

Europe's new industrial strategy and circular economy action plan: after the preparation shall come the action for the flat glass sector

Brussels, 12 March 2020, The European Commission's Communications *A New Industrial Strategy for Europe* and the *Circular Economy Action Plan* shed light on the challenges and potentials for emissions reductions and kickstart the legislative activities to achieve a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. To Glass for Europe, it is time to activate, without further delay, the right sequencing of actions that will make the Green Deal a success.

The *Industrial Strategy* and the *Circular Economy action plan* mark a promising start to operationalize the carbon-neutrality agenda. Since the carbon budget is limited, there is an urgent need to act in the sectors where the largest potential for quick emissions reductions lies. *"The announcements made by the European Commission with the Green Deal and Climate Law have generated high expectations. We need to build on this momentum to start working with the sectors where solutions are ready to be deployed"*, said Bertrand Cazes, Glass for Europe's Secretary General.

To support the definition of concrete actions, the flat glass sector has released in January 2020 a vision for a climate-neutral Europe in 2050. The vision is the result of a long reflection inside the industry on how the sector could maximise its contribution to the carbon neutrality objective. *"It is reassuring to read that we share with the European Commission the assessment of the challenge ahead: the need to continue providing at a competitive price the materials required for the transition in the building and transport sectors, while at the same time reducing our own manufacturing emissions. The task is daunting, but our sector is willing to contribute"*, commented Bertrand Cazes.

The flat glass sector agrees with a number of actions listed in the industrial strategy, such as the investments in renewable energy infrastructures or the support to research and development. Yet, some important elements are missing and would require to be included in the future set of EU actions. In the field of manufacturing emissions, all renewable sources of energy are not considered and the strategy omits the carbon capture storage infrastructures which would be required in particular by sectors with process emissions. In terms of market activation for the production, the strategy limits itself to mention the need for creating new markets, while studies show that existing markets, such as the construction sector, are functioning far below their potential for reduction with the use of sub-optimal products.

Glass is a resource and recycling glass to replace virgin raw materials is good for the environment, the climate and the economy. While the flat glass sector has successfully worked on closing the industrial recycling loop, it is estimated that 40% additional recycled glass could be used if the end-of-life building glass was entirely recycled. Glass for Europe is eager to engage in a dialogue with the decision-makers to support this and is looking forward to contribute to the discussions on Sustainable Built Environment, the need for material special recovery targets or the implementation of by-products status across the Member States.



Glass for Europe is the trade association for Europe's flat glass sector. Flat glass is the material that goes into a variety of end products, primarily in windows and facades for buildings, windscreens and windows for automotive and transport as well as solar energy equipment, furniture and appliances. Glass for Europe brings together multinational firms and thousands of SMEs across Europe, to represent the entire building glass value-chain. It is composed of flat glass manufacturers, AGC Glass Europe, Guardian, NSG-Group and Saint-Gobain Glass Industry, and works in association with national partners gathering thousands of building glass processors and transformers all over Europe.
