

## Press release

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### Bluetooth and multiroom are still trending

**Nuremberg, August 30, 2017 – Good news for the audio market: positive music experiences are becoming increasingly important to consumers – anytime, anywhere. The demand for suitable products has been increasing accordingly, which is giving the industry a further boost. Manufacturers are responding with new multiroom and streaming solutions for the home and wireless solutions for outside. These are GfK's findings for the global audio market on the occasion of IFA 2017 in Berlin.**

For 2017, global sales of 368 million units are expected in the **headphones and mobile stereo headsets** segment. This corresponds to an increase of four percent compared with the previous year. GfK expects stronger growth of ten percent in global sales value. That is mostly due to the trend towards higher price segments. Expected global revenue will therefore be about €8.8 billion for 2017.

In Western Europe\*, **Bluetooth technology** continues to contribute strongly to growth: about 15 percent of the headphones and mobile stereo headsets sold in the first half of 2017 were Bluetooth-enabled. The Bluetooth share was thereby almost twice as high compared to in the same period the previous year. In-ear Bluetooth models made particularly large gains, as did Bluetooth headbands. There is also increasing demand for true wireless devices (completely wireless headphones with two separate ear pieces), devices with active noise cancelling and devices specially designed for sports activities.

**Portable Bluetooth speakers** are also still popular with consumers. These small loudspeakers are now not only available in different shapes and colors, but also with new functions like shock-proof or water-resistant. GfK predicts sales volume of 15 million items in Western Europe for all of 2017 with growth of 14 percent. Revenue of €1.3 billion is expected (up eleven percent).

In the aftermarket for **in-car electronics** (car radios, multimedia systems

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and navigation systems), devices with a Bluetooth interface and devices that have Apple CarPlay or Android Auto are enjoying increasing popularity.

### **Demand for home hi-fi connectivity and multiroom systems is increasing**

The sales of streaming-enabled audio devices increased by four percent in Europe in the first half of 2017 to two million units. Revenue for the same period was €480 million, slightly less than during the same period of the previous year. Soundbars also experienced a slight decline in the first half of the year. After years of growth this market has generated a revenue of €369 million in Europe.

The market for smart **multiroom-enabled systems** in Europe grew again by 14 percent to reach 1.5 million items sold. Because there was more demand for higher priced products, revenue increased even more (up 14.4 percent) and reached €582 million. Multiroom-enabled soundbars and receivers in particular contributed to this growth. Smart soundbars and bases thus increased in revenue by 35 percent and reached a volume of €174 million. Smart receivers were even able to achieve an increase of 67 percent.

In addition to "Multiroom", "Dolby Atmos" and "High Resolution Audio" are also proving to be growth segments for various hi-fi products such as receivers and soundbars.

### **Digital radios still popular with consumers**

Digital radios are enjoying increasing popularity. In the European countries relevant for the sale of digital radios (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Australia), a total of 1.9 million radio receivers\*\* with DAB/DAB+ function were sold between January and June 2017. Compared to the first half of 2016, that corresponds to growth of nine percent.

### **About GfK's methods**

Through its retail panel, GfK regularly collects data in more than 80 countries worldwide on the sale of technical consumer goods. This includes audio products as well as in-car electronics.

\*Western Europe includes the countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.  
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\*\*Product categories included the following: Audio Home Systems, Tuners, Receivers, Clock Radios, Portable Radios, Radio Recorders, Car Radios (aftermarket).

### **GfK activities at the IFA, September 1-6, 2017, Berlin:**

- 1) The **GfK Info Point** at the IFA press center provides all the information published by GfK during IFA
- 2) Come and chat with our experts in the **GfK office** at the IFA (VIP Room 2, Großer Stern).
- 3) **GfK Technical Innovation Conference** "Digital Transformation" on August 31, 1-3 pm, IFA, Marshall Haus Trade Fair Grounds Berlin. You can download the agenda here:  
<http://www.gfk.com/insights/event/ifa-2017-digital-transformation/>

On the occasion of IFA 2017, GfK will be publishing press releases relating to the sectors IT, TV, Smartphone & Wearables, Audio, Small Domestic Appliances and Major Domestic Appliances. All information is available here: <http://www.gfk.com/de/presse/press-releases/>.

### **About GfK**

GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's long-standing data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices.

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