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Europe’s brewers unite behind sustainability and competitiveness

An industry assembly in Lisbon signaled that environmental goals now sit at the center of breweries’ strategy on investment, regulation and growth.

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Brewers from across Europe met in Lisbon on Thursday for the 2026 general assembly of The Brewers of Europe, where they set out shared priorities around sustainability, innovation and economic competitiveness at a time when the industry is facing regulatory and investment pressure on several fronts.

According to The Brewers of Europe, the meeting brought together representatives of national brewers' associations and brewing companies from across the region to discuss the main challenges and opportunities for the sector. The agenda included beer's role in local communities, sustainable production practices and brewing's contribution to the European economy.

The group said members exchanged views on how to support a brewing industry that remains competitive while adapting to environmental demands and changing market conditions. It also said the discussions reflected a common view among participants that beer has a broader social and economic role, from supporting jobs and livelihoods to contributing to cultural life across Europe.

The assembly reaffirmed the sector's commitment to working together on what it described as a sustainable, innovative and competitive future for brewing. That language matters beyond beer alone because priorities set by one of Europe's main brewing bodies can help shape where producers direct capital spending and how they prepare for future policy debates on sustainability, industrial strategy and innovation across the wider drinks business.

For brewers, those issues are closely tied to operating costs, packaging choices, energy use and long-term market access. Industry positions adopted at a European level can also influence how companies engage with lawmakers and regulators as rules evolve around environmental performance and economic policy.

The Lisbon meeting did not announce specific new measures in the published account, but it underscored the sector's effort to present a united position on the pressures facing breweries across Europe. In doing so, it placed sustainability and competitiveness side by side, signaling that producers see environmental progress and economic resilience as linked rather than separate goals.