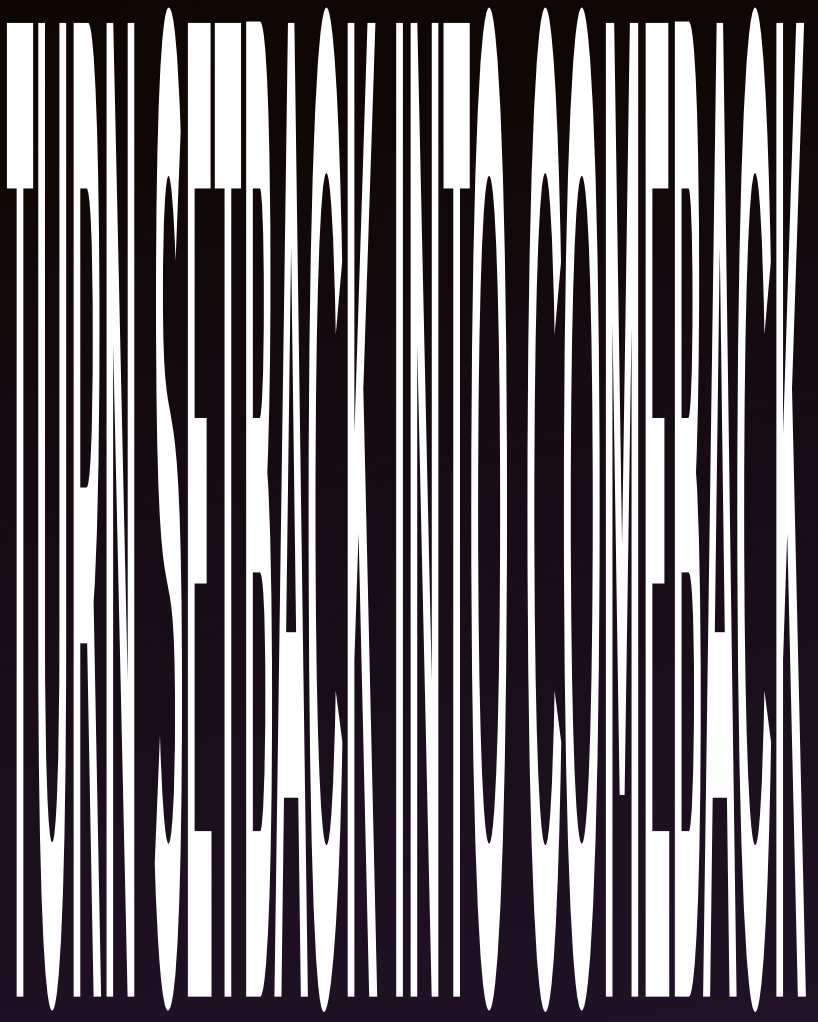


*Tilt the page forwards, close one eye and read from the bottom.*
*A message appears.*

What happens when you change your perspective?

As Denmark holds the EU Presidency, we invite Europe to look again. A slight change of view turns distortion into direction.

Danish Industry

# TURN SETBACK INTO COMEBACK

## A matter of perspective

From one angle, Europe’s challenges seem overwhelming: slowing growth, declining competitiveness, layers of regulation. Old alliances are fading, and the way forward is uncertain.

The picture appears distorted. But shift the angle slightly, and a new path emerges.

**Distortion becomes direction.**

What first looked like fracture becomes a framework for renewal.

This is Europe’s moment to look again. Not just at the crises we face, but at the possibilities hidden within them. Europe must break free from the constraints we’ve placed on ourselves.

By changing our perspective, we can uncover new pathways: faster approvals, simpler rules, stronger markets. Massive investments in competitiveness, security, and innovation.

Denmark holds the EU Presidency at a turning point for Europe. The optical illusion on the front page is an invitation to turn setback into comeback.

If governments, businesses and civil society look through the same lens, Europe can reinforce its place in the world. As a trusted partner, a hub of innovation, a force for competitiveness.

Tilt the front page, and the message becomes clear. Tilt our thinking, and Europe can bring back its focus.

Proposals to improve EU’s competitiveness

Danish Industry – DI – is Denmark’s largest, most representative and most influential business and employers’ organization, covering manufacturing as well as service industries across sectors such as transport, energy, IT, health, trade and professional services.

Danish Industry

## One year after Draghi, the urgency has only increased - yet Europe has barely moved

Only 11 percent of the recommendations from the Draghi report have been fully delivered. European companies stand ready to invest in new capacity, green technologies and innovation. But too often, Europe's framework conditions hold them back. We cannot afford another year of hesitation.

*- Source: European Policy Innovation Council, "Draghi Observatory Implementation Index: Only 1 in 10 measures implemented," September 2025.*

## Five facts that show the challenge

- **Since 2000, Europe has accumulated an investment gap of €4.8 trillion compared to the United States.**
  *- Source: Danish Industry, 2025*

- **Approvals take too long: 453 days for medicines in Europe versus 333 in the United States. In the EU it takes 7 years to approve a microbe that can replace chemical pesticides. In the US and Brazil, this takes 2-3 years.**
  *- Source: European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), "Patients W.A.I.T. Indicator", 2023 and IBMA, 2024.*

- **Energy costs remain high compared to competitors.**
  *- Source: BusinessEurope: "Reform Barometer", March 2024.*

- **Europe invests less in research and development compared to global competitors.**
  *- Source: Mario Draghi, "The Future of European Competitiveness – Report to the European Commission", September 2024.*

- **Regulatory burden is growing: 13,000 new EU legal acts were introduced between 2019 and 2024.**
  *- Source: Danish Industry, EUR-Lex database (2019–2024).*

## Foundations for a comeback

History shows that when Europe is tested, it delivers. The Single Market remains one of our greatest strengths, capital and capabilities are in place, and policy momentum is building. The foundations for a comeback are here, if we choose to act.

## This is the comeback moment

Europe has the people, the market and the technology. What is missing is the political will to deliver on competitiveness. Turning setback into comeback requires decisions:

**Strengthen Europe's industrial and security backbone**
Competitiveness cannot thrive without security. To restore Europe's strength, the EU must reinforce its industrial capacity, geopolitical influence and defense capabilities. Europe needs a robust and innovative defense industry, resilient supply chains and secure access to critical raw materials

**Cut red tape and accelerate approvals**
Simplify rules, reduce administrative burdens and halve approval times for new products. Predictable regulation will unlock capital and create jobs.

**Make the green transition Europe's growth engine**
Competitiveness and the green transition go hand in hand. By investing in green solutions, energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainability, Europe can position itself as a global leader in green technology and attract investments and talent to the region.

Proposals to improve EU's competitiveness

Danish Industry

# Business leaders call for Europe's comeback

"For decades, Europe has been losing ground in life science investments. This is not only a business challenge; it directly affects millions of Europeans who rely on breakthrough treatments. It is vital that our leaders act now to safeguard Europe's place as a strong and competitive hub for life sciences."

**Mike Doustdar**
President and CEO, Novo Nordisk

"We need bold choices to put in place the right frameworks for business and prepare our economy for tomorrow. By simplifying regulation, speeding up permitting, and modernizing infrastructure, Europe can restore competitiveness and lead the green transition. To succeed, we must turn today's first-mover disadvantages into lasting advantages."

**Vincent Clerc**
CEO, A.P. Moller – Maersk

"I believe in Europe's comeback because we already have the foundations in place. But it requires putting competitiveness and business policy at the very top of the European agenda. We are seeing encouraging signs. The political will to simplify rules and cut red tape is growing. And if we create clear frameworks and results-oriented regulation that is meaningful and drives innovation, then Europe is firmly on the right track."

**Jacob Aarup-Andersen**
CEO, Carlsberg Group

"Reviving competitiveness won't be easy, but Europe has shown what is possible when ambition meets action. Technology for the future already exists, as does demand for new answers. But businesses cannot do it alone. Governments must create fit-for-future regulation, encourage investments, and help innovations reach the market faster."

**Ester Baiget**
President and CEO, Novonesis

"Europe is a remarkable region with a strong democratic foundation and a rich entrepreneurial tradition. We can reclaim our global competitiveness by doubling down on technologies where we can lead. The time to act is now. We have the technologies to turn the challenge of decarbonization into a powerful driver of value creation and competitive advantage. With focus, speed, and commitment, our future is bright."

**Kim Fausing**
President and CEO, Danfoss

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