

*Statement on EU Competitiveness for heads of state meeting  
Alden Biesen, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026*

## ReMade in Europe

We have no idea whether ‘Made in Europe’ regulations will improve industrial competitiveness. But we are certain that the ‘ReMade in Europe’ sector is already doing so. If the heads of state meeting at Alden Biesen cannot reach agreement, then we have a better question for them to ask: what can we do to enlarge the existing ‘Remade in Europe’ sector? After all, the larger this European sector grows, the less often material will need to be mined, refined and machined to produce another brand new product.

The World Bank forecasts sales of €100 billion by 2030 for the ‘Remade in Europe’ sector. It consists of companies taking back their used products to give them a new life. This includes reuse, refurbishment and at the highest level, remanufacture, which involves disassembly, replacement and upgrading of worn parts, to return their products to a ‘better than new’ condition. Retaining the product value at its highest point, for as long as possible, is a key lever for resilience and competitiveness.

European heads of state seem to be missing the news that their citizens are leading the world in demanding ‘better than new’ products. Ask Back Market or eBay. Demand from consumers for previously used smart phones has grown so much since 2022 that specialized European businesses have to import 30-40% of their feedstock from outside Europe, not least from Japan, where brand new products are still widely preferred. The demand in Europe for refurbished and remanufactured smart phones and laptops is an early signal of buyers’ confidence in the reliability of the ‘ReMade in Europe’ sector.

An increasing number of original equipment manufacturers can take back their own equipment for remanufacture (Xerox, AISIN, Schneider Electric, SKF, Valeo, and Brother are examples). But there are also specialists who carry out the work on their behalf. TVH is one example, Cordon Group another. The latter employs 4,000 staff and is growing quickly. Valeo is expanding its existing car parts remanufacturing into electronics and electric motors.

Remanufacturing applies to consumer products such as smart phones, laptops, printer cartridges and spare parts for passenger cars. Remanufacturing is used for servers, machine tools, industrial compressors, laundry equipment, aviation components, military equipment, transmissions, buses, trains, and even tyres for aircraft, trucks and some passenger cars. Access to healthcare for patients in European hospitals has been quietly improved through the use of cheaper, refurbished, medical imaging equipment.

If the heads of state ever come to ask themselves, ‘what can we do to enlarge the existing ‘Remade in Europe’ sector?’, what would be the most helpful response?

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We signed the Antwerp Declaration in 2024. We *especially* support the calls being made via the 10-point declaration for:

- immediate reforms to the single market (7)
- making it easier for customers to choose circular economy products (6)
- and for policies which reduce demand for critical raw materials (5)

But if the 'ReMade in Europe' sector is to scale up from sales of €100 billion we must first comb out the regulations designed to add cost and complexity to the operations of companies bringing back their own products for remanufacture. The pioneer investors in 'ReMade' surely deserve better.

The European Commission's Horizon programme has done some great work over the past five years to promote the R&D needed to scale up the sector. But, it is the deliberate policy embedded in the Chinese 5-year plans to overproduce for export which makes implementation of capital-intensive circular economy innovation so risky. We are calling on the participants at Alden Biesen to keep one eye on the destination. That is, an economy in which 'ReMade in Europe' drives the design of products that are suitable for disassembly and return to use without triggering another cycle of mining, refining, melting, making and disposal. A European Union that continues to import products and lose its strategic autonomy in critical materials is not on a path to becoming competitive, ever.

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Notes:

The European Remanufacturing Council (ERC) was one of the original signatories to the Antwerp Declaration in 2024. We represent companies and organisations that take back products for reuse as part of the ReMade economy. These products are returned to use as 'better than new'.

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Contact details:

David Fitzsimons

Director, ERC

[david.fitzsimons@europeanreman.eu](mailto:david.fitzsimons@europeanreman.eu)