NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING

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TODAYS News

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The State of the Union 2017: Catching the wind in our sails

European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** today delivered his 2017 State of the Union Address, before the Members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, presenting his priorities for the year ahead and outlining his vision for how the European Union could evolve by 2025 (see full speech). He presented a Roadmap for a More United, Stronger and More Democratic Union (see Roadmap Factsheet). European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said today: *"The wind is back in Europe's sails. But we will go nowhere unless we catch that wind. (...) We should chart the direction for the future. As Mark Twain wrote, years from now we will be more disappointed by the things we did not do, than by the ones we did. Now is the time to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe for 2025."* President **Juncker**'s speech in the European Parliament was accompanied by the adoption of **concrete initiatives** by the European Commission on trade, investment screening, cybersecurity, industry, data and democracy, putting words immediately into action. A **series of factsheets** published today also expand on some of the key elements touched upon in the President's speech. A full press release is available online.

Second quarter of 2017 compared with the first quarter of 2017 - Employment up by 0.4% in both the euro area and in the EU28 - +1.6% and +1.5% respectively compared with the second quarter of 2016

The number of persons employed increased by 0.4% in both the euro area (EA19) and in the EU28 in the second quarter of 2017 compared with the previous quarter, according to national accounts estimates published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In the first quarter of 2017, employment increased by 0.5% in both areas. These figures are seasonally adjusted. Full text available here

Commission welcomes agreement in principle to extend and reinforce Investment Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

One year after President Juncker announced the proposal in his State of the Union speech, the European Parliament and Member States have come to an agreement in principle on the extension and strengthening of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the Investment Plan for Europe. The agreement extends the EFSI's duration as well as increases its financial capacity. Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: "*Tonight's agreement means that the new and improved European Fund for Strategic Investments – or EFSI 2.0 - will benefit European citizens until at least 2020. The EFSI has already reached all 28 Member States, supporting key public and private investment projects and financing a huge range of small businesses and start-ups. I thank the Council and the Parliament for their hard work and commitment on this important* *piece of legislation. With its increased firepower and duration, the EFSI will continue to be an important driving force in the EU's economic recovery.*" The draft EFSI 2.0 Regulation that has been agreed in principle still has to be formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. For more information about the agreement, see our full press release

Industrial production in euro area up by 0.1% from June to July 2017, up by 3.2% since July 2016

In July 2017 compared with June 2017, seasonally adjusted industrial production rose by 0.1% in the euro area (EA19), while it decreased by 0.3% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In June 2017, industrial production fell by 0.6% in both zones. In July 2017 compared with July 2016, industrial production increased by 3.2% in the euro area and by 3.1% in the EU28. More information here

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition over a new joint venture between SAIC Motor Corporation and Infineon Technologies

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of joint control over the newly created Chinese joint venture SAIC Infineon Automotive Power Modules (Shanghai) Co, by Infineon Technologies AG ("Infineon") of Germany and SAIC Motor Corporation Ltd ("SAIC") of China. The joint venture will be established in China and produce and sell automotive frame-based insulated-gate bipolar transistor power modules (power semiconductors) for hybrid and fully electric vehicles in China. Infineon is active in the power semiconductor business. SAIC is a car producer. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the joint venture is not active in the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's competition website, in the public case register under the case number M.8513.

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Find out **here** what will be discussed next week in the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament.