

European Technology Platform MANUFUTURE

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Press Release

European Economic Recovery Plan/Research Policy:

Industry welcomes José Barroso's 'Factories of the Future Initiative'

12 March 2009 – Yesterday, the European Technology Platform on future manufacturing technologies MANUFUTURE has officially decided to engage in a partnership with the European Commission for the development of 'Factories of the Future'. The Chairman of the MANUFUTURE High-Level Group, Professor Heinrich Flegel (Daimler) said: "Fighting the economic crisis requires a collective effort throughout Europe. By combining public and private R&D resources we will achieve a lasting impact on our long-term competitiveness and growth prospects. With the 'Factories of the Future Initiative', the European Commission is showing its long term commitment to the EU's manufacturing technology sector; an industry where Europe leads the world today and should continue to do so."

The MANUFUTURE High-Level Group has decided at its 12th meeting today to establish the European Factories of the Future Research Association (EFFRA), which will be proposed to become the European Commission's private partner for the implementation of the 'Factories of the Future' public-private partnership. This association will pursue the promotion of pre-competitive research on manufacturing technologies across Europe and create European-wide networks of companies, trade associations, universities, research institutes and other stakeholders in the field of manufacturing. EFFRA aims at establishing a joint undertaking according to article 171 of the EC Treaty and at managing European research funds in partnership with the European Commission.

The 'Factories of the Future' public-private partnership has been proposed by Commission President José Manuel Barroso as part of the second pillar of the European Economic Recovery Plan of 26 November 2008. This major partnership between the public and the private sector will boost 'smart' investments into research, development and demonstration and increase the use of technology in the manufacturing sector. With a total research budget of €1.2 billion, the initiative will help EU manufacturers, in particular SMEs, to adapt to global competitive pressures by widening the technological base of EU manufacturing through the development and integration the enabling technologies of the future, such as engineering technologies for adaptable machines and industrial processes, ICT, and advanced materials.