



Press Release

CEOs promote model for long term growth

European industry leaders look to closer collaboration between business and schools

Brussels, 2 October 2008 - Increasing young people's interest in Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) is essential for sustainable economic growth and competitiveness in Europe, according to the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), a group of 45 industrial leaders from across Europe. ERT has identified this issue as a key priority for European industry. To discuss this issue aimed at tackling a potential shortfall in MST trained people in Europe, ERT organised a high-level multi-stakeholder event⁽¹⁾ for academia, business, government and the teaching profession to explore ways of developing a shared approach for the promotion of MST across Europe's schools from as early as primary school level.

ERT Chairman Jorma Ollila, Chairman of Shell and Nokia, stated that "Companies of ERT members sustain around 6.6 million jobs in the region and our industries are highly dependent on access to a skilled MST workforce. MST is the basis for innovation and competitiveness which is essential for sustainable economic growth and welfare in Europe."

"With a declining student proportion in MST, a stabilisation of access to tertiary education, unfavourable demographic trends and negative attitudes towards education and careers in MST it is evident that stakeholders need to act."

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso supported the initiative, saying "Europe needs more highly skilled, qualified and motivated individuals to push back the technological frontiers, in order to improve economic growth and employment. Your analysis on the need to promote MST in our schools and universities is spot-on. And so is your solution. The European Commission has been calling for more partnership between education and business for some time. Together let us show the way ahead."

ERT Vice Chairman, Leif Johansson, CEO Volvo Group commented that "ERT member companies are determined to strengthen long term commitments to supporting Europe's schools, teachers and universities. Support must be able to survive the economic cycle. Today's event has reinforced our belief that businesses have an important role to play. Businesses need to work closely with schools to put MST into meaningful life and career contexts, provide access to role models and keep teachers informed of what MST careers are."

Facilitating stakeholders at the event included representatives from the European Commission, European Schoolnet, European Industrial Research Management Association (EIRMA), Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JA-YE) and Jet-Net. The breakout discussions confirmed ERT's belief that existing and future collaboration needs to be better

coordinated in order to leverage full potential and inspire future generations of MST students.

Jorma Ollila concluded that “We believe that this event has provided us with a mandate to take immediate steps in this direction”.

ERT will step up work with a broad range of stakeholders to develop a schools and business collaboration with the long-term aim of ensuring Europe has the right skills to thrive.

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Note to Editors:

The **European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT)** is a forum of 45 leaders of major companies of European parentage. These companies are drawn from a wide range of industry sectors from 18 European countries, and have a combined turnover of €1,600 billion, employing around 4.5 million people worldwide. ERT’s “core” mission is to promote the competitiveness of European industry. It expresses views on those areas most connected to its own expertise, chiefly major developments which may affect the conditions essential to providing the proper environment conducive to successful business operation.

ERT Chairman: Jorma Ollila

Jorma Ollila is currently the Chairman of Royal Dutch Shell plc and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nokia Corporation since 2006. Prior to his current duties he served as Chairman and CEO of Nokia from 1999 until May 2006.

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(1): Event entitled: “Inspiring the Next Generation: How to harness the potential of Mathematics, Science and Technology to drive Innovation and Competitiveness in Europe”