

Energy-intensive industries: Immediate action is needed – specific steps must be taken to reduce energy prices and ensure the competitiveness of Czech industry.

Prague, 10 February 2026 - The Alliance of Energy-Intensive Industries (AENO), an informal initiative representing hundreds of industrial companies across key sectors of the Czech economy, today handed a joint declaration to members of the government. The alliance calls for an accelerated solution to the critical situation facing energy-intensive industry in the country. According to the signatories, the government must immediately adopt concrete measures to ensure that traditional industrial sectors - such as chemicals, steelmaking, ceramics, glassmaking, production of construction materials, and paper manufacturing - are maintained and further developed in the Czech Republic.

Representatives of industry presented the declaration at the “Czech Antwerp” conference, held the day before the European Industry Summit in Antwerp, Belgium, and two days before a key informal meeting of the European Council at Alden Biesen Castle. At that meeting, heads of state and government are expected to address, among other topics, the future of the European internal market and the protection of industry from unfair competition from third countries.

Daniel Tamchyna, Executive Director of Kaprain Chemical and President of the Association of the Chemical Industry of the Czech Republic, explained why it is important to act without delay: *“We call for immediate measures. It is absolutely essential to ensure a reduction in energy prices to €50 per MWh for electricity and €20 in the case of gas. EU ETS allowances must then cost no more than €30 per tonne.”* According to Tamchyna, both the Czech Republic and Europe have the tools to achieve this. For instance, through compensation for indirect costs, funding within the CISAF framework, reductions in taxes and distribution fees, maintaining the free allocation of allowances, and other steps that can be implemented quickly.

“It is evident that irreversible changes are taking place in industry; the process of deindustrialization is unfortunately in full swing, and the impacts on the Czech Republic are significantly worse compared with other EU countries,” Tamchyna added. The AENO alliance is the voice of industrial enterprises that in the Czech Republic generate revenues of CZK 1.2 trillion and employ more than 400,000 people directly. *“This is a production that is essential. We are demonstrably irreplaceable in healthcare, the food industry, energy, and the defence sector. Irreplaceable in a secure and resilient Europe,”* Tamchyna said at the conference. Lower energy prices will best protect the European market and secure its future.

The crisis in energy-intensive industries is also evidenced by hard data. Production declined by 15 to 20 % between 2018 and 2024, depending on the sector. For example, in the chemical industry, output fell by 32 million tonnes of chemical products. This was not due to a drop in demand, but because European manufacturers were replaced by imports from Asia and the United States. Investment in these sectors fell by an alarming 90 % between 2022 and 2025. The pace of plant closures in 2024 was six times higher than in 2022. Manufacturers such as Spolana, Rako, BASF, INEOS, Dow and others have closed their factories in the EU.

“An important measure for us is the reintroduction of exemptions from energy tax for energy-intensive processes. This is not a special advantage, but rather alignment with competitors in other EU countries, where this relief commonly exists,” said Roman Blažíček, Vice-President of the European association of ceramic tile manufacturers and long-time CEO of Lasselsberger.

“Over the past two years, five major foundries have ceased operations, which means a loss of around 50,000 tonnes of annual capacity and hundreds of jobs,” said Karel Mikulčák, Director of ZPS - Slévárna. *“We need a stable and predictable energy policy. Protection of the market from unfair competition from third countries is also essential. The effectiveness of the European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is, so far, debatable,”* added Jan Hadraba, President of the Association of the Glass and Ceramic Industry. Other speakers expressed similar views.

Government representatives at the conference pledged that they would address the competitiveness of Czech industry - both within Europe and in relation to third countries - without delay, and that they are preparing concrete steps. ***“Let us set the price of ETS 1 at the level expected in 2020, as predicted by the European Commission, that is, around EUR 30. At the same time, let us establish a corridor within which the price may increase over the next ten years. We need predictability and must ensure that it does not become a speculative instrument. That is what everyone should focus on. We can change the industrial situation in the Czech Republic only in cooperation with business,”*** said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade Karel Havlíček. He added: ***“The way forward is not to increase taxes, fees, and tariffs. The way forward is to create an environment here at home that reduces costs for companies. We must create a competitive environment and make cuts where they will not be painful.”***

“Emission allowances are a huge problem. Prime Minister Andrej Babiš is seeking support within the EU to address the situation with ETS 2, ideally to abolish it. It will not be easy - we know that. Germany, together with Austria, is preparing massive support for industry in terms of energy prices, which are a key problem for industry. Cross-border working groups with these partners are very important,” added Minister of Finance Alena Schillerová.

The Government Commissioner for Climate Policy and the Green Deal, Filip Turek, commented on the state of industry in Europe: ***“The ongoing deindustrialization is essentially the end of industry in Europe. Compared with the rest of the world, and especially with Asia, our emission allowances cost several times more. If we do not make changes at the European level, there is little we can do about it. For a long time, the position of the Ministry of the Environment was framed as: what must you do for the environment? We want to focus on what the environment can do for you - how revenues from emission allowances can be returned to industry; these are practical steps. But besides emission allowances, we also face the problem of energy prices, which are among the highest in the world.”***

The government has already begun taking initial steps at the European level. Representatives of industrial sectors welcomed a letter from Prime Minister Andrej Babiš in which, ahead of the informal summit, he addressed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa, among other things calling for limits on excessive volatility in emission allowance prices and for the establishment of a single EU target - namely, the reduction of CO₂ emissions.

The declaration was signed by eight unions and associations: the Association of the Chemical Industry of the Czech Republic, the Czech Paper Industry Association, the Steel Federation, the Foundry Association of the Czech Republic, the Czech Lime Producers Association, the Association of the Glass and Ceramic Industry of the Czech Republic, the Association of Building Entrepreneurs, and the Czech Forging Industry Association.