Exploring European competitiveness at inaugural University of Birmingham Brussels symposium

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EU Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship Mr. Antonio Tajani will be the keynote speaker at a University of Birmingham symposium on European Competitiveness next week.

Taking place on Wednesday 1 June 2011 at the University of Birmingham's Brussels office, the symposium explores the alignment of European industrial and innovation policies, putting forward three critical building blocks to achieve this: understanding wealth creation through production; distributed innovation; and the role of public procurement in securing innovation through smart specialisation.

Mr. Tajani will give his analysis on the critical drivers of European competitiveness, protecting and enhancing what is distinctive in Europe in relation to the delivery of Europe 2020, the Innovation Union, and the new EU Industrial Strategy.

Professor Adam Tickell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Knowledge Transfer at the University of Birmingham, said: "The University's first Brussels symposium on European competitiveness represents our commitment to this evolving agenda. This is a key moment to focus on the measures likely to foster growth and employment, and maintain the EU's strong industrial economy, while also supporting the development of a competitive services-based society over the next ten years."

Other speakers include Malcolm Harbour MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection and Chair of the European Manufacturing Forum, Professor John Bryson, Professor of Enterprise and Economic Geography at the University of Birmingham and Professor Anders Flodström, Member of the Executive Committee of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) Governing Board, who will speak about the development of a new EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda and its role in enhancing innovation throughout European industry. Following the speeches there will be an open debate for participants to exchange views with an early evening reception concluding the programme.

The symposium is free to attend although places are limited. For further information and to register, please visit: **http://www.wmec.eu.com/ (http://www.wmec.eu.com/)** or contact Xavier Rodde: Tel: +44 (0) 121 414 3880 / Email: **x.rodde@bham.ac.uk (mailto:x.rodde@bham.ac.uk)**

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Notes to Editors

• The University of Birmingham is a truly vibrant, global community and an internationally-renowned institution. Its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 4,000 international students from nearly 150 different countries.

• The University is home to approximately 28,000 students. With more than 7,500 postgraduate students from across the world, Birmingham is one of the most popular universities for postgraduate study in the UK.

• The University of Birmingham launched its office in Brussels in December 2010, becoming the first UK University to have a dedicated presence in the political centre of the European Union. It was officially opened by HMA Jonathan Brenton the British Ambassador to Belgium. The office has been established to help inform European policy debates and the development of programmes, support alumni in the Benelux region and consolidate European research collaborations. The office also provides local services to the staff and students of the University when working and studying in Brussels.

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