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“Factories of the Future for Automotive” – Insights to results from key European projects to be exploited in the Automotive Industry.

Brussels – 28-02-2018

On 28th February 2018, the ‘**Factories of the Future for Automotive**’ event, jointly organised by ERTRAC-EGVIA and EFFRA took place at the ‘Maison de l’Automobile’ in Brussels.

Event’s Aim

One of the principal aims of the event was to provide an opportunity for the Automotive Research & Innovation community to gain insight into key European projects being conducted within the context of Factories-of-the-Future PPP, the results of which could be exploited in the Automotive Industry.

First session: Importance of Research and its impact on social aspects

Zeljko Pazin, Executive Director of EFFRA, and **Stephan Neugebauer**, Chairman ERTRAC and EGVIA, opened the workshop, welcoming the participants before highlighting the benefits of collaborative research performed at EU level and stressing the merits of the Factories of the Future and Green Vehicles cPPPs respectively. In his presentation, Dr. Neugebauer also presented the ERTRAC vision to 2050 together with key topic areas for research in Road Transport domain, mentioning also the increasing focus on adopting the circular economy approach for vehicles and infrastructures, with respect to energy efficiency and sustainable production.

In the first session, Jürgen Tiedje, Head of Unit D2 Advanced Manufacturing Systems and Biotechnologies (DG RTD), and Jean-François Aguinaga, Head of Unit H2 Surface Transport (DG RTD), also addressed the importance for continuing to perform research and innovation activities in the supporting the Competitiveness of European Industry in the 9th Framework Programme, mentioning the specific interest and extra funding already being allocated in Horizon 2020 for battery research topics, including battery manufacturing, while emphasizing the importance for the PPPs, including FoF and EGVIA, in terms of addressing also social aspects and the impact of technological development on citizens.

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First technical sessions: Results and conclusion from 20 FoF projects

In the two technical sessions that were introduced by Chris Decubber, Technical Director of EFFRA, the outcome or actual results of a total of 20 individual FoF projects, either on-going or recently completed, were presented, encompassing wide range of technical areas of significant relevance to the automotive sector including:

- Additive manufacturing (including hybrid approaches), joining technologies or other material processing technologies for flexible manufacturing
- Flexible manufacturing and Factory automation (including robotics, zero-defect manufacturing, digital platforms in factory automation)
- Agile supply chains and digitalisation
- Product service and life-cycle management, engineering tools and methods (including simulation)

Panel discussion “Future automotive manufacturing challenges and outlook towards FP9”

Following these presentations, the two co-Chairs of the ERTRAC Global Competitiveness WG namely Thilo Bein of the Fraunhofer-LBF Institute and David Storer from CRF, the research centre of FCA, chaired a panel discussion on “Future automotive manufacturing challenges and outlook towards FP9”. The session opened with a presentation by Prof. Bein which provided an overview of recent and on-going manufacturing-related Green Vehicle projects, hence sparking a discussion on “next-generation manufacturing for next-generation vehicles”. The subsequent debate, with lively participation from the attendees, addressed a wide range of issues including: the increasing need for greater customisation and modularity of future products in general, and road vehicles in particular, reflecting the evolution in customer needs and demands; the changes in the value chain in the Automotive Industry, particularly with respect to the projected increase in demand for electrified vehicles; and the opportunities which may be offered for increased flexibility and optimisation across the entire vehicle design and production process through digitalisation and the potential for new, powerful, highly advanced virtual product engineering tools for the automotive sector thanks to the digital revolution currently underway in terms of high-performance computing, artificial intelligence and machine-learning.

Looking towards the 9th Framework Programme, the discussion also focused on the ever-present need to address major challenges such as Decarbonising Road Transport through the Integrated Approach in which responsibility for determining sustainable solutions is shared among stakeholders, and how the multi-sectorial characteristic of the FoF initiatives should respect the specific needs of manufacturing in the Automotive Industry, for example the manufacturing in Europe of battery cells for electrified vehicles.

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Conclusions

In conclusion, there was general consensus for the need, particularly in view of the 9th Framework Programme, to harmonise the voices of the different stakeholders active in ERTRAC-EGVI and FoF with respect to communicating the R&D interests and requirements from Automotive Industry in the fields of Materials and Manufacturing particularly as regards the Circular Economy, Digitisation and Industry 4.0.

All presentations from the workshop are available at:

<http://www.effra.eu/news/effra-co-hosts-factories-future-automotive-sector-workshop>