



## PRESS RELEASE

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*Announcing the EFC 20th anniversary conference:*

### Moving European Philanthropy Forward

**Berlin 9 – 10 November 2009**

Representatives from more than 200 foundations will join together in the city of Berlin to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the European Foundation Centre (EFC). The conference will trace the history of the EFC from its establishment in 1989 to the present day, and go further to look at what the Centre will aim to achieve in the next twenty years both in terms of shaping European philanthropy and contributing to the development of the European project.

Supported by **Bertelsmann Stiftung, Körber Stiftung, Robert Bosch Stiftung** and **Volkswagen Stiftung** (EFC Members), the conference will take place at the Brandenburgische Akademie Der Wissenschaften, Berlin.

The conference will open with a message from **José Manuel Barroso**, President of the European Commission and **Günter Stock**, President of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Further speeches will be given by leading foundation personalities including **Emílio Rui Vilar**, President of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and current EFC Chair, and **Raymond Georis**, one of the co-founders and first Chair of the Centre.

During the two-day event, delegates will also hear from a panel of foundation representatives who will discuss how civil society engagement in the European Union has developed over the past two decades, and from some of the founding EFC members who will shed light on how the Centre came to be established. Other highlights include a debate on the challenges facing Europe and European philanthropy in the coming years.

Looking forward to this milestone event, **Gerry Salole**, Chief Executive of the EFC, underlined the particular relevance of the chosen theme:

“Over the last twenty years, the European foundation sector has expanded dynamically, making a significant contribution to Europe’s sustainable economic growth and development... Looking ahead, we expect to see the philanthropically-inclined ‘baby-boomer’ generation transferring a large slice of their wealth to activities for the ‘public good’ which coincide substantially with the areas in which foundations have expertise. I am hopeful that this conference will explore ways of how best to harness this new wave of philanthropy for the good of citizens in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and what role the EFC should play in the future in shaping the European foundation sector.”

**Emílio Rui Vilar**, President of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Chair of the EFC, outlines how the conference will help facilitate reflection on the future of the EFC and European philanthropy:

“Riding on a wave of opportunity and optimism that was created with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a group of seven forward-looking European foundations joined together to found EFC. Twenty years on, we are at an important crossroads where we need to stop and take stock of how far the EFC has come and how far it has still to go in developing a strong and effective European foundation sector. As foundations do not operate in isolation, we also need to better understand the challenges facing Europe and the world today and in the future, so that our sector can be more responsive to the needs of citizens everywhere. I look forward to the conference, which I believe will provide us with important guidance on what to expect for the road ahead.”

During the conference there will be an honorary reception where a special award will be presented to William S. White, President and Chief Executive Officer of Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, in recognition of his continual support for European philanthropy. The conference will be immediately followed by the Grantmakers East Forum. The Forum promotes the development of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union states by providing funders active in the region with a forum to discuss the effectiveness of their grantmaking efforts, exchange experience, get inspired and encourage new donor activity in the region.

The EFC 20th anniversary celebrations will continue throughout the remainder of 2009 and into next year, culminating in the **Foundation Week**, due to take place in Brussels 31 May - 4 June 2010. This pioneering event will see foundations take centre stage and promises an exciting programme of activities and a unique space for discussion and engagement among leaders and senior representatives of foundations and funders, the European Union institutions and other actors in civil society.

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#### **For more information**

[Read the final conference programme](#)

[Visit the DAFNE website](#)

[Visit the Grantmakers East Forum website](#)

In case you have any questions about the **European Foundation Centre** please contact:

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#### **Notes to Editors**

##### *About the EFC*

- The European Foundation Centre (EFC), founded in 1989, is the leading membership association representing public-benefit foundations at European level. It is based in Brussels.
- The EFC develops and pursues activities in line with its objectives: creating an enabling legal and fiscal environment for foundations; documenting the foundation landscape; strengthening the infrastructure of the foundation sector; and promoting collaboration, both among foundations and between foundations and other actors, to advance the public good in Europe and beyond.
- The EFC currently has 229 members including community and independent foundations as well as corporate funders spread across 40 countries. A majority (86%) are based in Europe.
- EFC members collectively manage over **€140 billion in assets** and have a total annual expenditure of over **€7.7 billion**.
- The EFC has established a range of Interest Groups and Fora which facilitate cooperation and exchanges of good practice among members across a wide range of fields of activity including: diversity, migration and integration; human rights and disability; protecting the

environment; HIV/AIDS; global health challenges; social investment; Central and Eastern Europe.

- The EFC hosts the secretariat of **Donors and Foundations' Networks in Europe (DAFNE)**, which supports cooperation among national networks covering 22 European countries. This network and collaboration with the EFC contributes to strengthening the voice and the representation of the views of this sector at a European level.
- The EFC coordinates the **European Forum on Philanthropy and Research Funding**, which was launched in 2007 with the support of the European Commission and other partners.

#### *About the sector*

- The foundation sector is growing dynamically and is gradually achieving a significant economic footprint. There are 110,000 public-benefit foundations (almost 4 foundations per 10,000 people) located in the European Union. Some 43% of these foundations were set up as recent as the early 1990s.
- It is estimated that in 2006 one public-benefit foundation was created per day in Spain and two per day in Germany.
- Foundations spend between €83 billion and €150 billion annually.
- Foundations are also big employers, providing direct full-time employment to between 750,000 and 1 million people in the EU.

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