

- Press Release -

MANUTEX - The European Textiles and Clothing and Textile & Clothing Machinery Sectors launch a joint Cooperation Initiative for Research & Development at European Level

The European Technology Platform for Assuring the future of Manufacturing in Europe (*Manufuture*) and the European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing (*Textile ETP*) sign a Memorandum of Understanding for close collaboration in the implementation of research and development priorities defined in their respective Strategic Research Agendas.

Vienna, 4 May 2006

On the occasion of the **European Technology Platforms Conference** organised by The European Commission and the Austrian EU Presidency on 4-5 May 2006 in Vienna, the European Technology Platform for Assuring the future of Manufacturing in Europe (**Manufuture**) and the European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing (**Textile ETP**) launched an initiative entitled **ManuTex** for closer collaboration in pre-competitive research and development at European level. Today, Prof. Heinrich Flegel, chairman of the High Level Group of *Manufuture*, and Mr. Dick Hendriks, chairman of the Governing Council of the Textile ETP, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect.

Europe's textile and clothing industry as well as its textile and clothing machinery sector are the undisputed global innovation leaders in their respective markets. This innovation leadership was built on a long tradition of symbiotic cooperation between the two sectors. Recent global market trends force both sectors in Europe to intensify their innovation activities to defend their leadership positions. In such a scenario, a close cross-sectoral collaboration in the field of research and technological development at European level promises a clear win-win situation for both sides.

The objectives of the ManuTex initiative are:

- the establishment of a permanent collaboration forum between textile/clothing manufacturers and developers and manufacturers of machines, systems & tools for textile/clothing production to exchange major technological trends and evolving user needs
- the combination of complementary elements of the Strategic Research Agendas of the *Manufuture* and Textile European Technology Platforms in a joint implementation plan
- the initiation of strategic, genuinely breakthrough-oriented collaborative research projects between the two sectors bringing together the best available competences and capacities to mutual benefit

The stakeholders of the ManuTex initiative are:

- the European textile & clothing industry and their representative organisations
- the European textile/clothing machinery industry and their representative organisations
- the European textile & textile machinery research community
- the European Commission & national authorities

The implementation of ManuTex will be coordinated and facilitated by a Coordination Committee which is composed of representatives of all stakeholder groups. The Coordination Committee will be chaired by Prof. Thomas Gries, director of the Institut für Textiltechnik at the RWTH Aachen University, Germany (ITA).

Prof. Heinrich Flegel (DaimlerChrysler AG), chairman of the High Level Group of *Manufuture* stated "The mechanical engineering sector is the centrepiece of Europe's manufacturing industry. It has derived its global leadership position from traditionally close collaboration in research, development and innovation with its leading European manufacturing industry customers – from automobiles to textiles. The ManuTex initiative is an excellent example of the will of two mutually dependent industrial sectors to defend and extend their global competitive edge through intensified cooperation in research and development at European level."

Dick Hendriks (Ten Cate Group), chairman of the Governing Council of the Textile ETP, concluded "The future of the European Textile and Clothing industry will be characterised by a general move towards high-added value specialty products, by a continued opening of new markets and application areas for functional textiles and by a move from mass production towards customisation and personalisation of products. These strategic shifts will require new manufacturing concepts and consequently new production technologies. We look forward to explore this new world of textiles together with our innovation partners from the textile machinery industry and we are confident that both sides will greatly benefit from this collaboration."

About *Manufuture*

MANUFUTURE – European Technology Platform for Assuring the future of Manufacturing in Europe was launched at the second *Manufuture* conference, held in Enschede, The Netherlands, in December 2004. On this occasion, the document *Manufuture – a Vision for 2020* was published as the basis for development of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) underpinning a transformation of European manufacturing industry into a knowledge based sector capable of competing successfully in the globalised marketplace.

The economic importance of sustaining a strong manufacturing base in Europe is indicated by the fact that the manufacturing sector in the EU provides jobs for around 27 million people, and produces an added value exceeding € 1 300 billion from 230 000 enterprises with 20 and more employees (2001).

The European Union is the world's biggest exporter of textile machinery.



About the Textile ETP:

The European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing is an industry-led initiative which brings together all interested stakeholders: the textile and clothing industry itself, related industries and service providers, the research and education community and public authorities at all levels. The joint effort is to map out long term visions and a strategic research agenda for the coming years to support the transformation of this industry into a knowledge-based innovation driven sector.

The European textile and clothing industry employs more than 2.3 million people in the EU in some 170,000 companies generating an annual turnover of close to 200 billion €. The European Union is the world's biggest exporter of textiles. For more information visit www.euratex.org.



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