



Legal Alert | The Upcoming EU Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA): Strategic Shifts for Industrial Projects and Public Procurement

by Ramona Pentilescu and Maria Dima | 6 March 2026

On March 4, the European Commission published the [Proposal for the Industrial Accelerator Act \(IAA\)](#) – a legislative initiative aimed at reversing the decline of the European manufacturing sector.

If adopted, the IAA would impose a series of significant measures targeting energy-intensive industries, net-zero technology manufacturing, and the expanding automotive supply chain, with the aim to revitalize European industry and secure a minimum of 20% to the Union's GDP by 2035. The IAA's core provisions cluster around four main pillars:

Faster Permitting

The proposal introduces a framework to significantly accelerate and digitalize permit-granting procedures for all industrial manufacturing projects, including energy-intensive industry decarbonisation projects:

- Establishes single national digital access points for all permits required for industrial manufacturing projects.
- Mandates streamlined, time-bound permit procedures, with one comprehensive decision per project (from the acknowledgement that the application is complete to the notification of the comprehensive decision on the outcome of the procedure).
- Extends simplified, faster, and more predictable permit-granting process and environmental assessments applicable in net-zero technology manufacturing to all decarbonisation projects in energy-intensive industries.

Mandatory Public Procurement requirements for Low-Carbon and Union-Origin Products

The proposed IAA establishes mandatory 'Union origin' – defined as content originating in the Union or in trusted like-minded partner countries – and 'low-carbon' requirements applicable to public procurement procedures and public support schemes involving energy intensive industries and the electric vehicles market.

In addition, the Act mandates, for specific procedures, **a general exclusion rule of tenders submitted by economic operators owned or controlled by entities in third countries** that have no agreement guaranteeing EU access to their markets.

Contracting authorities may waive the origin and carbon thresholds only in limited exemptions:

- where there is only one supplier,
- where no suitable tenders are received,
- or where compliance would cause disproportionate costs (presumed if differences exceed 25%) or technical incompatibility in operation/maintenance.



The aim seems to be to reward companies (manufacturers and suppliers in automotive, steel, chemicals, construction materials and related sectors) that invest in manufacturing sustainably within the bloc or in allied nations, shifting the focus towards supply-chain composition and carbon intensity metrics.

Conditions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Strategic Sectors

The proposed IAA will also add a new industrial layer in the screening of certain investments. A preliminary review on the FDI Regime under the IAA, by our colleague Vanessa Nistor – [click here](#)

Industrial Manufacturing Acceleration Areas

Member States are required to establish at least one Industrial Manufacturing Acceleration Area (IMAA) within 12 months of the Regulation's establishment into law.

The purpose of IMAAs is to cluster industrial manufacturing projects in strategic sectors within areas that operate effectively (by virtue of comprehensive financial, infrastructural, skills-related, and strategic support measures).

A central feature is the pre-cleared permitting environment: since most permits are addressed at the area level in advance, individual projects might benefit from significantly reduced administrative lead times.

The proposal signals a significant reorientation of EU industrial policy towards a coordinated, Single-Market-wide framework integrating both industrial and decarbonisation objectives.

If implemented effectively, it could advance Europe's transition toward a more autonomous, competitive, and climate-aligned industrial economy, while providing the structural conditions necessary for sustained investment and high-quality job creation across the Union.

For countries like Romania, it might create the framework for a revival, in acceleration mode, of large industrial projects and industrial and manufacturing clusters.

Deeper dive => more details to come on [PNSA blog](#)