

# Competitive horizons

## ***The electric vehicles market in China***

Government initiatives have helped raise demand for clean energy vehicles in China, a report published by [www.chinadaily.com.cn](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn) points out. Consumer interest in both fully electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids has grown as a result of more stringent emissions regulations being introduced. The report claims that China's intention to become the strictest country for such regulations will see clean energy vehicles become further appealing to consumers. Additional market impetus has been provided by the state's subsidising of domestically produced lithium-ion cells that account for 90 per cent of batteries used in China's e-mobility sector. This significant manufacturing advantage is cited as a major reason why China is leading industry development. Strong market growth has seen the country surge ahead of countries such as Germany, Italy, the USA, France, South Korea, and Japan. Satisfying growing consumer calls for longer battery life will also help manufacturers meet sales targets for clean energy vehicles. Authorities expect fully electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids to account for 7 per cent of sales by 2019 and 19 per cent by 2025.

## ***Automation helps job growth in the USA***

According to a report from the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), greater use of industrial robots in the USA is helping to create jobs. This finding runs counter to conventional beliefs that automation typically results in job losses. The report, as published by [www.theengineer.co.uk](http://www.theengineer.co.uk), notes that the trend is particularly strong within the automotive industry. In that sector, the number of robots increased by 52,000 from 2010 to 2016. In the same period, 260,000 new jobs were created in the sector. The report claims that automation has had a similarly positive impact on job numbers in other industries too. The IFR claims that robotics is enabling the USA to increase its competitiveness by keeping more manufacturing jobs in the country while also helping to reverse the practice over recent decades of outsourcing production overseas.

## ***Irish economy to face Brexit backlash, IMF claims***

Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) could result in a strong negative impact on the economy in Ireland. A report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) points out that trade barriers which emerge in the aftermath of Brexit will harm traditional sectors. Ireland is Britain's geographically closest trading partner and is considered especially vulnerable because of this. The report, as published by [www.uk.reuters.com](http://www.uk.reuters.com), points out that the negative effect is likely to be greatest within sectors that rely heavily on Britain for trade. Ireland has been the strongest performing EU economy for the past three years but faces additional uncertainty because of tax reforms in the EU region and the USA. The IMF suggests the country should make efforts to further broaden its tax base and avoid making long-term spending increases or tax cuts based on temporary gains in revenue.

## ***Ways to get the most out of meetings***

Meetings can be a frequent source of inconvenience and irritation. Many start late and then meander through seemingly without either real direction or purpose. But an article published by [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) shows that it does not have to be like this. Just a few simple steps can make any meeting become much more effective. The first point is to make sure it begins promptly. Stick to the advertised time and do not be late. This sets the tone for what follows and lowers the likelihood of people getting annoyed at the outset. It is equally important to ensure that proceedings finish on schedule as well. Those attending will have to give up precious time that could be used to complete important tasks. Keeping them longer than necessary is bound to have a negative effect. Starting and finishing on time also helps to make sure that the agenda is adhered to. Most important in this respect is informing people at the outset or before as to what the meeting will cover and the objectives it is hoped will be achieved. Without this information, proper focus and direction is bound to be lacking. Finally, toward the end of the meeting, subsequent actions should be discussed. Critical aspects here include determining what people's responsibilities are and the deadlines for task completion.