

# MEPs grill Breton over role of research partnerships in industrial strategy

*Commission must explain how it can achieve technological autonomy without a clearer plan, and a stricter timeline for launching new technologies by 2030, MEPs say*

By [Florin Zubaşcu](#)



Trade Commissioner, Thierry Breton. Photo: European Commission

The European Commission should align the goals set in its updated industrial strategy with plans for research partnerships in Horizon Europe, MEPs told trade commissioner Thierry Breton on Monday.

Breton was in the European Parliament to present the update to the EU's industrial strategy the Commission published last week. The strategy, first published in March last year, is aimed at increasing the EU's independence from technology products and services developed and manufactured in other parts of the world.

As part of the strategy, the EU is to launch new industrial alliances to develop microprocessors and semiconductor technologies, industrial data and cloud technology, space launchers and zero emission aviation.

But MEPs say the Commission has yet to explain how it could achieve technological autonomy in certain areas without a clearer plan and a stricter timeline for launching new technologies by 2030. By that date, the EU wants to reduce carbon emissions by 55%, a feat for which it needs technologies that do not yet exist.

The Parliament's rapporteur for Horizon Europe, German MEP Christian Ehler said the Commission has only eight and a half years to deliver these new technologies and the plan for it is missing. "That's not a long time," Ehler said.

The Commission also wants to become less dependent on imports for raw materials, batteries, active ingredients for pharmaceuticals, hydrogen, semiconductors and cloud computing, but it hasn't presented a clear timeline for achieving that. In addition, the Commission is planning to examine dependency issues in sectors, including renewable energy, energy storage and cyber security by the end of the year.

According to Breton, the updated industrial strategy will ensure traditional European industries, such as car manufacturing, are future proof. The commissioner estimates that 35% of the price of a car will be made up of semiconductors and processors. Batteries will also become one of the most expensive components of cars. "It's important to master this chain of autonomy," said Breton.

Portuguese MEP and rapporteur for public private partnerships in Horizon Europe, Maria da Graça Carvalho said the Commission's industrial strategy should include clearer links with the private and public partnerships planned within Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme.

"I regret that there [aren't] more synergies and strategic alignment of the initiatives contained in the documents that were published, and the partnerships," Carvalho said. "The partnerships are, in a certain way, the core of technological development."

The views of the MEPs echo a statement published last week by the European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO). Researchers say the Commission's industrial strategy should include a clear plan on how to manage research and innovation investment plans in strategic technologies and to coordinate with Horizon Europe partnerships.

Ehler wants the Commission to come up with a document that lays out how different EU funding sources will be routed to achieve climate goals and technological sovereignty in microprocessors and advanced materials and batteries. "Is there a working document?" asked Ehler. "When can we expect it?"

Without such a document, Ehler said, the EU could fail to achieve its plans. "We are no longer talking about an unforeseeable future, we're talking about next year and the year after," he said.

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