

Budapest, 15 September 2011

Alexander von Gabain starts as Chairman of the EIT Governing Board

Martin Schuurmans, the first Chairman of the EIT Governing Board, passed on the strategic leadership of the institute to Alexander von Gabain on the occasion of today's Board meeting.

„It is a great pleasure for me that Alexander is taking on the leadership of the Board. With his distinguished background and career as an entrepreneur, he will lead the EIT into a new era in which, as we have concluded at the EIT, entrepreneurship is so essential for innovation success”, says Martin Schuurmans.

The Governing Board took this opportunity to thank Martin Schuurmans for his strong leadership and dedication to setting up the institute and getting its first KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) up and running. *“Martin has impressively led the EIT as Chairman of the Governing Board for the past three years, driving the EIT towards becoming a high impact investment institute seeding innovation in Europe”* adds Alexander von Gabain.

One of Alexander von Gabain's immediate priorities will be to focus the EIT's efforts on becoming a true innovation impact investor; a vision that is outlined in the [EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda \(SIA\)](#). It was thus decided during this meeting to focus the next few years on preparing the EIT for its future growth via the implementation of further KICs as this will lead to a critical impact on Europe's innovation landscape. To this end, the Governing Board welcomed the proposals put forward by the new EIT Director José Manuel Leceta including a service oriented EIT offices in Budapest and the setting up of a Corporate Forum, both of which will increase accountability and ultimately add value to the current KIC operations.

The European Commission's [consultation](#) on the future of the EIT found that the EIT stakeholder community has broadly supported the notion that the EIT's distinctive strength is its entrepreneurial approach to innovation is. In this light, the EIT Governing Board supported the establishment of an EIT Roundtable of Top Entrepreneurs, as a pilot for the setting up of an EIT Academy of Entrepreneurs. This Roundtable will bring together 15 to 20 outstanding individuals with a record of excellence in entrepreneurial and innovative enterprises on an annual basis, to exchange views and experiences. This is intended to serve as a platform for mutual inspiration and dialogue in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation between the EIT, its KICs, top level entrepreneurs and its stakeholder community.

This meeting also saw the adoption of further refined quality criteria for EIT labelled degrees and diplomas and EIT overarching learning outcomes that will be applied to Master and PhD programmes developed by and implemented within the three KICs. EIT labelled degrees form a major element of the EIT's intent to deliver a unique brand of excellent and relevant education, responsive to both business and societal demands based on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

Contact: press@eit.europa.eu