

Flash estimate for the first quarter of 2018 -GDP up by 0.4% in both euro area and EU28 – +2.5% and +2.4% respectively compared with the first quarter of 2017

Seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.4% in both the **euro area** (EA19) and the **EU28** during the first quarter of 2018, compared with the previous quarter, according to a flash estimate published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In the fourth quarter of 2017, GDP had grown by 0.7% in the **euro area** and by 0.6% in the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

March 2018 compared with February 2018 – Industrial production up by 0.5% in euro area – Up by 0.4% in EU28

In March 2018 compared with February 2018, seasonally adjusted industrial production rose by 0.5% in the **euro area** (EA19) and by 0.4% in the **EU28**, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In February 2018, industrial production fell by 0.9% in the **euro area** and by 0.7% in the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

EIB approves EUR 4.3 billion of new support for business, education, energy, health and transport schemes



- **EUR 4.3 billion of new financing for 20 projects approved by EIB Board**
- **Include reducing energy use on Belgian regional road network**
- **EUR 3.1 billion for private sector investment around the world confirmed**

Meeting in Luxembourg earlier today the Board of the European Investment Bank approved a total of EUR 4.3 billion of new financing for 20 projects located across the Europe, and around the world.

Following Board approval the EIB will finalise financing for new business investment, transport, health, energy, education and telecom infrastructure.

This includes backing low-energy replacement of smart street lighting on 2,700km of Belgian roads, upgrading medical education in Poland and new hospital facilities in Finland.

“New investment to upgrade clean energy, sustainable transport, healthcare and communications is essential to improve lives and strengthen economic activity. The impressive range of schemes approved today demonstrates the EU Bank’s unique global engagement and technical expertise supporting the competitiveness of the Union and contributing to tackle global challenges.” said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

EUR 3 billion new financing to strengthen private sector investment

New EIB lending programmes and financing initiatives totalling EUR 3 billion to support private sector investment were approved by the Board.

These includes financing for new business investment with local partners in

Greece, Italy and Poland. Small business financing schemes outside Europe will be supported in Turkey and Egypt were also approved.

Research and development investment by companies in France, Germany, Italy and Spain will also be financed through direct corporate lending.

Unlocking new investment in sustainable transport

The EIB is expected to provide EUR 575 million for new transport investment. This includes backing investment in low energy lighting for Belgian roads and financing two motorways in south-eastern Spain.

Improving health and hospital infrastructure

Two health projects totalling EUR 327 million were approved by the EIB Board. These include construction of a new medical simulation centre at Poznan Medical University in Poland and renovation and extension of hospital buildings in Helsinki.

Improving clean energy generation and distribution

The Board approved EUR 303 million of new financing for energy investment in Hungary, France and central Asia. This includes support for construction of six new biogas plants and rehabilitation of the Kairakkum hydropower plant in Tajikistan, operational since 1957.

Investment Plan for Europe

Financing totalling EUR 837 million for 7 different schemes backed by the Investment Plan for Europe, and guaranteed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments, was approved by the EIB board.

EFSI projects include energy efficiency investment in Belgium, corporate research and development in Germany, Greece, France and Spain, and support for investment by entrepreneurs in Poland.

Speech by Michel Barnier at the EU Institute for Security Studies conference

“The future of the EU Foreign, Security and Defence Policy post Brexit”

Dear Federica,
Ladies and gentlemen,
General, dear Jorge,
Ambassadors,

Our future partnership with the UK must go beyond trade. The European Union has said this many times before.

It should, in particular, include a strong pillar in foreign, security and defence policy.

So, let me thank the EU Institute for Security Studies for this opportunity today to discuss this future cooperation, together with Federica Mogherini.

Gustav, your institute is the place for creative thinking in foreign policy and security – exactly what we need for this discussion.

Back in April 2017, the European Council expressed its readiness to establish a close partnership with the UK in foreign, security and defence policy.

What unites us here is stronger – much stronger – than what divides us.

This was demonstrated after the attack in Salisbury. The EU reacted with a great sense of unity and solidarity with the UK.

10 months from the day of Brexit, our clear sign to the UK and the international community is that the security of the European Union and the UK is bound together.

- There is still a lot of uncertainty. Negotiations on the future with the UK have not started yet. We have had a first exploratory discussion.
- But there should be no uncertainty about our commitment to a future security partnership: security challenges are, by their nature, cross-border.

Solidarity is not to be negotiated. Any trade-off between security and trade would lead to an historic failure – and it would be a strategic mistake, benefiting those who want to weaken us.

We therefore welcome the UK's commitment to Europe's security, as restated in the recently published UK paper "Framework for the UK-EU Security Partnership".

In the future, the EU will take decisions on the basis of the interests of the EU27. And it will respect the UK's sovereignty.

But the EU and the UK's interests are likely to overlap in foreign, security and defence policy.

As a consequence, I firmly believe that a close partnership is in our mutual interest.

We should join forces and protect our citizens against global threats, such as terrorism – which struck again in Paris this weekend – cyber-attacks or hybrid-threats.

We should join forces and shape the global order:

- We must continue to secure the nuclear deal in Iran together.
- We must work towards a political process to bring an end to the conflict in Syria.
- We will need to work with our African partners to combat poverty and address the root causes of migration.
- We will need to continue our work towards peace in the Middle East and continue to defend a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine. I say this with today's tragic events in mind.

On these and other foreign policy challenges, the EU must continue to be at the forefront. As a credible but frank partner to the US. And in honest discussions in particular with China and Russia. The EU is a global actor and will remain so after Brexit: it will continue honouring its responsibilities worldwide.

The EU does not act in isolation. It has always favoured multilateral and international cooperation.

And the UK will be one of our most important partners. Not least because of its permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Prime Minister Theresa May said in Munich that the UK as a third country will pursue an independent foreign policy in the future.

But it is also clear that it will be in the UK's interest to remain close to the values and objectives of the EU's foreign and security policy. That is why we will keep the door open for close cooperation.

Obviously, post-Brexit, our solidarity will be organised on a different basis. We respect the sovereign decision of the UK to leave the Union.

Yet, being a third country does not mean that the UK cannot have an ambitious partnership with the EU.

This applies in particular to Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy, which are subject to specific rules and procedures.

These EU policies have developed over time in a flexible manner. And we cooperate with many partners.

- More than 25 third countries have participated in EU-led operations.
- The European Defence Agency, dear Jorge, cooperates today with 4 third country partners.
- And Federica has just mentioned a new partnership framework to enhance

cooperation with third countries in the field of defence.

While more work is needed to prepare for the UK's orderly withdrawal, we have begun discussions on our future partnership.

These discussions are based on the guidelines adopted by the European Council in March and include a part on foreign, security and defence policy.

I just showed the Ministers for Foreign Affairs what the architecture could be of the discussions with the UK, based on four pillars: Trade, specific cooperation, internal security and external security. Following the European Council Guidelines, we have to begin now, on an operational basis, this discussion with the UK.

I will work in close cooperation with Federica and her services. And I will, of course, consider the close relationship we already have with partners, such as Norway.

The UK has decided to leave the Union and become a third country. As a consequence, the UK will not have the same rights as EU Member States.

- It will no longer participate in the decision-making of the EU.
- It will no longer have the ability to shape and lead the EU's collective actions.
- British entities will no longer have the same rights as EU entities.

These are the legal mechanic consequences of Brexit.

And the reality is that political and legal arrangements with a third country cannot be a substitute for all the benefits of EU membership.

But our future partnership could be underpinned by a set of mechanisms – dialogue, consultation, coordination, cooperation, exchange of information.

It could include five dimensions:

1) First, close and regular consultations with the UK on foreign policy.

- A shared assessment of geopolitical challenges will facilitate the convergence and consistency of our external action.
- This will notably be the case for restrictive measures. Dialogue and information-sharing regarding EU sanctions will facilitate the UK's alignment with the EU.

2) Second, when projecting the EU's support worldwide, we will be open to the UK's contribution.

- In development aid, the EU and its Member States are the world's leading donors.

We are open to contributions from third countries and to local joint programming. We hope that the UK will make use of these possibilities.

- In EU-led operations, it is no secret that the UK's contribution has been rather marginal so far.

We would of course welcome its participation in EU-led operations in the future, considering that the UK has strategic military assets.

3) Third, in defence matters, the UK should have the possibility – where it will add value – to actively take part in a number of the European Defence Agency's Research and Technology projects.

- We should, however, keep in mind that industrial cooperation, also in the field of defence, is intertwined with EU rules underpinning the Single Market. This will in particular apply to the European Defence Fund.

4) Fourth, exchanging information on incidents will make us collectively more effective in fighting cyber-attacks.

5) Finally, this future relationship should be underpinned by a Security of Information Agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom.

It will provide for the exchange and protection of classified information. It will facilitate the exchange of intelligence, as mentioned today in Berlin by Andrew Parker, the Chief of MI5.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One word on Galileo. There have recently been many press articles – and many misunderstandings.

The UK decided unilaterally and autonomously to withdraw from the EU. This implies leaving its programmes as well.

So, we need to put the cooperation on Galileo between the EU and the UK on a new basis.

In doing so, our responsibility is to maintain the autonomy of the EU and to protect our essential security interests.

The EU's rules on Galileo have been in place for a long time, and are well known to the UK.

In particular, third countries (and their companies) cannot participate in the development of security sensitive matters, such as the manufacturing of PRS-security modules.

Those rules were adopted together by unanimity with the UK as a member, and they have not changed.

Those rules do not prevent the UK, as a third country, from using the encrypted signal of Galileo, provided that the relevant agreements between the EU and the UK are in place.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The level of ambition of our future partnership will very much depend on the UK's readiness to commit.

The more the UK converges with EU foreign policy and substantially engages alongside the EU, the closer the cooperation is likely to be.

Of course, some defence and intelligence actions take place outside the framework of the EU, such as in NATO. Bilateral relationships will also continue to develop. And the UK will continue to operate with partners in ad hoc groupings, such as recently in Syria.

Yet, the EU is more than a coalition of the willing.

It is a Union.

- A Union at 27 Member States and of 440 million citizens that provides for stability and certainty in a volatile environment.
- A Union that roots its action in multilateralism, defends and projects values globally and deploys a vast set of instruments.
- A Union that is strong enough to best address current and future challenges.

It seems natural, therefore, that we should build our cooperation together, rather than build it piecemeal. This cooperation should be based on an alignment of foreign policy objectives, rather than short term and ad hoc interests.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will keep the door open to the UK as a third country.

At the same time, our priority is to continue deepening our policies in defence and security.

President Juncker has called for a European Defence Union. President Macron for European sovereignty. Chancellor Merkel for a Union that shapes its own destiny.

The Union is enhancing its ability to act globally, with for example the European Defence Fund, EU space programmes, EU cyber-security centre of excellence. And the Union will continue to develop its partnership with NATO, in the spirit of the joint declaration signed in Warsaw in July 2016.

There is no ideology on the EU's side. No emotion. No willingness to punish. Never.

But ambition and respect for our rules.

As I said in Berlin last November, our future relationship in the field of

foreign, defence and security policy should not be designed through the lens of the past.

Rather it should take into account the geopolitical challenges of tomorrow.

This is the spirit in which we will prepare, for October, the political declaration on the framework for the future relationship– provided that the Withdrawal Agreement is finalised.

Allow me to repeat myself: we are not there yet.

To be clear, if you look at the draft Withdrawal Agreement, 75% of it is in green. This is a good point. The last 25%, which remain, in particular the Irish and Northern Ireland case, are very serious. We are not there yet, but are now working on this future framework, which must be ambitious.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Report on the risk assessment of 1-(4-Cyanobutyl)-N-(2-phenylpropan-2-yl)-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide (CUMYL-4CN-BINACA) in the framework of the Council Decision on new psychoactive substances

This publication presents the data and findings of the risk assessment on 1-(4-Cyanobutyl)-N-(2-phenylpropan-2-yl)-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide (CUMYL-4CN-BINACA), carried out by the extended Scientific Committee of the EMCDDA on 7-8 November 2017. On the basis of the Risk Assessment Report – and on the initiative of the European Commission – on 14 May 2018, the Council decided that CUMYL-4CN-BINACA should be subject to control measures across the Member States.