

Mr Thierry Breton  
Commissioner for the Internal Market  
European Commission  
1040 Brussels

Brussels, 13 July 2022

**RE: Energy reduction plan – potential impact on ceramics and its value chains**

Dear Commissioner Breton,

I am contacting you in my capacity as President of Cerame-Unie which represents the 9 European ceramic sectors, a turnover of around €30 billion and over 200,000 direct jobs throughout the EU.

The upcoming Commission Guidelines concerning the EU demand reduction plan will be of extreme importance to the ceramic industry and to the numerous value chains it supplies.

We believe that the ceramic sector should be considered as a **priority sector in terms of access to natural gas** due to its **dependency on natural gas** and **criticality in supply chains**.

Natural gas constitutes approximately 80% of the energy mix for our sector. Being fully dependent on natural gas, the ceramic industry responds to the prioritisation criteria of gas dependency proposed by the Commission. Additionally, in the **short-term** there are **no feasible solutions for the substitution of natural gas** in the energy mix.

With regards to supply chain criticality, ceramics are essential for multiple strategic value chains. This is the case for products across all ceramic sectors. Ceramic refractories are **indispensable to produce steel, aluminum, cement, glass, chemicals and petro-chemicals** and to any other high temperature manufacturing activity, while technical ceramics have very **broad applications from medical to aerospace, and including batteries or the production of hydrogen**. Ceramics are also used as an **essential material in the construction sector**, as is the case for bricks and roof tiles, wall and floor tiles, sanitary-ware, which are key for **affordable and energy efficient housing**.

All of these activities would suffer significant disruptions if the production of ceramics were halted in the EU. Consequently, the resulting **social and economic impact would not only be felt in the numerous regions where tens of thousands of jobs directly depend on the ceramic industry but also in areas where its very diverse value chains are established**.

In light of these considerations, we call on the Commission to consider ceramics as a priority sector in terms of access to natural gas under the upcoming Commission Guidelines.

We hope that these considerations will be well reflected in the EU demand reduction plan.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Delcourt  
Cerame-Unie President