

## [Press release: EU must cut emissions and also adapt to climate change, warn Auditors](#)

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## [Pressemitteilung: Die Prüfer weisen darauf hin, dass die EU ihre Emissionen verringern und sich zudem an den Klimawandel anpassen muss](#)

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## [Juncker Plan in Sweden: EIB provides EUR 30 million for iZettle's research and development](#)

iZettle, a Swedish financial technology company, will receive **EUR 30 million** in debt funding from the European Investment Bank in the coming three years. The funds are earmarked for **research and development of financial and commercial tools that address the needs of smaller companies**. The transaction with iZettle was made possible by the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#). EFSI is the central pillar of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), in which the EIB Group and the European Commission as strategic partners aim to boost the competitiveness of the European economy.

iZettle provides services through state-of-the-art technology which allows small companies to take payments, to register sales and to get funding. The EIB financing will support iZettle's research and development programme in four key business areas: **development of next generation payments infrastructure, insights and actions through machine learning and artificial intelligence, digitalisation of commercial processes**, and scaling of legislative and compliance systems.

**EIB Vice-President Alexander Stubb** said: "This loan is something that the EIB is proud of: it bears testimony to the EIB's ongoing effort to improve access

to funding for European midcap companies. iZettle is a young and innovative company which helps digitalise our economy and improves the business and cost structure of millions of small shops.”

“We’re proud to receive this stamp of approval from the EIB. It’s the type of offer you can’t refuse and it will allow us to further accelerate our growth and continue to level the playing field for small businesses, giving them access to tools to take on the big corporations” said **Jacob de Geer, CEO and co-founder of iZettle.**

**European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, commented: “With the backing of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the EIB continues to support truly innovative companies and project ideas, such as this one in Sweden with iZettle. I wish the company every success in their research and development programme. I hope other small businesses are inspired to also apply to the EIB’s partners for financing to innovate, expand their activities and create jobs.”

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## [State aid: Commission approves alternative to divestment commitment for Royal Bank of Scotland](#)

Today’s decision follows the agreement in principle reached [on 26 July 2017](#) between Commissioner Vestager and the UK Government.

In April 2017, the Commission [opened an in-depth investigation](#) to assess whether the alternative package proposed by the UK authorities could be considered an appropriate replacement for the original commitment to divest part of its UK retail and SME banking operations known as Williams & Glyn (also known as “Rainbow”). This commitment to divest Williams & Glyn was made by the UK authorities as part of RBS’s restructuring plan submitted [in 2009](#) and amended [in 2014](#), to remedy competition concerns in the concentrated UK SME banking sector, where RBS is the leading bank.

The Commission can only accept modifications to existing commitments by Member States and aided banks that were given to obtain approval for restructuring aid (such as the one leading to the existing RBS restructuring decision), if the new commitments can be considered equivalent to those originally provided.

In this context, the opening of the in-depth investigation also gave interested parties the possibility to submit to the Commission their views on the new commitments and the Commission received comments from many parties. The UK authorities proposed amendments to the package to take into account

some of those comments and ensure equivalence of the alternative package with the divestment it would replace. In particular, the package targets a transfer of a 3% market share in the UK SME banking market from RBS to challenger banks.

The Commission's investigation concluded that the improved package is sufficient to replace the divestment commitment and will increase competition in the UK SME banking market:

- The **Capability and Innovation Fund** will be distributed to eligible challengers to develop their capability to compete with RBS in the provision of banking services to SMEs and/or develop and improve their financial products and services available to SMEs.
- The **Incentivised Switching Scheme** will provide funding to eligible challengers to enable them to offer incentives to encourage RBS's SME banking customers to switch their business current accounts, deposit accounts and loans.

On this basis, the Commission approved the UK's improved alternative package under EU State aid rules.

## **Background**

RBS is one of Europe's largest financial services groups and had a balance sheet of £799 billion at the end of 2016. During the financial crisis, in late 2008, RBS was on the verge of collapse and has benefitted from the following state aid measures:

- a recapitalisation of £45.5bn and an (eventually unused) five year contingent recapitalisation of £8bn
- an impaired asset measure covering excess loss (which was terminated with RBS not having received any payments from the State, but instead paid a cumulative fee of £2.5bn for the participation) and
- guarantees and other liquidity measures (now fully repaid).

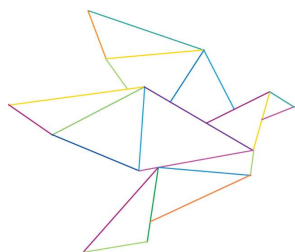
These aid measures resulted in the UK Government holding the majority of RBS's shares and were accompanied by the restructuring of RBS approved by the Commission [in 2009](#) and amended [in 2014](#).

As part of this restructuring, the UK committed RBS would undertake a significant balance sheet and risk reduction. RBS has already delivered on those commitments to ensure the bank's long-term viability, in line with the Commission decision. It also delivered on all its other divestment commitments (sale of RBS insurance, transaction business, commodity trading, US banking subsidiary), which were made to ensure adequate own contribution by the bank to the financing of the restructuring of the core UK banking operations and to limit the distortion of competition. The divestment of Williams & Glyn, to be completed by end-2017 is the last outstanding commitment, with the objective to mitigate the distortion of competition in the UK SME banking market. This commitment has now been replaced with the new commitments from the UK relating to the alternative package.

The non-confidential version of this decision will be made available under the case number [SA.47702](#) in the [State Aid Register](#) on the [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. New publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal are listed in the [State Aid Weekly e-News](#).

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## [State of the Union 2017 – Industrial Policy Strategy: Investing in a smart, innovative and sustainable industry](#)



On 13 September, in his annual [State of the Union address](#), President Jean-Claude **Juncker** stated: *“I want to make our industry stronger and more competitive. The new Industrial Policy Strategy we are presenting today will help our industries stay or become the world leader in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation.”*

The renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy brings together all existing and new horizontal and sector-specific initiatives into a comprehensive industrial strategy. It also clarifies the tasks ahead for all actors involved and sets out the fora – an annual **Industry Day**, the first edition of which took place in [February 2017](#), and a **High Level Industrial Roundtable** – that will allow in particular industry and civil society to steer industrial policy actions in the future.

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki **Katainen** said: *“By embracing technological change, converting research investments into innovative business ideas, and continuing to pioneer the low-carbon and circular economy we will pave the way for a smart, innovative and sustainable industry in Europe.”*

Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: *“Many European industries are at a turning point. In our day and age, industrial policy is about empowering our industries to continue delivering sustainable growth and jobs for our regions and citizens.”*

The main new elements of the EU Industrial Policy Strategy include:

- A comprehensive package to reinforce our industry's **cybersecurity**. It includes the creation of a European Cybersecurity Research and Competence Centre to support the development of technology and industrial capabilities in cybersecurity, as well as an EU-wide certification scheme for products and services, recognised in all Member States (adopted on 13 September 2017).
- A proposal for a Regulation on the **free flow of non-personal data** that will enable data to circulate freely across borders, helping to modernise industry and create a truly common European data space (adopted on 13 September 2017).
- A new series of actions on Circular Economy, including a strategy on **plastics** and measures to improve the production of **renewable biological resources** and their conversion into bio-based products and bio-energy (autumn 2017).
- A set of initiatives to modernise the Intellectual Property Framework, including a report on the functioning of the Directive on the enforcement of **intellectual property rights** and a Communication on a balanced, clear and predictable European licensing framework for **Standard Essential Patents** (autumn 2017).
- An initiative to improve the functioning of **public procurement** in the EU, including a voluntary mechanism to provide clarity and guidance to authorities planning large infrastructure projects (autumn 2017).
- Extension of the **Skills Agenda** to new key industry sectors, such as construction, steel, paper, green technologies and renewable energies, manufacturing and maritime shipping (autumn 2017).
- A strategy on **sustainable finance** to better orient private capital flows to more sustainable investments (early 2018).
- Initiatives for a [balanced and progressive trade policy](#) and a European framework for the [screening of foreign direct investments](#) that may pose a threat to security or public order (adopted on 13 September 2017).
- A revised list of **critical raw materials** where the Commission will continue to help ensure the secure, sustainable and affordable supply for the EU manufacturing industry (adopted on 13 September 2017).
- New proposals for **clean, competitive and connected mobility**, including tightened CO2 emissions standards for cars and vans, an Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Action Plan to support the deployment of charging infrastructure, and actions to foster autonomous driving (autumn 2017).

Putting this holistic strategy into practice is a shared responsibility. Its success depends on the efforts and cooperation of the EU institutions, Member States, regions and most importantly on the active role of industry itself.

[Europe's industry is strong](#) and has retained a leading position in many sectors in global markets. Industry accounts for two thirds of the EU's exports and provides jobs for 32 million people, with 1.5 million of these jobs created since 2013. But to maintain and reinforce its competitive advantage, an important modernisation effort is required. That is why [industry is at the heart of the Juncker Commission's political priorities](#). All Commission policies are geared to empower industry to create jobs and boost Europe's competitiveness, foster investment and innovation in clean and digital technologies and defend Europe's regions and workers most affected by

industrial change.

New production technologies are changing Europe's industrial landscape and play an increasingly important role in determining the ability of European business to compete globally. They will create jobs through a number of channels, and technologies delivering higher productivity can benefit the wider economy. They may also have a deeper impact on the nature and availability of work. The future of Europe's industry will depend on its ability to continuously adapt and innovate by investing in new technologies and embracing changes brought on by increased digitisation and the transition to low-carbon and circular economy. At the same time, global competition is higher than before and the benefits from globalisation and technological progress are unevenly spread across our societies. The Juncker Commission wants to address this.

[President Juncker's Political Guidelines](#) have underlined the importance of a strong and high performing industry for the future of Europe's economy. The creation of jobs and growth through innovation and investment has since been at the centre of the Commission's key initiatives. The [Juncker Plan](#) (the Investment Plan for Europe) and the [Capital Markets Union](#) help to mobilise resources to boost economic recovery; EU support for innovation helps industry and in particular SMEs play to their strengths; Europe is at the forefront of the global push for a low-carbon and circular economy through its [circular economy](#), [clean energy](#) and [low carbon economy](#) initiatives; [key enabling technologies](#) help industry compete globally; the [Digital Single Market Strategy](#), the accompanying [Digitisation of Industry Strategy](#) and the [Action Plan on 5G for Europe](#) help businesses take advantage of new developments and create a properly [functioning data economy](#); the [Single Market Strategy](#) makes it possible for industry to access a market of 500 million consumers and to connect in value chains free from customs or technical barriers; and the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) helps equip the people behind our industry with better skills.

These horizontal policies that concern all industries are complemented by a number of specific policies for strategic sectors, including a [Space Strategy](#) to further build on Europe's strong and competitive space industry, a proposal for a [European Defence Fund](#) which will act as a catalyst for a competitive and innovative European defence industry, and a wide range of initiatives for clean, sustainable and competitive car industry (including the [Europe on the Move](#) initiative, [actions to curb air pollution by cars](#) and [GEAR2030](#) action), and a [Communication on steel](#) to ensure Europe's steel industry can compete fairly in world markets.

**More information:**