

How to create lead markets for clean, sustainable and circular feedstocks in the chemical industry?

CEPS, Brussels, 21 April 2026

The EU has established a direction for the clean transition of its economy. Reaching this goal will require deep emissions cuts across all sectors, including energy-intensive industries such as the chemical industry. While electrification and a growing share of low-carbon electricity will be essential across the board, some sectors will require additional measures to meet EU climate targets.

The chemical industry is a case in point. A third of its total emissions are linked to materials – mainly feedstock. To date, more than 90% of those materials are fossil-based. Addressing these non-energy emissions will require changes in production routes and especially in feedstocks, including the scaling up of new technologies and alternative materials. A key tool will be the creation of lead markets, as suggested in the Industrial Accelerator Act.

This CEPS event will explore the policy options to create lead markets for clean, sustainable and circular low-carbon feedstocks, and how such lead markets fit into the EU policy framework. This event will accompany the publication of a CEPS report on this topic.

AGENDA

(all speakers are confirmed)

- 12:00-13:00 Registration and light networking lunch
- 13:00-13:10 **Introduction and welcome**
Christian Egenhofer, Associate Senior Research Fellow, CEPS; Senior Fellow, Florence School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute (EUI), Florence
- 13:10-13:30 **Opening Keynote speech**
Fritz Georg von Graevenitz, CEO CropEnergies, Mannheim
Followed by short discussion
Moderator: **Christian Egenhofer**
- 13:30-13:40 **Key Messages from the Report**
Christian Dietz, Research Associate, Florence School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute (EUI), Florence; formerly CEPS
- 13:40–14:40 **Panel¹ 1: Kickstarting the clean, sustainable and circular transition (short-term)**
A number of measures and initiatives exist to kick-start the transition. This includes labels, public procurement, targets but also carbon pricing or the Industrial Decarbonisation Bank and subsidies. The panel will discuss how these measures and initiatives work and have worked and how they can be adapted to serve the purpose.
- **Tom van Ierland**, Head of Unit C2, Low-Carbon Solutions II, DG Clima, European Commission

¹ Approx. 5 min introduction.

- **Brigitte Huckestein**, Senior Manager Energy and Climate, BASF
- **Benjamin Nummert**, Head of Industry Affairs, Henkel
- **Irene Domínguez**, Bellona

Discussion

Moderator: **Christian Dietz**

14:40-15:40 **Panel² 2: A roadmap to reach scale in the clean transition (mid to long term)**

Different approaches for a lead market framework have been presented and discussed. The Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) has put a placeholder for a such a framework. This panel discuss the pros and cons of different ideas and how to move forward.

- **Christopher vom Berg**, Executive Manager Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI), Nova-Institute (RCI)
- **Silvia Freni Sterrantino**, European External Affairs Manager, Unilever
- **Sebastian Kunz**, Director Corporate Development & Services, Südzucker AG
- **Hans Ingels**, Head of Unit F/2, Bioeconomy, chemicals and cosmetics, DG Grow, European Commission

Discussion

Moderator: **Christian Egenhofer**

15:40-15:45 Conclusions and end of meeting

Questions to be addressed:

1. What accounting framework do we need to underpin demand creation instruments?
How can pragmatism and robustness be balanced in practice?
2. What do demand creation instruments need to achieve to drive the feedstock transition (e.g. speed, scale etc)? Do the existing instruments address these needs? Are they sufficient? How can the identified challenges/shortcomings of the options be address?
3. How should the way forward look like? What opportunities can the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) offer?

² Approx. 5 min introduction.