions like social leasing must be scaled across member states.

Investment is equally critical. Households, companies, and public authorities need support to invest in vehicles and infrastructure. Yet austerity budgets are undermining both public and private investment. The next EU budget must reflect Europe's climate and industrial ambitions, aligning macroeconomic governance with strategic goals like climate neutrality and industrial resilience.

The future of 13 million workers and entire regions depends on bold, coordinated action. We need a stable, skilled workforce, strong social dialogue, and tools like SURE 2.0 and a Just Transition Directive to manage change fairly and democratically.

Europe must rise to the challenge. Workers are watching. The time for gesture politics is over. Workers and their unions expect quick, concrete, and courageous decisions. Their future—and Europe's industrial strength—is on the line.

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Frankfurt and Brussels, 12 September 2025