ASML CEO Christophe Fouquet co-signed opinion piece with European technology companies

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Veldhoven, the Netherlands

Together with six other technology companies headquartered in Europe, ASML has shared an opinion piece in national newspapers across eight countries calling for swift government action across Europe to ensure that conditions for global technology leadership in Europe will be safeguarded.

Europe is losing global competitiveness every day. We are facing a crisis largely of our own making – and therefore one we can overcome. This is not just an economic concern; it threatens our social cohesion and tests the very foundation of our future prosperity and technological sovereignty.

In a period of unprecedented geopolitical and technological change, the decisions made in the coming months and years will determine whether Europe can compete and thrive in the decades ahead.

As CEOs of technology companies operating at the center of today's transformation, we see first-hand how the next wave of technological change is taking shape, at record speed – from semiconductors to advanced connectivity to aerospace, defense and AI. These industries are not only central to Europe's economic strength, but to its ability to shape what comes next.

As European tech creators representing some of the continent's leading innovators across the foundational technology stack, we recognize our responsibility to help build this future.

Together, our companies generate revenues of €417 billion and represent a market capitalization of almost €1.1 trillion. We account for over 957,000 high-tech jobs worldwide and invest over €40 billion in R&D annually and control 213,000 patents globally. We are the nucleus of the powerful ecosystems that form the foundation of Europe's technological sovereignty, creating a unique opportunity for Europe to lead in the next phase of technological transformation.

For the past two decades, the focus has been on building the digital world. But the next phase of innovation will be defined by how digital capabilities are applied in the real world – across industries, infrastructure and entire economies. To create value, technologies like AI must be connected to the physical systems they are meant to improve.

Europe has the people, the ecosystems and the technology to lead in this next phase. But too often, it is not converting this position into scale. Instead, we face fragmented markets and subsidized rivals with very strong market penetration in the EU. Companies in Europe face stifling, unnecessarily complex and often overlapping rules that make it incredibly hard to keep pace with the speed of technological progress.

Nowhere is this more visible than in the digital domain. More than three years after the "ChatGPT moment", Europe is still debating regulation, while others have long shifted focus to scaling AI in physical systems and robotics. We must ensure we do not regulate ahead of innovation but rather shape the standards of tomorrow by building and deploying.

However, we see an openness to change. Initiatives such as the Draghi and Letta reports and the Commission's competitiveness agenda are a clear recognition that Europe must act differently. And we stand ready to support European leaders as they step up to the urgency of the moment.

We must use the momentum shown with current efforts to reduce and simplify Europe's digital rules so that they act as agile guardrails – rather than rigid, detailed requirements – to keep pace with the speed of technological development. In practice, this means preserving the contractual freedom needed to create data spaces, protect intellectual property and enable industrial AI applications without overlapping constraints.

Achieving Europe's strategic goals requires robust, market-driven sector policy support. European public policy, tightly coordinated with national strategies, must support breakthrough flagship projects and catalyze private capital by fully realizing the Savings and Investments Union. We must also reform competition and M&A regimes, enabling the strategic consolidation and scale necessary to compete globally.

Building strategic resilience also means driving the use of trusted technology and breaking down civil-military silos to accelerate dual-use innovation. Crucially, true wealth and resilience are built on creating and controlling intellectual property, rather than merely consuming it; long-term sovereignty requires us to fiercely support and scale homegrown European innovation, alongside fostering the skills and mobility of our workforce.

Finally, all of this must be underpinned by a cohesive geo-economic strategy, fostering a unified industrial and trade approach that protects European interests while empowering our companies to thrive internationally. To execute this, we need a dedicated forum

where business and political leaders can continuously align to ensure policies are grounded in industrial reality and global market dynamics.

We are deeply convinced of the creativity and innovation potential of Europeans. Yet, to truly harness that potential and catch up with global competitors, we need to focus less on ambition alone and more on execution – creating the conditions that allow us to turn Europe's technological strengths into real-world progress.

The European Commission under President von der Leyen has taken important first steps in this direction. Now, more than ever, we urgently need to come together as tech creators and policymakers to turn this ambition into action.

The priority now is not only to grow entire strategic ecosystems – from research and startups to global champions – but also to develop and scale the next generation of technologies, including industrial AI applications, in Europe and for the world.

We stand ready to do our part and to support those European leaders willing to take bold action. The time is now. Let us collectively rise to the challenge.

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Guillaume Faury (Airbus)
Börje Ekholm (Ericsson)
Arthur Mensch (Mistral AI)
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Publications:

Les Echos (France)
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Wyborcza (Poland)