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Commission Communication on an EU Industrial Policy Strategy: a step in the right direction

Pressure has been building on the European Commission to make a clear commitment to EU manufacturing industry in recent months, with both the European Council and Parliament calling for the delivery of a real and visible European industrial strategy. Today, the Commission has responded with the publication of a Communication ‘Investing in a smart, innovative and sustainable industry: A renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy’.

For Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, this is a welcome move. “We have long been calling on the Commission to take a holistic approach to its support for industry’s competitiveness,” comments Adrian Harris, Director General of Orgalime. “If policymakers are to put in place a framework that enables manufacturing firms to grow their business and create jobs, they need to connect the dots between the many different policy areas impacting the sector. This Communication is a step in the right direction.”

Orgalime’s updated [Vision Paper](#), released in late 2016, advocated precisely this sort of joined-up approach, presenting recommendations across all policy areas that affect how engineering firms do business. The paper highlighted how digitisation is transforming the sector, while emphasising the need to place support for this transformation in a broader context encompassing the full spectrum of challenges faced by industry. “Much has already been done by the present Commission,” Mr. Harris points out, “But we still lacked the wholesale political commitment we expected at the outset of this Commission.”

By underlining the importance of digitisation to the future of EU manufacturing, while acknowledging where improvements are necessary in areas such as governance, infrastructure, investment and innovation support, the Communication provides the foundation for a policy which provides real European added value for strengthening Europe’s industrial base. Close collaboration with industry stakeholders will be a must, however: “The commitment to an annual Industry Day and the establishment of a High-Level Industrial Roundtable is a welcome step,” remarked Mr. Harris, “and we look forward to working with the Commission and our colleagues in other sectors within the framework of these forums.”

Commission President Juncker in today’s State of the European Union speech also briefly commented on the role of manufacturing in the future EU. “While Orgalime appreciates this mention by Mr. Juncker, we are not yet convinced that the Commission has fully understood the contribution that manufacturing and the wider economy can and must make to the future of Europe,” concludes Mr. Harris. “In the engineering sector alone, our firms employ over 11 million Europeans and contributed €2,000 billion to the EU economy in 2016. There can be no doubt that industry is and will remain the backbone of the European economy.”

Ends

Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, speaks for 41 trade federations representing the mechanical, electrical, electronic, metalworking & metal articles industries of 23 European countries. The industry employs nearly 11 million people in the EU and in 2016 accounted for some €2,000 billion of output. The industry represents over a quarter of the output of manufactured products and over a third of the manufactured exports of the European Union.

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Notes for Editors:

Orgalime's Vision Paper update can be viewed at <http://read.orgalime.org/PaperVision2016/>



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