

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

European Shares Rise On Optimism Over US Stimulus

European shares rose further on Wednesday after posting their biggest one-day gain since late 2008 the previous day.

Investor sentiment was boosted after U.S. lawmakers and the Trump administration reached an agreement on a sweeping \$2tn stimulus package designed to curb the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pan European Stock 600 was up 4.1 percent at 316.55 after surging as much as 8.4 percent in the previous session. The German DAX rallied 3.8 percent, France's CAC 40 index jumped 4.4 percent and the U.K.'s FTSE 100 was up 2.8 percent.

Equinor surged 5.6 percent after it announced an approximately \$3 billion action plan to strengthen financial resilience amid the COVID-19 impact and lower commodity prices. Credit Suisse Group soared 10 percent. The Swiss lender said that profitability in the first quarter of 2020 has so far continued the strong year-on-year improvement trend, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant volatile market environment.

Miners rose across the board after mainland China reported a drop in new imported coronavirus cases. Anglo American, Antofagasta and Glencore surged 5-6 percent. Shares of Centamin rallied 2.5 percent. The company announced that as of March 24, the company has experienced no material disruption to operations, supply chain or gold shipments due to the coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic.

Pest control firm Rentokil Initial slumped 10 percent. The company withdrew its fiscal 2020 guidance due to the impact of COVID-19 or Coronavirus. Housebuilder Persimmon surged 8.2 percent after saying that its board remains confident of the Group's future prospects.

Renault shares gained 4.8 percent. The automaker said it had suspended its production activities at industrial sites in Latin America until further notice. Capgemini added 4 percent. The provider of consulting, technology services and digital transformation has signed an agreement to acquire WhiteSky Labs, an independent MuleSoft full-service consultancy, with operations across Australia and Asia.

Construction group Eiffage jumped nearly 16 percent after it was chosen as concession operator of the future A79 motorway in France. Electric utility E. ON soared 11 percent. The company said that its management board, with the approval of the supervisory board, has adopted a dividend policy with an annual growth rate of up to 5 percent.

Industrial and technology group ThyssenKrupp jumped 15 percent. The company said it would reduce up to 2,000 jobs in the next 3 years, and roughly another 1,000 jobs by 2026. United Utilities Group advanced 3.3 percent. The company said its current trading is in line with the group's expectations for the year ending 31 March 2020.

In economic releases, German business sentiment logged its steepest fall ever recorded since German reunification, as the spread of coronavirus weighed on economic activity, final survey data from ifo Institute showed.

