
Advancing Water Resilience for Europe's Net-Zero Industry

September 2026

The undersigned companies welcome the objective of the European Commission's **Industrial Accelerator Act** to strengthen Europe's industrial competitiveness, accelerate decarbonisation and improve investment conditions for strategic sectors.

To deliver on the IAA's objectives, streamlined procedures should be complemented by measures that address key operational preconditions. In this respect, **water remains insufficiently reflected as a core condition for industrial continuity** and for the scale-up of net-zero industrial capacity, in line with the **EU Water Resilience Strategy** and the **Water Efficiency First principle**.

Water resilience is now a condition for Europe's industrial acceleration

Water availability, water quality and the capacity to treat and reuse water are increasingly critical to Europe's industrial continuity and for the competitiveness of strategic value chains. This is particularly true for **energy-intensive and net-zero industries**, as well as for **cooling-intensive digital infrastructure**, where water availability, energy efficiency, and system reliability are becoming key factors in investment decisions.

The IAA is designed to address vulnerabilities in strategic sectors and to reduce bottlenecks that delay industrial investment and decarbonisation. While the proposal rightly focuses on permitting and on strengthening the resilience of strategic value chains, **acceleration must be matched by the capacity to manage the industrial water cycle** efficiently and sustainably.

In a context of rising water stress, growing competition over water uses and increasing requirements for water quality and discharge management, water constraints can become binding for project delivery and operations. These risks are systemic: the escalating threat of **water scarcity directly jeopardizes nearly 15% of the total economic output of the euro area** (ECB, 2025).

In practical terms, water constraints can affect industrial feasibility at three levels:

Operational continuity. Water-intensive industrial activities may face disruptions from scarcity, restrictions, or local infrastructure limits.

Investment certainty. Where water availability or wastewater treatment capacity is uncertain, project timelines and bankability can be materially impacted.

Decarbonisation feasibility. Key decarbonisation pathways rely on water efficiency, reuse and advanced treatment to enable process optimisation and reductions in energy intensity.

For these reasons, water management technologies are not peripheral environmental technologies. They are enabling technologies for net-zero deployment and for the resilience of industrial ecosystems.

Water management technologies enable net-zero manufacturing at scale

Water management technologies provide **deployable solutions to constraints affecting the reliable implementation and operation of industrial projects**. By reducing dependence on external water sources and enabling a more efficient industrial water cycle (closed-loop recycling, high-recovery processes), they help facilities manage local scarcity while meeting tightening requirements on water quality and industrial emissions.

Even where permits are granted, unresolved issues on water supply, discharge conditions, or treatment capacity can delay commissioning or constrain operations. Integrating water management solutions early in project development **increases predictability for project developers and financiers**, particularly for capital-intensive projects in strategic value chains.

Water efficiency and advanced treatment are likewise integral to decarbonisation: **unlocking the water–energy nexus** means optimising industrial water cycles to reduce the energy intensity of water management (heating, pumping, treatment), thereby **lowering overall industrial energy demand and carbon intensity**. Efficient water movement is likewise a decisive lever for industrial decarbonisation: high-efficiency pumping, intelligent control systems, pressure optimisation and digital monitoring can reduce energy use while improving system reliability.

The **IAA will remain incomplete** if it accelerates permitting without recognising the technologies needed to make projects ready for implementation. Designating water management technologies as strategic net-zero technologies would **provide a clear regulatory signal, strengthen deployment and scale-up incentives** across industrial hubs, and support clearer prioritisation by public authorities and market actors.

Water technologies strengthen Europe’s resilience and competitiveness

Recognising water technologies as enabling solutions would strengthen Europe’s resilience, innovation capacity and global competitiveness. Such deployment should be supported by **open and competitive markets, technology-neutral conditions and resilient enabling infrastructure**. Integrating water solutions within the Union’s strategic industrial toolkit would also improve **alignment across net-zero manufacturing, circularity and pollution prevention objectives**.

It would also **reinforce European leadership and the EU’s trade position**. Europe is home to world-class water technology providers and export leaders. Anchoring these capabilities

within the EU net-zero industrial policy framework **strengthens global competitiveness, supports the EU's capacity to set standards and capture growing international demand** for industrial water solutions, and **reduces exposure to future dependencies** and bottlenecks as water resilience becomes central to industrial feasibility.

Annex - Proposed targeted amendment

Annex I to the Industrial Accelerator Act defines the **scope of industrial manufacturing acceleration areas** by reference to “**net-zero technologies**” as listed in Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 (**Net-Zero Industry Act, NZIA**). Including water management technologies and equipment in that list would therefore strengthen coherence between the IAA's acceleration areas and the operational solutions required to translate permitting acceleration into deliverable industrial deployment.

Therefore, the undersigned companies propose a targeted adjustment introduced through **Article 34** of the Industrial Accelerator Act, which amends directly the NZIA. The adjustment consists of two elements:

- 1) **inserting a definition of “water management technologies and equipment”** in Article 3 of the NZIA ;
- 2) **adding “water management technologies and equipment” to the list of strategic net-zero technologies** in Article 4(1) of the NZIA..

Article 34
Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2024/1735

Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 3 the following points (34), (35), (36) and (37) are added:

...

(37) 'water management technologies and equipment' means the manufacturing equipment, systems, and solutions, including digital technologies, necessary for the sustainable management of the water cycle in industrial facilities and critical infrastructures, including abstraction, treatment, desalination, recycling and reuse, monitoring, water-efficient pumping, pressure and leakage management, and water-energy nexus optimization, contributing to industrial continuity, resource efficiency, resilience, security of supply and decarbonisation;'

(2) in Article 4, paragraph 1, the following point (t) is added:

'(t) Water management technologies and equipment.'