

# CERAMIC MANIFESTO



ENSURING EUROPE'S SUSTAINABILITY  
WITH CERAMIC MANUFACTURING

## Deeply rooted in Europe

No other industry has a heritage that goes as far back as ceramics. Bronze age pottery, Roman aqueducts and medieval roof tiles are but a few examples that show both our history and the durability of our products.

Today, Europe is the world leader in high quality and strategic ceramic products such as wall and floor tiles, bricks and roof tiles, sanitary ware, tableware, vitreous clay pipes or refractory ceramics for most high temperature processes, or advanced ceramics for transport, defence, medical devices and other value chains.

The ceramic industry is mainly SME driven and provides local jobs and local value creation.



ABRASIVES



BRICK AND ROOF TILES



WALL AND FLOOR TILES



TABLE AND ORNAMENTALWARE



SANITARYWARE



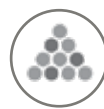
REFRACTORIES



TECHNICAL CERAMICS



CLAY PIPES



EXPANDED CLAY



FLOWER POTS

## Why ceramics matter



**€37 billion**  
Production value

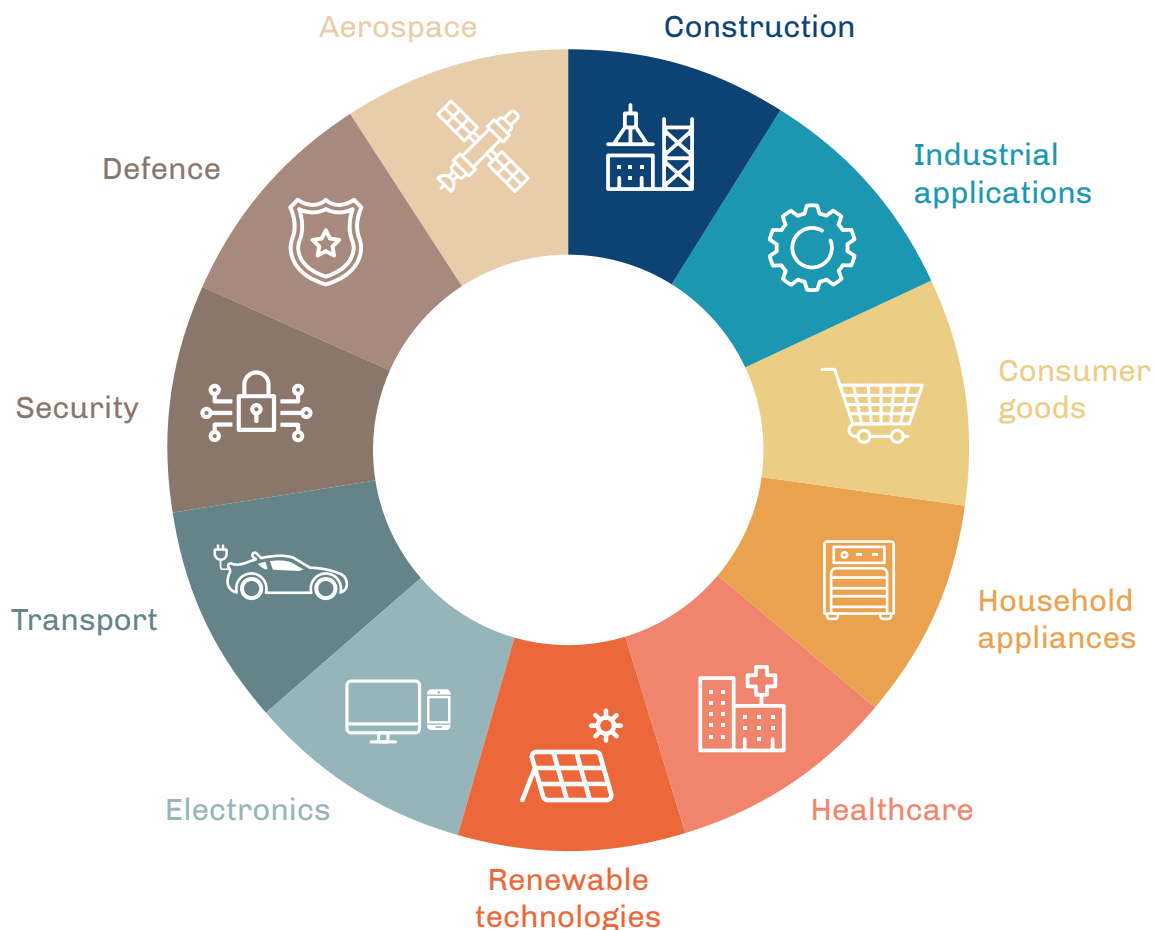


**200,000**  
direct employment



**€5.3 billion**  
positive trade balance

## CERAMIC APPLICATIONS





### Resilience

Producing in and for Europe enhances the EU's strategic supply chain security, reduces dependencies on third countries and supports a resilient Europe.



### Sustainability

R&D and investments in decarbonisation have ensured that European ceramics have the lowest carbon footprint in the world.

### Building a net zero future

Ceramics support climate adaptation measures and are key for CO<sub>2</sub> neutral, circular and long-lasting buildings by significantly reducing the embodied carbon of new houses and by supporting the energy-efficient renovation of existing buildings.



### Innovation

The European ceramics industry is the world leader in both product innovation and innovation in manufacturing technologies.



## Numerous challenges facing ceramic industry

Over the past years, ceramics manufacturing has overcome many challenges (COVID pandemic, war in Ukraine, energy crisis). However, today, the industry is facing multiple threats simultaneously. Because of its broad product offering and specialisation, not all ceramics companies face the same issues, but some challenges are common to most companies.

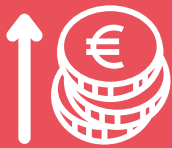
### High cost of energy

On average, energy accounts for 30% of production costs. The ceramics sectors are therefore very vulnerable to energy price volatility.



### Lack of international level playing field

European ceramics compete with low-cost products from third countries produced with far less stringent environmental requirements, which risks carbon, jobs and investment leakage.



### High capital costs

In order to remain competitive and reduce emissions for the green transition, continuous investments are required which have become costly to finance.



### Challenging exports

European ceramics face tariff and non-tariff barriers in several countries, which are threatening fair access to important markets.



## The role of EU policy

For the manufacturing of ceramics in Europe to be viable and sustainable, a range of EU and national policies must be adapted to restore competitiveness and create the conditions that will allow for further investments to secure the future of the sector in Europe.



### No wishful thinking - effective support for technology readiness and green energy infrastructure is a key requirement

The green transition and the sustainable decarbonisation pathway of the ceramic sector as described in the "[Ceramic Roadmap to 2050 – Continuing our path towards climate neutrality](#)", needs to be acknowledged. The current EU decarbonisation target for 2030 requires technologies, infrastructure and decarbonised energy sources that might become reality in the future but are not available in the short term.



### No unilateral policies without considering the bigger picture

In parallel, the implementation of unilateral climate policies without assessing the social and economic sustainability of the decarbonisation pathway, has left the industry without any real possibility of significant short-term progress on decarbonisation. This leads to an increase in costs for European companies and, thus, a loss of international competitiveness.

## 8 Action Areas

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We have identified 8 action areas where European and national policies can help shape a sustainable European ceramics sector.



### An EU wide and ambitious industrial policy

A fundamental shift in the EU's approach is required for the industry to overcome the loss of competitiveness on global markets and maintain its production in Europe.

#### How can policy help?

- Restore and promote medium to long term regulatory **predictability and stability**
- Introduce **an industrial chapter in the 2040 EU climate targets**
- Develop strategies for **gas intensive industries that are mostly composed of SMEs**
- Work on the simplification of **administrative and reporting requirements**, particularly for SMEs, and set KPI's for reducing regulatory time and cost burdens for companies

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### Climate policy for manufacturing

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) is not an effective driver of green innovation for the European ceramic sector. The required green energy is not yet available and whilst research is ongoing, several other measures will require time to be developed and tested. While the ceramics sector is recognised as being at risk of relocation, the current ETS system penalises best performers and does not provide any support for electrification.



#### How can policy help?

- **Reform the ETS** to incentivise growth in manufacturing while promoting decarbonisation
- Guarantee continued and strengthened **carbon leakage protection**
- Expand access to **equivalent measures for small emitters** (i.e. opt-out) to support SMEs
- Urgently review the **EU ETS State Aid Guidelines** to enable indirect cost compensation to sectors with the potential for electrification and **eliminate penalties for cogeneration**
- Make **Carbon Contracts for Difference (CCfDs)** available to EU ceramics
- Do not extend the **scope of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** to additional sectors without sectoral consultations and a proper impact assessment
- Guarantee **export adjustments under the CBAM** to allow EU producers to remain competitive in export markets
- Ban non-obliged entities to make **speculative manoeuvres on EUAs**
- Secure EU wide **carbon leakage** measures for smaller installations under the **new ETS 2**
- Reduce the cost burden of decarbonisation through **sector specific funding for ceramic green transition** projects

## Energy resources and infrastructure for manufacturing

The ceramic industry is ready to switch to carbon neutral energy. However, green hydrogen, green electricity or biogas are currently not available at competitive prices or do not have sufficient distribution network and storage capacities in all EU Member States (as identified in the [Ceramic Roadmap to 2050 – Continuing our path towards climate neutrality](#)).



### How can policy help?

- Provide secure access to **green energy sources at competitive prices**, and significantly increase the available quantities
- Guarantee **equal access to green hydrogen** for all end-users and support OPEX for on-site production
- Secure **robust and reliable electricity grid capacity** for industrial consumers
- Introduce new **State Aid guidelines for the energy transition of gas intensive sectors** (covering projects facilitating the electrification of installations and giving gas-intensive sectors access to decarbonised energy sources, including green electricity & technologies)
- Facilitate a genuine and effective **single European energy market**, including hydrogen and existing options such as natural gas, overcoming tariff barriers between Member States
- Improve the possibility, especially for SMEs, of **access to Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)**
- Facilitate **permitting process** for green investments
- Guarantee better **crisis response mechanisms**
- Avoid additional **energy taxation for mineralogical processes** under the Energy Taxation Directive

## Promote sustainable and affordable buildings

Ceramic construction materials are key for both new buildings and renovating the existing building stock. They are pivotal to make buildings energy-efficient, CO<sub>2</sub> neutral, circular, long-lasting, healthy (indoor air quality) and comfortable. Furthermore, they can ensure fire and flood protection, and make housing affordable



### How can policy help?

- Ensure the adoption of **material-neutral policies for construction** considering the full life-cycle assessment at building level, including the long lifespan of ceramic construction materials which reduces maintenance as well as the durability of ceramic products for circular buildings
- Ensure a level playing field between **new and reused products** when it comes to technical performance, certification, and standards
- Promote **long-lasting, reusable, and recyclable construction products**, such as ceramic construction products **for circular buildings** (ceramic construction materials can have a lifespan of more than 100 years)
- Recycled materials from own production processes (i.e., grinded scrap) as well as other material streams substituting primary raw materials should be considered as non-primary raw materials and included in the definition of **secondary raw materials**

## Environmental protection, health & safety and sustainable finance

By committing to using the Best Available Technologies to reduce all forms of pollution, European ceramics ensure the health and safety of our workers, customers and citizens.



### How can policy help?

- Ensure a revised **Ceramic Best Available Techniques Reference Document (BRef)** under the revised Industrial Emissions Directive with realistic emissions limit values
- Apply realistic limit values for **Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS)** ensuring the health and safety of workers
- Ensure a **fit for industry REACH Revision** notably by ensuring that the intermediates definition can still be applied to industry
- Guarantee that the **Ceramic food contact materials** revised legislation safeguards consumers and employers' protection by setting research-backed limits
- Adapt **recycling and collection systems** to the waste streams and the quantity of waste available in a cost-effective way
- Simplify the **access to sustainable finance** with ad-hoc training for investors and the adoption of realistic criteria in SME financial systems
- Adopt realistic and achievable **EU Taxonomy Technical Screening Criteria** to encourage sustainable practices in the industry
- Adopt harmonised **EU end-of-waste criteria for ceramic** construction products

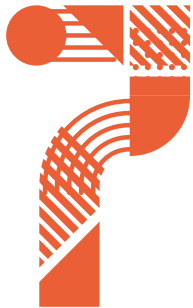
## Ensuring a level playing field through effective trade policy and a functioning internal market

To maintain the competitiveness of the industry, which in 2022 had a positive trade balance of €5.3bn, a rules-based international order remains crucial to ensure that all EU producers can benefit from a global level playing field.



### How can policy help?

- **Promote free trade** by ensuring fair access to extra-EU markets by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers. Advance the EU FTA agenda with key partners and diversify the source of critical raw materials
- **Ensure fair trading practices** by rapidly implementing trade defence measures to fight unfair trading practices in third countries
- **Harmonise the internal market** by improving the harmonisation of packaging and labelling requirements in all EU Member States
- Keep “**enforcement**” high on the agenda, and restore the long-term practice of designating a “**Trade Commissioner**” and increase the resources in the DG Trade’s Trade Defence department to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented in a timely manner
- Introduce **new trade instruments** ensuring compliance of imports with **EU quality, safety, environmental and social standards**



## Effective support for Research & Innovation for all ceramic producers

Access to European funds in R&I is becoming increasingly difficult for SME-focused and heterogeneous industrial sectors such as ceramics.

### How can policy help?

- Develop **dedicated funds reserved for specific industries** such as ceramics
- Promote **simplified application processes** and easier access to **EU funding programmes**
- Increase **funding for R&I projects above TRL5** more likely to lead to large-scale deployment
- Set realistic **emission reduction requirements** (under the ETS Innovation fund) in the open calls, since the technologies needed to achieve the requested goals, are not yet available in the market



## Skills for manufacturing

A just transition to a climate-neutral, resilient economy can only be achieved by providing citizens with the necessary skill sets and qualifications for future job profiles.

### How can policy help?

- Access to **simplified funding opportunities** to support the upskilling & reskilling
- Alignment between **Academia curricula and skills requirements** of EU manufacturing
- Stronger collaboration **opportunities** between industry, research & training institutes
- **Positive communication and promotion** of EU manufacturing industries to younger people

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CERAMICS FORUM – JOIN NOW!

The European Parliament Ceramics Forum (EPCF), which dates back to the 1994-1999 EP, is a cross-party discussion group whose aim is to facilitate dialogue between the European Institutions and the ceramic industry, on all relevant policy developments. EPCF participants include Members of the European Parliament, officials from the European Commission, representatives from the European ceramic industry and trade unions.

For more information on how to become involved, please visit [www.epcf.eu](http://www.epcf.eu)

