News Release

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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World Economic Forum on Europe and Central Asia Opens Wednesday in Vienna

6 June 2011

- More than 500 participants will convene under the theme Expanding the Frontiers of Innovation
- Heads of state and government from 12 countries will join public and private sessions to discuss the most pressing issues in the region
- More information about the World Economic Forum on Europe and Central Asia at www.weforum.org/Europe2011

Vienna, Austria, 6 June 2010 – The World Economic Forum on Europe and Central Asia will open this week in Vienna, bringing together more than 500 leaders from business, government, academia and civil society from over 67 nations. The meeting will be held from 8 to 9 June under the theme Expanding the Frontiers of Innovation. It is the ninth World Economic Forum meeting held in Austria, an important gateway between Europe and Central Asia. The meeting is co-hosted with the Government of Austria.

Watch the video

The list of participants and programme were announced at a press conference in Vienna today with Michael Spindelegger, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of European and International Affairs of Austria, and Stephen Kinnock, Director, Head of Europe and Central Asia, World Economic Forum. Click here for an overview of the programme. An abridged list of participants is available here.

This year ' s programme has been shaped around three core areas: global competitiveness, resource equation and risk resilience. In addition to the award for European Social Entrepreneurs of the Year, official sessions will look at pressing global issues including the Arab spring, the future of the euro, energy resources after the crisis in Japan and the fastest growth countries and game-changers in the region.

" While the future of the European Union tends to be a discussion about negatives these days, " said Kinnock, " there is a strong and positive story to tell across the Europe and Central Asia region. In particular, there is incredible potential in the area of innovation, which ranges from pioneering technology to policy development, to R&D, to the products on our shelves. The goal of this meeting is therefore to highlight the partnerships that are already working in the region and to build the new bridges between Europe and Central Asia that will drive sustainable growth through collaborative innovation. "

Heads of state and government from Armenia, Austria, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovenia, Tajikistan and Ukraine will join the meeting in Vienna and highlight its significance for the region. In addition, 24 ministers will participate along with more than 150 chief executive officers from top global companies and more than 50 public figures representing over 30 countries from around the globe.

The diversity of the region is reflected in the co-chairs of the meeting: Herman Gref, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, Sberbank, Russian Federation; Kairat Kelimbetov, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Kazakhstan; Sir Michael Rake, Chairman, BT Group, United Kingdom; and Jim Hagemann Snabe, Co-Chief Executive Officer, SAP, Germany

"I very much welcome the World Economic Forum ' s return to Austria with a high-level regional forum on Europe and Central Asia," said Minister Spindelegger. "This important gathering of leading policy-makers, entrepreneurs, key representatives from civil society and the media highlights the role of Vienna as a platform for international dialogue. "

Notes to Editors

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