



**MEDIA RELEASE FINAL
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**PAUL JACKSON HIGHLIGHTS ENGINEERING SKILLS GAPS AT EUROPEAN
REGIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM 2009**

ETB Chief Executive Paul Jackson today gave a presentation to the European Regional Economic Forum (EREF) on *'The skills needs for engineering in the 21st century.'*

Convened in Slovenia and attended by representatives from the 27 EU member states, this year's EREF addressed the issue of "Developing Human Capital and Managing Migration for more Competitive European Regions".

Mr Jackson outlined the need to inspire and train thousands more engineers and technicians to address the increasing global challenges of energy production, population growth, global warming, poverty, pollution, disease and clean water shortages.

Drawing on figures from the ETB's flagship report on the engineering labour market, *Engineering UK*, Mr Jackson called for EU countries to think globally and act locally in order to change perceptions of engineering and tackle international skills gaps in the sector. He also highlighted the aging professional engineering workforce, and current population trends which mean there will be 12 % fewer 18-year olds by 2018 to take up crucial engineering roles.

Outlining the need to appeal to a wider cross section of society including women and girls in order to widen the talent pool, Mr Jackson urged EU nations to work together to address recruitment issues and ensure Europe keeps pace with emerging markets such as India and China.

The ETB's presentation also highlighted the following engineering statistics:

- There has been a 4.96% rise in the number of Engineering and Technology degrees achieved in the UK, from 19,455 in 2002/3 to 20,420 in 2007/8.
- 39% of UK scientists and engineers are now female as compared to 29% for the EU 25, though many of these are in biological sciences

Paul Jackson said:

“Engineers and engineering are vital to meeting the social, environmental and economic challenges of 21st Century Europe. The EREF and its partners across the world must come together to ensure there are enough skilled engineers and technicians to help develop renewable fuels, clean drinking water, effective carbon capture, and flood defences - as well as laying the firmest possible foundations for the future economic recovery.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1.) The Engineering and Technology Board (ETB) is an independent organisation that promotes the vital role of engineers, engineering and technology in our society. The ETB partners business and industry, government and the wider science and engineering community: producing evidence on the state of engineering, sharing knowledge within engineering and inspiring young people to choose a career in engineering, matching employers' demand for skills. For more information about the ETB please visit www.etechnology.co.uk.

2) For more information on Engineering UK 2008, visit:

http://www.etechnology.co.uk/search.cfm?widCall1=theme2.contentItem_show_1&cit_id=2620

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