

Competitiveness for sustainable growth

A competitive industry and growth are prerequisites for ensuring a strong economic recovery and enable investments for needs ranging from the twin transition to new geopolitical realities.

The Swedish presidency in 2023 will create a new impetus for competitiveness. We propose that the Commission presents, in good time before the Spring European Council in 2023, a Communication focused on competitiveness for sustainable growth through three work streams:

The Single Market at 30

For 30 years the Single Market has been the primary driver for EU competitiveness and growth. We should maintain focus on openness, free movement, fair competition and stimulating innovation.

Removing barriers for the free flow of goods and services and avoiding new ones as well as better enforcement of existing rules is vital:

- We cannot afford to fail in delivering further development of the services market – including eliminate barriers to cross border online services, and to facilitate free data flows.
- We must maintain and reinforce the functioning of free movement of goods.
- We should continue work on the capital markets union to create integrated, open, and globally competitive capital markets in the European Union. New sources of financing should be opened for businesses, and in particular SMEs.

Sustainable growth

European industry has a given role in the transition towards a circular, climate-neutral, and digital society. There is no sustainability without innovation and no resilience without competitiveness. We need to seal the Green Deal and agree an ambitious Fit for 55 package.

We should continue developing our policy framework and deliver on measures set out in our strategies (industrial, SME and digital) to provide the right conditions for industry to drive the twin transition.

Industry needs:

- Coherent legal frameworks for innovation and competitiveness on growing markets. Delivery on President von der Leyen’s “one in-one out” promise.
- Investments in research and innovation,
- Access to fossil free energy, skilled people, raw materials, and other critical inputs,
- Increased trade possibilities through a reinvigorated and positive trade agenda.

The European Semester – from Lisbon to...?

Necessary investments and reforms to strengthen competitiveness will require efforts by the EU institutions and Member States. Private investments play a crucial role, as do sound public finances, well-functioning labour markets and social inclusion. Further utilizing the European Semester to drive competitiveness should be considered., including dedicated targets with attributed indicators, measuring different dimensions of competitiveness.