



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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## Reindustrialisation and innovation to help EU industry

**Italian, Spanish and Portuguese ministers, together with Vice President Antonio Tajani, European Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship, yesterday evening in Lisbon signed a statement in support of European reindustrialisation, with an emphasis on assistance for innovation. While Europe has excellent science and has world-leading industries, we are still lagging behind the US, Korea and Japan and need to improve in bringing research results quickly to the market. Therefore at today's annual COTEC conference the focus will be firmly placed on accelerating the commercialisation of innovation.**

In January 2014 the Commission approved its [strategy for industrial revival](#). It set an ambitious goal: to increase the share of GDP generated by manufacturing industries, from the current 15.1% to 20% by 2020. In response, yesterday evening members of COTEC – a technology think tank - including the Italian minister for education, universities and research, the Spanish minister for industry, energy and tourism, and the Portuguese minister for economy, signed a joint statement supporting the move to reindustrialise the EU's economy. The initiative was bolstered by the presence of the heads of state of all three countries, the President of Italy, the King of Spain, and the President of Portugal – all honorary presidents of their respective national COTEC institutions.

The joint statement refers to the *"specificities of Southern Europe economies, which include 54 Millions of workers and 7 Millions of businesses, most of all SMEs, require a special attention in terms of the settings of the new industrial policy. .... It is... essential to actively pursue the reindustrialization of Europe and to increase its productive capabilities, especially at a time when consistent positive economic signs are being felt all across the continent, in particular in Portugal, Spain and Italy"*.

Europe's reindustrialisation strategy relies heavily on investment in innovation, especially in fast growth sectors identified in the Commission's recent industrial policy communication. Innovation means to improve collective solutions which, when applied on a large scale across the industry in question, produce widespread prosperity. Traditionally, research, technology and innovation policies have focused mainly on research and development (R&D) to boost innovation. But to create much needed growth and jobs, Europe needs a strategy that focuses on the acceleration of commercialisation of all forms of innovation.

This is why the new European programmes for innovation and competitiveness, HORIZON 2020 and COSME, have allocated €150 billion to benefit industry and SMEs. Advanced

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manufacturing technologies, bio-based products, sustainable construction, electric cars and key enabling technologies are priority areas.

While the Commission's reindustrialisation strategy relies heavily on investment in innovation, yesterday's statement also focuses on improving the other main ingredients: the internal market and internationalisation, skills, and access to finance.

### **Innovation in maritime security**

As part of the COTEC conference, a meeting was also held yesterday with Italian, Spanish and Portuguese companies involved in the "Sea Challenge Project" which seeks to monitor boats containing illegal migrants. The tracking of such vessels poses real technological and safety challenges for the authorities, which cannot be faced today in an affordable manner with current technologies. Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General of the European Commission Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry, highlighted to the companies involved that only innovation leading to cheaper operational costs for the authorities responsible for surveillance, search and rescue can create a workable solution in the future, and thus hopefully lead to a decrease in the number of lives lost in the Mediterranean sea. To this end, the Commission is working on a number of R&D projects to help develop this area, including the PERSEUS and CLOSEYE projects described in the December 2013 [Communication on the work of the Mediterranean Task Force](#).

### **COTEC**

Cotec is a private non for profit organisation, acting as a think tank to help foster the use of technological innovation in companies and throughout society. Founded in Spain in 1989, sister organisations were later opened in Italy and Portugal. For the last few years, COTEC organisations have also dedicated efforts to promote and facilitate innovation in SMEs.