

## **Crisis in auto industry today, Maintaining the lead in skills and innovation tomorrow**

**Brussels 10 October 2012 - Today in Brussels, the CEOs of four of Europe's automobile manufacturers, European Commissioners and MEPs came together to discuss 'Innovation for Europe, Skills for the Future' with 40 young Europeans. This debate was held in the framework of Our Future Mobility Now (OFMN), a youth project launched by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) last year in order to look into the future of transport and mobility through the eyes of young people.**

Speaking to reporters just before the debate, Sergio Marchionne, ACEA President and CEO of Fiat SpA, outlined the impact of the economic crisis on the European auto industry: "With sales on a downward trend for the past five years running, most automobile manufacturers are losing money in Europe at the moment. And the outlook is far from rosy, as we now expect new car registrations to decrease by between 8-10% compared to 2011. It is a question of survival for many manufacturers who are struggling to sustain the same level of capacity as in pre-crisis times."

As demand is cyclical it is nonetheless vital that the auto industry preserves its current workforce and guarantees that it has the people who will drive innovation in the future. "We believe very strongly that 'skills' and 'innovation' offer two pathways to help Europe out of the current crisis, and to enable the European automobile industry to remain 'one step ahead' on the global stage," Mr Marchionne explained. "Within ACEA we want to have a dialogue on these issues directly with young people. They are the very ones who will be developing and applying the necessary skills, and they will be the driving force of innovation in the future. They are also the ones bearing the brunt of the economic crisis and it is important that they are not left out of the picture."

Mr Marchionne was joined at the press briefing by Harrie Schippers, CEO of DAF Trucks and ACEA Commercial Vehicles Board Chairman; Alfredo Altavilla, CEO of IVECO SpA; Didier Leroy, CEO of Toyota Motor Europe; and Ivan Hodac, ACEA Secretary General.

ACEA also welcomed the fact that the European Commission has recognised the importance of both skills and innovation in its Communication on Industrial Policy which it launched earlier today. Indeed, two of the priority areas in this Communication are: ensuring that skills meet industry's needs; and securing investments in technologies and clean vehicles. ACEA stresses that if these priorities are to be realised, it is essential that the EU maintains the proposed €80 billion budget for 'Horizon 2020' - which is the framework programme for research and innovation for 2014 to 2020.

For this occasion, ACEA/OFMN commissioned a study by Think Young on skills mismatch entitled 'Youth Attitudes to the Job Market', which it released today.

Taking part in the debate with the young people and CEOs were European Commissioners Connie Hedegaard (Climate Action), Janez Potočnik (Environment) and László Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), as well as MEPs Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Libor Rouček and Pablo Zalba Bidegain.

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## Notes for editors

- Our Future Mobility Now brings together the mobile generation of the future and Europe's leading vehicle manufacturers to explore how vehicles and transport will evolve and influence the 21st Century. It is organised and run by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA). More information can be found at [www.futuremobilitynow.com](http://www.futuremobilitynow.com).
- The skills mismatch study by Think Young, 'Youth Attitudes to the Job Market', is available at [www.futuremobilitynow.com/thinkyoungstudy](http://www.futuremobilitynow.com/thinkyoungstudy).
- The European automotive industry is key to the strength and competitiveness of Europe. The ACEA members are BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler, FIAT S.p.A., Ford of Europe, General Motors Europe, Hyundai Motor Europe, IVECO S.p.A., Jaguar Land Rover, Porsche, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault Group, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen Group, Volvo Cars, Volvo Group. More information can be found on [www.acea.be](http://www.acea.be).

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