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## **ECMSA launches initiative for collaboration between the chemical industry and its customers**

The Hague, The Netherlands, 25 November 2008

Chemical industry strategists and marketing experts are setting out to **better understand the sector's customers and drive improved competitiveness.**

Being prepared for the new competitive environment after the current financial and economic crisis is over is the focal point of the initiative. They believe a **deeper understanding of vitally important value chains will result in a "win-win" situation for chemical companies and their major customer-industries like electronics, automobiles, construction, packaging and food.**

The European Chemical Marketing and Strategy Association (ECMSA) is embarking on an ambitious **project to help improve chemicals sector and customer industry competitiveness.**

ECMSA wants to test fully the hypothesis that that chemical industry and its customers can benefit greatly from learning much more about one another.

"While the chemical industry needs to understand changes in the value chains in order to help its customers, **our customer industries need to understand how to use the potential of the chemical industry in order to maintain and/or regain their competitiveness,**" said ECMSA Advisory Board member, Klaus Heinzlbecker.

"An integrated approach from both sides is a win-win situation for everybody," ECMSA President, Fred Du Plessis added.

ECMSA expects to work with various strategy consulting organisations and exchange market insight and future foresight up and down important value chains - which run from the oil well to, for example, the auto dealer forecourt and the electronics

retailer.

The association believes that joint approaches could help create breakthroughs in a number of areas. Two examples might be sustainable mobility and sustainable housing, Fred Du Plessis said. **ECMSA provides a forum for its members and others to exchange ideas and extend learning in chemicals marketing techniques and strategic planning.**

It has successfully partnered with numerous industry and consulting organisations to host events and seminars looking at the future of the European chemical industry.

**A recent meeting held in collaboration with the German chemical industry association, the VCI, looked at the important automotive and electronics industries in China and India.** Participation included the German Automotive Association **VDA** and the Electrical Industry Association **ZVEI**. Event sponsors were **KPMG, Booz & Company** and **Euro Asia Consulting (EAC)**.

Using an **electronic voting system** the meeting delegates noted the **increasing importance of value chain analysis to raw material suppliers and their customers in the auto industry.**

Cooperation between raw material providers, component suppliers and car makers was seen as an important success factor.

Delegates agreed that **energy and resource efficiency** would be the major challenges in the automobile business in the years ahead. The challenge of energy and resource efficiency to the electronics industry was noted. **Technology leadership and understanding customer needs were seen as decidedly important criteria for success.**

An understanding of electronics industry value chains was not as highly rated as a success factor in this sector although **strategic cooperation with Asia partners was seen as important for suppliers of chemicals for electronics.**

China and India are the future markets for the automotive industry, the ECMSA event concluded, but **European players are well positioned to retain a strong position in these booming countries due to technology leadership and innovation.**

Asia has become the major global market for electronics with China rapidly overtaking Japan as the dominant producer. **Product and solutions innovation, and smart innovation management, are a key success factors to ensure growth in the sector,** the ECMSA says.

However, integration along the value chain utilising collaboration and innovative business models will become more important.

The chemical industry is a vitally important innovative and raw material development partner for both sectors and will be expected to work more closely with these industries as geographic expansion continues.

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Learn more about the ECMSA and how it serves the European chemical industry by visiting <http://www.ecmsa.org>