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Press Event, Helsinki**

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Overwhelming welcome

I am honoured to be welcomed on my first day in the office here in Helsinki by **Prime Minister Vanhanen, Lord Mayor Pajunen** and Commission Vice President **Verheugen**.

I am very pleased of this **opportunity to thank** the **European Commission** and **Finnish Government** on behalf of the European Chemicals Agency for all the preparatory work that allows the Agency to start immediately in its own offices.

I am also **grateful to the City of Helsinki** for the relocation support it is providing to ECHA staff.

This press event

The main objective of my presentation today is to launch the Agency website. This tool will not only be the face of the Agency but more importantly its main communication channel with the outside world. We will use it to provide information to industry as well as to keep the media and the public informed on progress in the Agency preparations. Also note that all parties to REACH procedures will have to communicate on-line with the ECHA, which is a faster, safer and environmentally-friendly way of communication. The website will show them how to do this.

LAUNCH OF ECHA WEBSITE

ECHA website provides information, guidance, tools and assistance

ECHA's website at "**echa.europa.eu**" is planned to become the single point of access for information on REACH and the Agency.

Let me quickly show a few aspects which may be of interest to you.

As you can see from the access page, the site is already **available in several languages** including Finnish and other languages will follow soon. From the homepage the user can easily access all main sections:

- "About ECHA" provides information about the Agency, its mission and work.

For instance, here you find information on the Management Board, which will have its first meeting later this month.

- In the "Press and Events" you will find for example today's press material and you can download for free of charge pictures from our image library.
- The section dedicated to "REACH" provides an easy access:

- to the **Navigator tool** which helps companies in finding out their REACH obligations;
 - to **guidance** explaining them how to fulfil these obligations;
 - to **software tools** that must be used to send the completed forms to ECHA, and
 - to the and **national helpdesks** which provide advice and assistance and are supported by the **ECHA helpdesk** .
- Last but not least I would like to draw your attention to the “Working with us” section where we will publish for example **our job vacancies**. I would advise anybody interested in working for the Agency to check regularly this page.

ECHA will be housed in renovated offices with modern ITC

I would like to invite you all after the question and answer session to have a coffee in our renovated offices on the second floor.

Vice President Verheugen will be there available for interviews. I will be present also in case you want information on the more detailed aspects of the Agency.

In addition, if you are interested in learning more about the website and the helpdesks my staff will provide there demonstrations and you can get a feeling of our flexible open plan offices, supported by modern information technology.

Thank you.