

**1st ESTAD / 31st JSI
7-8 April 2014 - Paris**

**Plenary Session
Opening address**

**Christophe Lerouge
Ministère du Redressement Productif**

Mister President Darmayan, Ladies and Gentlemen the professionals of the steel industry,

Thank you for the invitation to co-chair the Plenary Session of this new conference of the European Steel Industry, ESTAD,

First Key Message : Industry matters

Today is the first day of the "Industry Week" in France. With this event, we celebrate the strengths of the Industry: its diversity, its know-how, its enduring capacity to cope with change and innovation, as well as responsibilities.

The industry and its competitiveness are well in the centre of the concerns of the French public authorities and is the subject of an ambitious policy: the industrial recovery (le redressement productif). It is founded upon 3 complementary pillars:

- Safeguarding the industrial facilities: the minister has developed a defensive and coherent arsenal to help the companies which are facing difficulties. Everywhere we try to help them to change their organization, to restructure, to have access to credit...
- Second pillar: improving the competitiveness of our economy by the implementation of competitiveness clusters to foster local ecosystems and the R&D and innovation. Another structural initiative is the creation of a National Council for Industry which aims to build a shared vision on how to strengthen the French industry's competitiveness. This Council is declined in 14 Strategic



Committees for Industrial Branches, included one covering steel industry that I'll talk about later;

- The third pillar of our industrial policy concerns the preparation of the future. This leads to the definition of 34 industrial plans: these plans will gather both public and private actions around a common objective of developing, industrialising, and marketing new products and services in the very next years.

Steel plays, of course, an indispensable role in the success of several plans: for instance, plans in relation to the transportation of the future (such as cars consuming 2 litres per 100 km, train and ships of the future) or the production of energy (building of ambitious fields of windmills will require steel).

Lastly, the report entitled "Innovation 2030" has defined 7 main priorities to drive French innovation over the next 15 years.

Second Key Message: metal and steel industry matters

Now, let me focus on specific initiatives for metal and steel industry.

France dedicates important means for R&D and innovation through several initiatives:

- The new institute for Research and technology M2P (Matériaux, Métallurgie et Procédés) for Materials, Metal Industry and Processes has been inaugurated last October in Metz. The program of M2P covers strong stakes for the steel industry such as the fonctionnalisation and the strengthening of surfaces, the improvement of the productivity of less energy and raw materials consuming processes while improving the quality of products, and recycling of materials.
- A public platform of research will be created in Hayange (linked to the M2P). It will receive from the French government a first 20 million euro envelope which will allow to develop new processes and to propose the production of new nuances of steel.

In a broader picture, steel industry shares many common stakes with other process industries, such as extraction, metallurgy, aluminum, glass, concrete or ceramics production. These branches have been gathered in a Strategic Committee for Extractive Industry and First Transformation. The work accomplished by representatives of

industries, trade unions and public authorities, will lead to a contract including common objectives and set of actions to be implemented to answer industry's competitiveness, more particularly:

- Ensuring access to raw materials from extraction or recycling;
- Promoting circular economy, in which steelmaking is already an example to follow;
- Favoring a stable and proportionate regulatory framework;
- Ensuring a cost-effective energy;
- Backing the development of industrial operators for R&D&I;
- Developing skills and attracting young people in your jobs.

Without any doubt a conference like ESTAD could contribute to these aims.

Third Key Message : metal and steel industry should matter for Europe

The French Ministry in charge of Industry, Arnaud Montebourg, is completely involved in a number of actions at the European level.

In particular, the French authorities fully support European policies in favour of industry in order to improve the framework conditions. The French Minister, along with his counterparts MM Jean-Claude Marcourt and Etienne Schneider, from Belgium and Luxembourg, has got heavily and personally involved in the elaboration of the Steel Action Plan on which Gordon Moffat will probably come back later; and the High Level Group in charge of the preparation and follow up of this Plan.

France has been backing many of the measures contained in it and still expects from the Commission to go further:

- In matter of energy, France is particularly vigilant that progress be made. In this respect, France regrets the careful speech of the Commission on the support for the electro – intensive industry. For now, the Commission's current project, far from making cheaper energy for steel plants, is going to increase it in a substantial way.
- About Climate, the efforts that you have being made in terms of clean technologies, will make a big difference when the rest of the world will take the same way as Europe is doing in the decarbonisation of the economy.

- Lastly, steel industry evolves in a fiercely competitive global market. However, European steelmakers face trade barriers or unfair practices leading to limited access to non-European markets. France firmly supports a more efficient and determined use of trade defense instruments to ensure a level playing field.

Overall, this action plan for steel is certainly an important step in the recognition of the need for a European industrial policy. Arnaud Montebourg has also been directly involved in the European Ministerial Conference of the Friends of industry. On their last meeting in January, they called for the adoption of an ambitious programme for the European industry and that industrial competitiveness concerns should be mainstreamed across all policy areas.

As a conclusion, the French authorities can only have a favourable opinion about the initiative that four European steel organisations have taken to establish this new conference for steel technologies and applications.

I wish to all of you an excellent conference.