



MANUFUTURE CONFERENCE 2007: CONSTRUCTING A SUSTAINABLY COMPETITIVE EUROPE

PRESS RELEASE

The MANUFUTURE Conference was promoted by the MANUFUTURE Technology Platform and organised by the Forum Manufuture Portugal. Its main goal was to debate the future of the European manufacturing industry and the conditions for its sustained development, with special emphasis on the investment in research and development as well as in human resources upgrading.

The Conference's previous editions have been held in Italy, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Finland, attracting around 350 participants from nearly all European countries, including industry, academia and policy makers, as well as regional, national and European authorities and internationally prominent speakers.

This year's Conference, part of the European Union Portuguese Presidency, focused on:

- The framework conditions that influence investment in research, development and innovation and their transformation in competitive advantages for manufacturing companies.
- The main science and technology development areas which are crucial for competitiveness in European manufacturing industry.
- An analysis of the first phase of the EU 7th Framework Program execution and outline of future actions.

This year's Programme also included non-European opinions and views. In fact, we had a glimpse over the American (USA) and Asian perceptions on private investment in R&D and on the globalisation of manufacturing, engineering and research activities, through the participation of two keynote speakers:

- Prof. Mitchell Tseng, University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong.
- Prof. James D. Thompson, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA.

The manufacturing industry's sustainable competitiveness is definitely central in the European agenda due to its relevance for the European economic development, job creation and growth. For that reason, organising an event to address such important topics could hardly be more relevant and timely.

The Conference had 365 participants from 35 different countries. For more information on the countries' participant organisations, please go to www.manufuture2007.inescporto.pt.

There were 41 presentations, 16 of which were company cases, and 8 parallel thematic workshops which took place at Portuguese companies. From the workshops, it was possible to collect a set of conclusions and recommendations which are available at the website.



It is also important to highlight the participation of important guests, such as Prof. Castro Guerra, Secretary of State for Industry and Innovation, Prof. Mariano Gago, Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education and Herbert von Bose, Director of Directorate G, DG Research.

In the context of the event, two agreements were signed:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MANUFUTURE Technology Platform and European Technology Platform for the Footwear Industry.
- A Collaboration Agreement to establish the Portuguese Alliance for Science-based Innovation in Manufacturing Industry (PAM).

Finally, it was also decided to create a Manifest containing the event's main conclusions and recommendations. This Manifest will be handed out to the President of the European Commission and to the Member States' ministers.