

PRESS RELEASE – 11 February 2026

**CERAME-UNIE JOINS THE EUROPEAN INDUSTRY SUMMIT AND CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE FREEZE ON CARBON COSTS TO PREVENT IRREVERSIBLE DEINDUSTRIALISATION.**

*Brussels, Belgium* – On 11 February 2026, Cerame-Unie attended the Antwerp European Industry Summit, joining forces with other energy intensive industries in calling for immediate action to safeguard the European economy and competitiveness. Ahead of the informal Council meeting on competitiveness scheduled on 12 February, **Cerame-Unie calls for emergency measures to stop any increase in carbon costs in 2026, specifically by suspending the decrease of free CO<sub>2</sub> quotas and freezing the ETS benchmark update**, a request that was heard and echoed by most of the EU heads of governments present in Antwerp today.

The additional foreseen increases in carbon costs for the sector in 2026 will be detrimental, given the severity of the current crises and the international context and considering that the main conditions for decarbonisation – access to low carbon energy at internationally competitive prices and to infrastructure - are not met. The ceramic industry is committed to its decarbonisation pathway, but urgently needs a **stable and fair regulatory framework, together with major capital investments and access to affordable low carbon energy and electricity to successfully manage the transition**. Therefore, the sector calls for a freeze on the benchmark update and the suspension of the cross-sectoral correction factor, which would otherwise result in a significant loss in free allocations compared to the previous period.

Competitiveness of the European ceramic industry is put under critical pressure due to the combined effect of surging energy prices and unfair competition from third countries. Compared to 2021, the sector is experiencing a 30% decrease in production, accompanied by a reduction of 50% in its trade balance and a 10% loss in jobs provided. While overregulation is a barrier to innovation and local production, if not urgently tackled, the estimated 30-40% total cost inflation, stemming from unbearable and unmatched energy and CO<sub>2</sub> prices, will accelerate relocation of production outside of Europe over the next few years.

To ensure the essential role of ceramics in Europe, providing durable and affordable goods for households, sustainable solutions to the housing crisis and indispensable industrial products, immediate action is needed.

While addressing the roundtable with Commission President von der Leyen and heads of governments, **Cerame-Unie President Heimo Scheuch emphasised that the industry needs “ETS emergency measures now. Not next year”** consisting in *“a pause on ETS benchmark tightening, a freeze in the reduction of free allowances, and a temporary ETS price cap to stabilize expectations.”*. He added that *“these measures are not a rollback of ambition, they are the only way to keep ambition alive”*.