



MEDIA RELEASE

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ENGINEERINGUK TO INVESTGATE WHY UK HAS LOWEST NUMBER OF FEMALE ENGINEERS IN THE WHOLE OF EUROPE

Speaking at the 'Decisions at 18' Careers Conference at Royal Holloway University of London today, Paul Jackson, Chief Executive of Engineering UK, highlighted the disparity in the percentage of female engineering professionals in the UK compared to other European countries. The fact that the percentage of women working as engineering professionals in Spain, Sweden and Italy, and the vast majority of other European countries, was twice that in the UK was simply not good enough he asserted and announced plans to commission a piece of research into the reasons behind the disparity.

Addressing the conference of teachers and careers advisors on the subject of STEM opportunities and barriers to entry, Mr Jackson announced that EngineeringUK had carried out a recent review of the data relating to women in engineering and technology and identified UKRC research that showed that only 9 per cent of UK engineering professionals are women compared to 18 per cent in Spain, 26 per cent in Sweden and 20 per cent in Italy.

This continuing lack of female engineers was one of three major barriers to tackling skills shortages in the UK sector, Jackson argued. Poor take up and retention rates for Further Education engineering courses as well as a ten per cent decrease in the number of 18 year olds were also causes for concern but none more so that the fact the UK ranked worst in Europe for the number of female engineering professionals.

Paul Jackson said:

“The fact that the proportion of female engineering professionals in the UK is the lowest in Europe is shocking. It’s essential we get behind these figures and understand why; what is it that our European neighbours are doing differently; what can we learn from them? Over the next twelve months, EngineeringUK will be commissioning research to understand what lies beneath this disparity and what the UK must do differently in future to address it. We need a step rather than incremental change in the number of women entering the engineering profession in the UK if we are to meet the future global technological challenges that lie ahead.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

EngineeringUK

EngineeringUK, formerly the ETB, is an independent organisation that promotes the vital contribution of engineers, engineering and technology in our society. EngineeringUK 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 EngineeringUK please visit www.EngineeringUK.com

Paul Jackson was speaking alongside Kate Bellingham the National STEM Careers Coordinator.

All statistics are from the European Labour Force Survey, details, breakdowns and sample sizes as below.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/introduction

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