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CLEPA supports the launch of an ambitious EU-US FTA

President Barack Obama officially announced, on 12 February, at his annual “State of the Union” address the launch of negotiations for an EU-US free trade agreement (FTA). His announcement is an important attempt to increase EU-US trade, investments and regulatory convergence leading to a much-needed boost in economic growth, international competitiveness and job creation, on both sides of the Atlantic.

"CLEPA fully welcomes President Obama's intention to launch a comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the EU" said Mr Jean Marc Gales, CLEPA CEO.

Brussels and Washington will initiate the internal procedures necessary to launch negotiations which are expected to start in the first half of the year. The Commission, hopes to get a negotiation mandate from the 27 Member States to start negotiations still during the Irish presidency of the Council.

This is set to pave the way for the biggest trade deal in history. EU 27 total trade with US in automotive component parts and accessories in 2012 was worth \$9,39bn.

"CLEPA views this launch as an opportunity to address obstacles to free and fair trade, through the dismantlement of tariffs and the elimination of Non-tariff barriers. Technical regulations in the automotive sector are among the leading trade barriers and add cost and unnecessary complexity to the industry. Achieving greater transatlantic technical and regulatory cooperation will lower the costs of doing business, expand new market opportunities and set down the foundations for future growth, competitiveness and job creation, on both sides of the Atlantic".

Yesterday the Commission published a joint EU-US experts report laying down the basis for talks that could last two years. The report outlines three major areas of work going beyond customs barriers: access to markets, including public market service and investments; regulatory problems and non-tariff barriers; the creation of rules to help resolve issues such as IPR, environment, worker protection and anticompetitive behaviour.

"Together with our partner association in the US: the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA), we are firmly and concertedly set on this ambitious new course and we look forward to being part of this negotiation" concluded Mr Gales.

Note to Editors

CLEPA is the European Association of Automotive Suppliers.

103 of the world's most prominent suppliers for car parts, systems and modules and 25 National trade associations and European sector associations are members of CLEPA, representing more than 3 thousand companies, employing more than 5 million people and covering all products and services within the automotive supply chain. Based in Brussels, CLEPA is recognized as the natural discussion partner by the European Institutions, United Nations and fellow associations (ACEA, JAMA, MEMA, etc).

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