

The future depends on how the EU builds it



ALLIANCE for
LOW-CARBON CEMENT
& CONCRETE

A roadmap for cement and concrete from 2024 to 2029

It mostly goes unnoticed, but cement is a part of our everyday lives. Still, very few of us are aware of its massive environmental impact — accounting for 8% of global CO₂ emissions. And even fewer know that solutions exist to significantly reduce these negative impacts - today.

Our Alliance for Low-Carbon Cement & Concrete — made up of leading innovative businesses and stakeholders across the value chain — is committed to decarbonising cement and concrete, targeting net zero by 2040.

Safe, scalable, and cost-effective technology already exists. It is now on the shoulders of legislators in the upcoming policy cycle to make them the norm in the EU.

Traditional clinker
— cement's main binding ingredient — is the main culprit of cement emissions, accounting for over 90% of its footprint.



How to get it right

Establish a framework for clean technologies to thrive

- ✓ **Ensure the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) delivers on cement decarbonisation.** In its current form, clean cement technologies are excluded from the scope of ETS, while clinker plants receive generous levels of free allowances. In fact, shifting production to low-carbon cements is even penalised as a result. A targeted revision of the ETS should be a top priority to create a level-playing field for clean cement technologies.
- ✓ **Ensure that policies and transition pathways mainstream cement and concrete as a fast-to-abate industry.** It is time to be honest about the share of emissions that are truly unavoidable. In fact, more than half of cement's emissions can be tackled at little to no cost. Avoiding emissions in the first place (e.g. reducing clinker production) is less expensive and energy-intensive than relying on carbon capture and storage (CCS).
- ✓ **Prioritise updating the Best Available Techniques (BAT) reference document (BREF) on cement, lime, and magnesium oxide.** Originally adopted over a decade ago, the document's underlying data goes back to 2009. But since then, a wide variety of clean technologies have become present on the market. This sorely needed update would allow the Industrial Emissions Directive to reach its full potential in driving a zero-pollution and circular cement industry.

Strengthen the internal market through standards

- ✓ **Shift to performance-based standards to ensure an innovative and long-term future for Europe's cement and concrete industry in a globalised market.** Current European cement and concrete standards — increasingly out of tune with international trends — are prescriptive, creating significant market entrance barriers for low-carbon materials.
- ✓ **Harmonise European concrete standards to strengthen our internal market with the uptake of low-carbon innovations.** Today's European internal market for concrete products is complex and fragmented, intersecting already significant barriers to low-carbon cement and concrete.
- ✓ **Ensure a swift and ambitious implementation of the Construction Products Regulation (CPR).** Rapidly rolling out environmental criteria for cement ahead of the 2029 deadline and moving towards a higher quality Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) system in Europe by reforming core disclosure rules in EN 15804 as a priority.

Develop lead markets and stable finance

- ✓ **Level up investments to become the home of clean technology.** The EU and Member States have a key role to play in ensuring public investments support a net-zero industry. For cement and concrete, priority should be given to those technologies with the potential to achieve significant emissions reductions well ahead of 2030.
- ✓ **Ensure a quick and thorough implementation of the Energy Performance for Buildings Directive (EPBD).** The new building law has the potential to create strong demand for low-carbon cement and concrete. A timely adoption of the Whole Life Carbon (WLC) methodology will be key to deliver upon this promise.
- ✓ **Unlock the potential of green public procurement (GPP) in creating demand for low-carbon products.** Public projects are responsible for around 40% of cement and concrete procurement. A mandatory and unified approach to GPP for construction products would ensure that cement and concrete meet ambitious environmental requirements.



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Our Alliance was created to steer the sector towards viable decarbonisation pathways. Our members represent mature materials designers and producers, and start-ups working in biotechnology, capturing carbon, and sustainable construction. We are all rooted in the circular economy and sustainable construction, and we all share the desire to change our industry — and prevent catastrophic climate change.

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