

Joint Statement of the

United Steelworkers and the German Industrial Union of Mining,
Chemical, and Energy Workers (IGBCE)



Joint Letter from David McCall and Michael Vassiliadis

The transformation of our industries is not a distant vision – it is happening now, and the choices we make today will determine whether working people have a fair stake in the economy of tomorrow.

As the United Steelworkers and IGBCE, we stand united in our conviction: The future of industrial work must be built on good jobs, fair wages, strong rights, and democratic participation – on both sides of the Atlantic.

We know that our industries are at a crossroads. The global race for green technologies, critical raw materials, and advanced manufacturing is accelerating. Countries like China are investing aggressively in strategic sectors, while workers in our countries face the risks of underinvestment, short-term thinking, and growing uncertainty.

Our message is clear: We need a bold, coordinated industrial policy strategy that puts workers at the center of transformation. This means:

- **Reliable and long-term policy frameworks** that give companies the confidence to invest – while ensuring that investments deliver good, unionized jobs and strengthen local economies.
- **Massive public and private investments** in modern infrastructure, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and workforce development – so we remain competitive and secure in a changing global economy.
- **Fair trade rules and strategic alliances** that promote sustainability, high labor standards, and innovation – without turning trusted partners into adversaries.
- **Stronger cooperation across borders** – because the challenges we face are global, and the solutions must be collective.

We reject a future where industrial strategy becomes a race to the bottom – where workers' rights are seen as optional, and long-term investments are hostage to short-term political cycles. Instead, **we call for a new industrial compact**: one that unites workers, industries, and governments in the shared goal of building a fair, sustainable, and secure industrial base for generations to come. **This is a Clarion Call for policymakers and companies alike**, on both sides of the Atlantic. We need a new worker-centered economic agenda, and as unions, we are the experts on how to design it in ways that increase economic mobility and allow *everyone* to benefit from economic growth. The following 10 statements create a starting point for such a new agenda.

Together, as USW and IGBCE, we will continue to stand up for the rights of workers, advocate for strategic investment in the industries that sustain our communities, and fight for a global economy that values people over profit.

This is the path forward. And we are committed to walking it together.

David McCall

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Clarion Call for a New Worker-Centered Economic Agenda

1. Creating reliable industrial policy frameworks for transformation:

Governments must ensure long-term investment security to promote sustainable and long-term industrial production based on workers' rights. This includes clear regulatory guidelines, stable support mechanisms, and targeted incentives for companies to make the transformation socially and economically sustainable. Our members are unsettled by the constant back and forth regarding investments in and public funding of industries and technologies, depending on who is in power. They need planning security and future-proof jobs. Ultimately, this is what transformation is all about.

2. Western industrial nations must massively increase their investments in industrial innovation to remain competitive internationally:

China already dominates the global production of wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles, and battery technologies and invests hundreds of billions of dollars annually in renewable energy. Without a decisive public and private investment strategy, Western nations risk losing their technological and economic leadership in industries that are critical to both national security and economic prosperity. Policymakers must therefore specifically promote research and development programs, strengthen the development of green technologies, and support the expanded deployment of renewable energy production with long-term incentives for industry to profit from low energy prices and sustainable business models.

3. Expanding strategic independence through domestic production and value chains:

The West must reduce its dependence on Chinese technologies and raw materials. This is especially true for hydrogen technologies, electrolysis capacities, batteries, pharmaceuticals and rare earths, which are essential for the ecological transition of industry and society. Political measures must focus on strengthening local value chains and trading relationships with allies, supported by strong workers' rights, establishing the production of future technologies within our own economic regions, and developing an independent industrial base.

4. Securing massive public and private investments in infrastructure and industry for long-term growth and employment:

Modernizing energy and industrial infrastructure is crucial for economic growth and job security. According to estimates by the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Canadian Government, the US and Canada need US\$3 trillion in investments over the next decade to bring infrastructure to a modern standard, while the EU requires €620 billion annually for the green and digital transition. Policymakers must mobilize targeted public and private investments in transportation, energy supply, digital infrastructure, education, health, and sustainable industries. Investments in the energy sector are particularly important to ensure a reliable and climate-friendly energy supply while ensuring globally competitive energy prices. However, particular attention must be paid to investment decisions by companies that operate in both the US and the EU. Union avoidance must not be a criterion in location decisions. We can and must improve global cooperation between unions and works councils. Enforceable global framework agreements can be another means of establishing and expanding codetermination rights.

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5. Targeted investments in skills and technology promotion are the foundation for a future-proof industry:

Industrial transformation requires not only modernized production facilities but also a highly skilled workforce. To meet international competitive pressure, states must increasingly invest in training, retraining, and workforce development. At the same time, active innovation promotion is needed to support research and development in new technologies. Targeted support is essential in key industries such as renewable energy, hydrogen, the circular economy, and sustainable chemistry to ensure the competitiveness of Western industries. States also need to accelerate the application of research results into industrial production.

6. Establishing the Circular Economy as a Pillar of Industrial Strategy:

The circular economy can be one of the drivers of an industry of the future. In the context of limited resources, existing raw material dependencies and the vulnerability of supply chains, the circular economy can make a major contribution to achieving economic independence and improve competitiveness. The challenges in the raw materials market are obvious and will become more difficult in the future. Chemical recycling should be part of any industrial strategy.

7. Strengthening the Transatlantic Industrial Base through Fair Trade and Strategic Cooperation:

A strong industrial base is essential to national, economic, and social security on both sides of the Atlantic. Industrial excellence has long been the bedrock of growth and prosperity in Europe, Canada and the United States. To safeguard good, well-paid jobs and enhance long-term competitiveness, transatlantic partners must support domestic industry, promote export growth, and work to reduce trade imbalances. This requires rebalancing the global trade system, which for too long has overlooked the interests of workers. Rather than broad, unilateral tariffs that disrupt vital alliances and supply chains, policymakers must pursue targeted action against countries that engage in unfair and predatory trade practices—particularly China. Open dialogue to address bilateral challenges must be a greater priority. While our unions absolutely view tariffs as one of many important tools we need to employ to rebalance our trade relationships, we urge a strategic approach that both strengthens our manufacturing sectors and preserves relationships with allies who play by the rules. Arbitrarily imposed tariffs may threaten the existence of our industries and thousands of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic, disrupt vital supply chains, and undermine manufacturing. We will fight ill-advised trade policy that hurts all of us.

Strategic enforcement of trade rules, combined with closer coordination among trusted allies, is essential to counter global overcapacity, restore industrial balance, and protect the shared prosperity of North American and European working families.

8. Securing fair trade through strong and enforceable environmental, social, and labor standards – instead of protectionism and trade wars:

International trade must not come at the expense of workers, the environment, and human rights. Labor rights, fair wages, and sustainability standards must be more strongly promoted globally. International trade and international labor law must go hand in hand. We need a trade policy that guarantees fundamental labor standards, particularly freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining as enshrined in international ILO labor law. Global trade agreements can be a viable instrument amongst others to implement the laws, rights and obligations of the ILO and other international organizations. However, we do

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not leave the enforcement of our fundamental values and principles to politics. The international labor movement and its affiliates must stand together against the exploitation of workers, wherever it occurs.

9. Addressing unfair trade practices – but in a targeted manner without jeopardizing Western alliances:

The use of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures and targeted tariffs is necessary when companies operating in countries with lower labor, social, climate and environmental standards distort the global market. They are also applicable when countries flood markets with overcapacities that stem from state-subsidized companies. We must distinguish between trusted trade partners such as the EU, Canada and the USA, and those who seek to undercut our industries as they work to dominate the global market. Instead, better multilateral trade coordination is needed to address non-market economic practices and enforcement provisions which protects labor standards. Where enforceable multilateral approaches are not possible, bilateral trade agreements on an equal footing and to mutual benefit are an alternative.

10. Leveraging trade relationships for innovation and competitiveness – avoiding barriers to future technologies:

Trade wars and unnecessary trade barriers threaten long-term investments in innovation and future technologies. Our economies must continue to have access to key inputs, raw materials, and technologies to drive industrial transformation. Policymakers should strengthen strategic partnerships for key industries and advance a joint industrial policy with like-minded nations which observe high standard approaches.