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Information Note

Manufuture Platform presents the Strategic Research Agenda for manufacturing at UK conference

An invited audience of around 350 top industrialists, academics and policy-makers with a shared interest in the future of European manufacturing are meeting at the MANUFUTURE 2005 conference in Derby, UK, on 6-7 December 2005. Held under the auspices of the European Commission and the UK presidency of the EU Council, the event marks the publication of the Manufuture Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) and the launch of a public consultation until Feb. 2006. The SRA is based on a vision document launched at the preceding conference in 2004, at which the creation of a Manufuture Technology Platform was also formally approved. The SRA proposes an ambitious plan inviting European organisations to invest in a set of targeted research, innovation and educational activities aiming to maintain and improve the EU manufacturing industries' competitiveness and employment in a knowledge-based economy. At the two-day event stakeholders can contribute to the on-going consultation process that will help to create an environment in which European industry is transformed via collaborative research and multi-level, multi-sectoral knowledge sharing.

Manufuture 2005, 'Making it in Europe', is a two-day conference presenting the Strategic Research Agenda developed as a means of implementing the Manufuture European Technology Platform launched at Manufuture 2004 in Enschede, the Netherlands, a year earlier.

The event is hosted by Rolls Royce, and takes place at its Learning and Career Development Centre in Derby, UK, on 6-7 December 2005. This is the third such conference in a consultation process initiated by the European Commission's Research DG in mid-2003 to speed up the rate of industrial transformation in Europe, secure high-added-value employment and win a major share of world manufacturing output in the coming decades. Manufuture 2005 is supported under the UK presidency of the European Council, and sponsored by a number of prominent high-tech businesses with operations in the vicinity.

Call for action

In the run-up to the forthcoming Seventh RTD Framework Programme, the conference provides an opportunity for decision-makers in industry, research and the public sector to consider concrete actions for putting the SRA into practice.

The radical vision upon which this document is based calls for European manufacturing industry to reinvent itself in the face of cost-based global competition, as a dynamic creator of knowledge-based added value. It envisages Manufuture as a broad horizontal initiative creating synergy between the vertical sector- or technology-specific action plans and Technology Platforms already in place or under preparation for this purpose at EU, national and regional level.

Proceedings in Derby take place under the joint chairmanship of Heinrich Flegel, Director of Production Technology at DaimlerChrysler, and Professor David Williams of Loughborough University. They will commence with welcoming remarks by Colin Smith, Rolls Royce director of Engineering and Technology; Research Commissioner Janez Potocnik; Lord Sainsbury from DTI (connected by video link) and Bryan Jackson, Chairman of the East Midlands Development Agency. The European Commission's Research DG Director of Industrial Technologies, Ezio Andreta, will then outline the objectives of the conference.

Following to that, Rosalie Zobel, Director DG INFSO, will summarise the role of IST in the *Manufuture* initiative after which Heinrich Flegel will summarise the content of the SRA.

At an evening gathering in the Rolls Royce Heritage Museum, Ric Parker, Director of R&T at Rolls Royce will offer his company's viewpoint on the importance of research and innovation to Europe's future.

Sessions on the second day include a presentation by Edward Chlebus, from the Wroclaw University of Technology on the country's plans for a national *Manufuture* platform.

Aiming for cohesion

As the conference is designed to trigger real discussions on research-related topics relevant to manufacturing industry, five parallel workshops are being organised with a view to initiating cohesion between *Manufuture* and key sectoral platforms. These will take place in various industrial locations, and will cover the following topical areas:

- ?? Aerospace and advanced engineering
- ?? Automotive and land transport
- ?? Established and process industries
- ?? Science-based industry and emerging markets
- ?? Manufacturing and information systems

After feedback from the workshop rapporteurs, a representative from a Research Center, Prof. E. Westkaemper - Fhg, one from Industry, D. Pecchini – President and CeO of COMAU, and Ezio Andreta, Director of Directorate G, DG Research, European Commission, will conclude explaining the approach towards the Implementation Plans and the next steps for the realisation of the SRA.