

Von der Leyen follows industry-dictated “shadow roadmap” ahead of EU leaders retreat, NGO coalition warns

A coalition of major civil society organisations has issued a [joint declaration](#) to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, alleging that the EU Commission is prioritising a "shadow roadmap" of industry-led deregulation over democratic and environmental safeguards.

The warning comes as President von der Leyen prepares for a high-level meeting on Wednesday with CEFIC, the European chemical industry's primary lobby group. The meeting is scheduled just hours before EU heads of state gather for an informal retreat on February 12, where a new suite of "Competitiveness" deregulation measures is at the top of the agenda.

In a joint declaration released today, the coalition, which includes Friends of the Earth Europe, Corporate Europe Observatory, and Transparency International EU, denounces a "recurring pattern" of privileged access for corporate interests.

Key highlights in the joint declaration include:

- 40% of meetings held by Commissioners' cabinet members were with individual companies, and 29% with business associations, while NGOs accounted for only 16%.
- Vital safety regulations are being systematically reframed as "regulatory burdens" to satisfy the chemical sector's demands.
- While industry groups claim capital shortages necessitate deregulation, the coalition notes that key industrial firms distributed €1.6 trillion to shareholders (75% of net profits) between 2010 and 2023.
- The coalition warns that upcoming "Omnibus" packages risk dismantling health and environmental protections, such as rules on chemicals (PFAS) and pesticides, without standard scientific impact assessments.

"The timing of this meeting gives industry a privileged opportunity to feed its demands directly into the EU heads of state summit," the coalition stated. "We are witnessing a systematic rollback of vital climate and social protections."

The organisations are calling for an immediate restoration of transparency and a "polluter pays" approach to the EU's industrial transition, arguing that competitiveness should not come at the cost of public health or democratic accountability.

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