

Commissioner Stylianides meets with Ministers from Luxembourg and Belgium and welcomes Member States' commitment in reinforcing the European Mechanism to respond to disasters

Today, Commissioner **Stylianides** meets with Luxembourgish Ministers Daniel Kersch, responsible for Home Affairs, Civil Service and Administrative Reform and Minister Romain Schneider for Social Security, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs and Sport on the occasion of a new Luxembourgish contribution to strengthen the EU Civil Protection Mechanism: mobile, satellite-based telecommunications via the platform emergency.lu.

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**, said: *"We welcome this contribution which is testimony to Luxembourg's long-standing tradition of providing high added-value capacities for a better EU response to disasters in Europe and worldwide. The new telecommunication platform emergency.lu will establish internet and telephone communication as in the aftermath of hurricanes Matthew and Irma that destroyed communication infrastructure in the Caribbean."*

The Luxembourgish capacity provides advanced communication services such as telephone and internet connections to support the coordination efforts of first responders and humanitarian actors in the field at times natural or man-made disasters destroyed local communication infrastructure. Composed of two experts, one satellite communications system and ICT equipment, emergency.lu can be deployed within 12 hours. It has also been used following major disasters such as the earthquake in Nepal and the Ebola epidemic. The emergency.lu capacity will be deployed to assure stable communication in emergencies to all Participating States of the Mechanism and internationally.

Ministers from Luxembourg will take this opportunity to visit the Brussels-based [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) (ERCC), the coordination hub for an efficient and coherent European response during emergencies inside and outside Europe.

Commissioner **Stylianides** also meets today with Jan Jambon, Belgian Minister of the Interior. As participant to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, Belgium offers expertise and actively supports states in need, like in 2014 when Belgium sent its mobile laboratory to fight against Ebola in Guinea. Both meetings take place in light of the Commission's ambitious new plans to strengthen Europe's ability to deal with disasters. The comprehensive plan focusses on two complementary strands of action, targeting a stronger collective response at European level: rescEU, and stepping up disaster prevention and preparedness capacities. Administrative procedures are foreseen to be streamlined and simplified to reduce the time needed to deploy

life-saving assistance.

For More Information

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#)

EESC on European Industry Day: Let's turn challenges into opportunities

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The EESC argues for closer cooperation, longer-term and predictable policies and fair trade agreements under the Commission's leadership

"Industry is the source of prosperity in almost all Member States. When industries die, whole regions suffer", warns [Gonçalo Lobo Xavier](#), EESC Vice-President ahead of a two-day conference organised by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform to mark European Industry Day (22-23 February).

"The challenges for Europe's industry are extraordinary, and no single Member State can meet them alone. But the opportunities are also enormous. We have to grab them to keep our lead in the many sectors where we have it and get it back where we have almost lost it to competitors.

This path, however, will only be successful if all 28 Member States play together, not solo. Therefore I call on the Commission and the Member States to blend the many existing policies into a single longer-term strategy and commit our countries to coherent action in order to support industry clusters across national borders."

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) takes the same line in a recent opinion on [Investing in a smart, innovative and sustainable industry](#), adopted on 15 February, where it also calls for the completion of the single market, including the capital market. It is particularly necessary to enhance standardisation and self-regulation, says the EESC.

"The low-carbon and circular economy offers many business opportunities. In order to grab them, we need a common framework and a longer-term strategy as well as Member States' commitment to coherent action. All Member States need to pull together to overcome the global challenges", says opinion rapporteur [Bojidar Danev](#).

Open trade must be fair and sustainable

Enterprises are challenged in an unprecedented way to swiftly transform new technologies into successful innovations in ever more competitive markets. "It is important that our companies comply with our very high environmental

and social standards, but the same standards must apply to our competitors. We therefore urge the Commission to actively use the instruments available to tackle unfair trade practices. Our enterprises need a level playing-field,” says Mr Danev.

People’s welfare at the core of the labour market transition

The structure of the labour market will change dramatically. In order to avoid or at least mitigate the impact on employees, the EESC advocates proper assessment and anticipation of possible changes. Since all workers need to upgrade their skills, particularly their digital abilities, work-based learning solutions must be applied more widely.

Technological challenges require ambitious policies and long-term investment but also changes to our education systems. Flexible pathways between education and work are needed. Collaboration between industry, schools and universities must be fostered, not only at national level but also Europe-wide.

“We need an expansion of the dual school system. Vocational training should play a greater role,” stresses opinion co-rapporteur [Monica Sitarová Hrušecká](#), who will speak at the European Industry Day’s workshop on the *Role of skills in future employment*.

“People must be at the core of change”, she adds. “The opportunities afforded by new technologies must not only be harnessed to create new products, but also to improve working conditions for staff”.

“Job security, job creation and social protection, particularly through the difficult time of transition, need to be in focus”, emphasises Ms Sitarová Hrušecká. “The EESC therefore urges the Commission to both provide more resources and extend the scope of the European Global Adjustment Fund”.

Bundling national to European efforts

“Our main competitors, China and the US, but also Korea and India, are single states with one industrial policy, while our industry policy is in the hands of 28 Member States. Industry is where we most need to manage the balancing act between the nation state and the EU, overcoming national thinking to think geopolitically. Like in the old days, the new Silk Road must also lead from West to East, with high tech products going from Europe to the rest of the world.

Therefore my advice is to pull together, to increase European collaboration in R&D and innovation activities combined with a strong skills agenda, and to turn the challenge of the digital age into a big opportunity for Europe’s industry”, concludes Mr Lobo Xavier, who will speak in the panel “Clusters and partnerships for stronger EU value chains” on the European Industry Day on 23rd February.

Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the opening plenary session of the Ideas Lab 2018 "Europe – Back on Track" of the Centre for European Policy Studies

Dear Joaquín,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be with you today for your annual conference.

I had the pleasure to know and to work with Joaquín for almost as long as I have been in politics. That is a long moment.

We were both – that was a special period – Ministers for Labour at the same time in the 1980s. He was in government in 1986 when Spain took its rightful place in our Union. And we later worked closely together – he as a Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and myself as the President of the Eurogroup. That was not always a pleasure because we had many controversial debates, but at the very end he lost. But he is a convinced European and a proud Spaniard, always ready to stand up for our Union, and he did it again and again.

[Europe: Back on track]

There are plenty of reasons for us to be positive today, just as the title of your conference is suggesting.

It is not so long ago that our Union was in danger of sleepwalking from one crisis to another without waking up.

This was the alarm call in fact we needed.

Since then we have slowly but surely turned the page from this so-called "polycrisis". And we have been able to do so by being united and by delivering on things that matter.

This has been my priority since the day the Commission took office.

We have already delivered 80% of the initiatives – 368 out of 460 to be precise – that we said we would when we took office.

We had some luck along the way but we also made our own luck. When faced with the wake-up call, Europe's leaders and institutions came together. We chose

unity.

Together, we chose to rally around a common positive agenda and renew our vows to our Union of solidarity.

And the results start to speak for themselves.

Every economy in our Union is now growing healthily. Employment is at an all-time high, unemployment at a 9 year low.

Business and consumer confidence are at their highest levels this century. Investment is now picking up.

But it is not just about numbers and figures. We have also made steps forward together that many thought unthinkable even in 2014.

We saw this with 25 countries taking part in the historic launch of Permanent Structured Cooperation in defence – the Sleeping Beauty of the Lisbon Treaty – at the end of last year.

The European Union has also stepped up on the world stage. We are now the driving force of global free and fair trade. With like-minded partners such as Canada and Japan we are helping each other grow, while setting standards that uphold our common values.

Together the EU and Japan already account for a third of the world's GDP. The new agreement could increase our exports to Japan by a third and save EU companies EUR 1 billion in custom duties every year.

At the same time, it will enshrine gold standard protection when it comes to food safety, regulatory standards and environmental protection.

We have also shown that we are a Union of solidarity. In 2016 alone, we offered asylum to three times as many refugees as the U.S., Australia and Japan combined. That is what some are calling the European fortress – three times more than the U.S., Australia, and Japan combined. And thanks to our pro-active, European approach, we were able reduce arrivals to our shores by 63% in 2017.

[Road to Sibiu and beyond]

There are many other examples I could choose to show how Europe is indeed back on track.

But my message today is that we cannot slow down. Europe must now press the accelerator. We still have a lot to do.

Between now and next summer when Europeans take to the polls, we must deliver on the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union, secure our borders, overhaul our asylum system, get back to Schengen, complete the Digital Single Market, bring the Western Balkans closer to our Union.

If we achieve this, our end destination will be a more united, democratic and

stronger Union at 27. By the time European leaders meet at a special summit on Europe Day 2019 in Sibiu, Romania, and there we must be able to show our citizens that this new Union of 27 works for them.

The Commission will be full steam ahead until the very last day of our mandate. And starting tomorrow, European leaders will meet 19 times in the next 18 months to tackle the issues that matter the most to our Union.

[A European budget for tomorrow]

And since we are on the eve of the first of those 19 meetings, I want to touch on the importance of tomorrow's discussions, in particular on the new Multiannual Financial Framework.

I see it an opportunity for Europe's leaders to send a clear message that Europe is not only back, but that it really means business.

Every seven years, Europe has to decide on a new budget for our Union. It is time for decisions.

It is about deciding what kind of Europe we want, about what we want our Union to be able to deliver.

First we must agree on our priorities, and then we can talk about numbers, about figures. It should not be the other way round. And if we have ambitious goals, then our budget should be equally ambitious.

Last week, we spelled out in black and white the choices that the European Union faces.

Let me give you a concrete example. When we ask Europeans what their top priority is, securing our borders consistently comes out as the first or second answer.

So we must decide now how to deliver on that. We could for instance choose to maintain the European Border and Coast Guard as it is. Or we could upgrade it so it has more staff, more tools, a bigger role in returns. Alternatively, we could transform it into a fully-fledged border management system with 100,000 EU staff.

Each of those options are debated and are discussed, but each of those options comes at a price.

The first of those options, maintaining the system we have, would need an 8 billion euro investment, in the next period of seven years. The second, upgrading the border control, would need between 20-25 billion euro. And the third, having 100,000 EU staff would need 150 billion euro. We must decide what it is we want to achieve. And then we must come back to the resources we need to do this.

And to do that, we need Member States to change the way they think about the European budget – a budget that only accounts for around 2% of public spending in Europe.

There is unanimity in the Council. We have those who do not want to pay more and we have those who do not want to receive less – that is the only piece of unanimity we have in the Council. But these two things are not really swimming in the same direction.

So the logic has to change. We need a budget that matches our ambitions. For instance, we want to be world leaders in renewable energy and get ahead of the curve on new technologies. If we want our Union to have a role in that, we must give ourselves the tools we need to make it happen.

The next budget will have to be large enough to manage new priorities and at the same time plug the gap left by the United Kingdom's withdrawal. That may mean that some pay more. We have to be honest enough to say this now, before the debate will start.

And on the same note, Member States must know the value of the budget as well as they know the cost of it.

We can all be net beneficiaries. European money invested in one country, or one region, has of course a value far beyond one border.

Tomorrow will not be a time to make final decisions. But it will be an important moment to show our willingness to swiftly agree on an ambitious and flexible and simplified budget for our future.

As I said earlier, Europe must now go full steam ahead. Delays on our journey are not an option. For the last budget, a slow agreement proved very costly.

At this time, back in December 2013, the fact that we were not able to agree earlier costed 5,000 research jobs for every single month that we did not agree. And it could cost up to 600,000 Erasmus places in 2021 if we are not agreeing on the budget before that date. But everyone, all the Prime Ministers are saying that we have to increase the number of those being in the Erasmus+ programme. We have to bring the money where our lips are.

[Conclusion]

Too often in Europe we talk about challenges and we forget about opportunities. Equally, we spend too much time discussing intentions rather than results.

Now that Europe continues to regain its strength, we have a once in a generation opportunity to build a stronger, more united and more democratic Union we collectively deserve.

We should grasp this opportunity with courage and with boldness. This is a time for action, not only for discussion.

Last September, when delivering the speech on the State of the Union at the European Parliament, I spoke of a Union of equals, a Union which is open to the Western Balkans. A Union with an enlarged euro area, Schengen space, Banking Union. A Union which stands up for fairness in the labour market and that is more accountable and able to take decisions in a quicker and more

effective way.

This Union, the one I am speaking of, is not abstract. We can deliver on it now – without Treaty changes. This is why I set out a Roadmap to Sibiu and why leaders also agreed on an agenda to get us there.

We are now fully focused on making sure Europe stays on this track. We must take it stop-by-stop, starting tomorrow. But just as those who set out on this journey 60 years ago, we must never lose sight of where we want to go.

Let us go together.

Thank you.

Keynote speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič at EU Industry Day – EU industry leadership in the transition to a low carbon society

I am delighted to welcome you to this **first edition** of the **Clean Energy Industrial Forum**

Back at the end of 2016 when we announced it in the Clean Energy Package, this forum seemed like a distant dream.

It is now taking place and, even more importantly, it has been prepared intensively **by** and **for** the industry – with collective and concerted actions, pledges, targets, projects and partnerships etc. We will hear more about them today and tomorrow.

This forum gives an opportunity to showcase what **you** are doing to boost EU leadership in the clean energy transition.

Of course in the same way as the Energy Union is not just about energy, its Industrial forum is not just about industry: it is about modernising and energising our economy, with innovators, workers, cities, investors, on board.

It is about delivering jobs, growth and investments for Europe.

But it is also about seizing the impressive growth opportunities created outside Europe for clean energy solutions – this is a fantastic opportunity for the EU industry at large.

We have a very positive story to tell. But it is in the making.

Our climate and energy targets, our regulations, our financing instruments are already being transformed into investments, innovation, growth and jobs.

Thanks to our joint determination, some 9 million Europeans are already working in the clean energy sectors. And we can expect this number to double by 2030.

The EU has great innovative and industrial assets to drive this transition. We will hear about them. But I would go one step further: our greatest **competitive** assets are the **values** we uphold. The only way to build and consolidate EU industry's position as frontrunner in the global clean energy transition is to defend these core values.

To stay or become the global leader in innovation, decarbonisation and digitisation we must therefore:

promote a rule-based multilateral system (fighting protectionism),

- forcefully pursue our sustainability agenda ("making our planet great again"),
- make sure that our competitiveness and social models work hand in hand (long term prosperity should also mean lowering inequalities)
- support and empower our citizens, cities, communities, our ecosystem to develop new business models, with smarter ways of living, consuming, working and moving around

I do not want to make the usual pitch about what the Commission has done – most of you are already very familiar with our Clean energy and Clean mobility packages. They are necessary. But not sufficient.

What is needed is **industrial ownership** of and **leadership in** the Energy Union project. We know the energy transition and the global fight against climate change will not succeed without the industry. You are the key drivers of EU innovation and global competitiveness. And since I have started this mandate, I certainly have witnessed that things are moving. European business forcefully embarking on this journey like never before

1. **So, why is this forum timely** ? Because as you very well know competition in the global market place is fierce. And let's be frank: in some areas (such as PV cells and modules) it is not that emerging economic power are catching up. They are now clearly one step ahead of us ! China has become the largest clean energy investor in the world. And other Asian countries are striving to become or stay first-movers (Koreans in batteries for instance). We can still overpass them but we need to act fast. So our future is being decided now. What we do today – not tomorrow – will define if we can be frontrunners, followers or the laggards of the fourth industrial revolution.

2. **What do we need to focus on?** Establishing Europe's **strong industrial and manufacturing base in strategic sectors**. This is critical to our competitiveness but also to maintaining Europe's capacity to innovate and remain at the cutting edge. It is the only way to bridge the deployment gap (so-called "valley of death" for our innovation). Yes, we should massively

and strategically invest massively into disruptive innovation to achieve our climate goals. But we should also have the manufacturing base in place to convert this into competitive advantage. Otherwise we become the “incubator” of the rest of the world, and our innovators end up responding to the Siren calls of our global competitors, despite our initial investment.

3. How do we achieve that?

Through robust partnerships. This is what this first edition is about: **creating robust partnerships and announcing concrete actions**. Public-private partnerships of course. But even more importantly partnerships inside the full value chain, and joint action plans.

To prepare for the Forum, an impressive work has been done by a very wide array of actors covering entire value chains – and I want to thank them for that.

In three strategic areas for the Energy Union: batteries, renewables and construction. In three industry-led initiatives, actions have been or are being agreed that will be instrumental to deliver on our energy and climate goals in the future.

Batteries: they are a – if not the – key enabler for our mobility and energy systems. Developing a competitive manufacturing value chain for batteries, in Europe, is not just a precondition to prevent major technological dependence upon our global competitors. It also has huge jobs, growth and investment potential – up to 4 to 5 million jobs could be created ! A surge in battery demand is expected over the next 5 years. This represents a new market of around 250 billion euros a year. If we get our act together.

Europe’s **renewables** industry-led initiative covers all renewable energy technologies and the full sectoral supply chain, from material developers, to technology providers, passing through project developers. This in itself is a first. You will hear about the priorities identified by all those actors.

The work is intensifying on **construction**. Buildings consume 40% of the EU’s final energy demand, more than any other sector. So large energy savings can be done. The Smart Finance for Smart Building has just been set up by the EIB. It will act as a formidable leverage instrument (up to EUR 10 billion for EE in buildings). This initiative could take up to 3 million families out of energy poverty. But we need to go further to reduce the significant resource and environmental footprints all along the buildings’ life cycle.

As part of the clean energy forum a number of workshops, organised by stakeholders, industries and start-ups will feed into our reflections, covering: the link between digital and circular economy, the clean mobility sectors, low carbon industrial innovation in energy intensive sectors, and an exhibition of our world class start-ups that will be opened in Covent Garden later this afternoon. So quite an ambitious programme !

These industry-led initiatives, workshops and exhibition showcase our thriving ecosystem and global competitiveness.

Tomorrow, Commissioner Moedas will launch a 'European prize on batteries', rewarding our collective efforts to promote innovation in that sector.

And you will find us both at the signing ceremony for the first ever Innovfin EDP loan to impressive batteries manufacturing project in Sweden.

I do hope that in these two days we will discuss both concrete areas of common action, but also our level of ambition.

I would also like to make the link with efforts undertaken by cities in Europe and in the world – very significant action is taking place thanks to local authorities. So they are creating the demand. And it is up to EU industry to respond to it, by deploying state of the art innovative solutions : decentralised energy production, smart buildings, charging infrastructure for electric and other vehicles, clean car sharing services etc.

Today the EU Covenant of Mayors is meeting and will report to us tomorrow on what they can offer and expect from industrial and innovation stakeholders.

Finally, I am convinced that this Forum will be feed into the high-level discussions of the 'Clean Energy Ministerial' and 'Mission Innovation' meetings in Malmö and Copenhagen on 23-24 May 2018. The EU is co-hosting these annual events with the Nordic Council. All major economies will be present. This will be a great opportunity to show that when Europe claims leadership in the clean energy transition and innovation, **"we mean business"**. By that time, the World should know what we – European industry, policy-makers, researchers, innovators, cities, investors – are collectively delivering.

I wish you fruitful discussions in this special first edition of the Clean Energy Industrial Forum.

[Pressemitteilung: EU-Prüfer untersuchen Kontrollsystem für ökologisch erzeugte Lebensmittel](#)

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