



## PRESS RELEASE

### European youth use STEM knowledge to solve real-world issues

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Sci-Tech Challenge inspires next generation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) leaders

**Bucharest, Romania 24 April 2015:** Encouraging European youth to consider careers in STEM is essential to ensuring a skilled workforce, ready to fill the high-tech jobs required to solve the energy challenges of the future. To foster this growth, Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise (JA-YE) Europe and ExxonMobil have been working together to inspire young people to pursue STEM-related studies and careers through the [Sci-Tech Challenge initiative](#).

**Caroline Jenner, CEO of JA-YE Europe** highlights this importance, saying *“It is crucial to grow interest and education in areas of STEM. Not only to address the current skills gap in Europe today, but to strengthen youth employability for the jobs of tomorrow.”*

On 21-23 April, a group of over 50 students from nine European countries participated in the Sixth Annual European Sci-Tech Challenge, held this year in Bucharest, Romania. The participants qualified by winning the national Sci-Tech Challenges in their respective countries. Student teams were given 24-hours to find an innovative way to minimise the carbon footprint of the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest. Whilst overcoming language and cultural barriers, students applied their STEM knowledge, creativity and entrepreneurial skills to succeed.

The 2015 winning team - Juliette Duval (France), Lauren Sillis (Belgium), Jack Francis (United Kingdom), Mattia Fusetti (Italy) and Arkadiusz Przywecki (Poland) - was chosen based on their team spirit, excellent presentation skills and outstanding innovative idea. Their “magic carpet” concept would be a technological invention that produces energy through static friction and reduces energy consumption at the same time by less people watching the contest at home on their private television. By placing their “magic carpets” in front of large community viewing screens in cities across Europe, the team said that individuals could generate energy through their movements.

Winning team member and aspiring chemical engineer, Jack Francis shared his experience: *“It was really challenging getting to work with people from different countries, so not just strangers, but strangers from different cultures. It was also a great challenge to find the right idea, because we had so many great ones. Someone suggested to make the project social, someone suggested to target the traffic, and we decided to put all these together.”*

Launched in 2010, the Sci-Tech Challenge invites 15 to 18-year-old students to address societal and energy challenges through innovative STEM-methods. The annual programme, has thus far involved more than 1,500 volunteers from ExxonMobil and engaged over 45,000 students in Europe.

At a time when the European Commission has underscored the need for greater STEM competences, the Sci-Tech Challenge encourages young Europeans to pursue futures in STEM. Vigdis Anderson, a 2012 Sci-Tech Challenge participant from Norway readily shared how the experience changed her life and even lead to further opportunities. *“My JA-YE experience turned out to be the beginning of an incredible journey towards the fulfilment of my dream to becoming the creative, inspiring leader I wish to be.”*

By having experienced employees participate as role models in the programme, ExxonMobil actively helps students understand the vital importance of STEM skills for exciting professions, which will help address future energy issues.

ExxonMobil Regional Communications Coordinator, Susanne Huefner, summarizes: *“Through Sci-Tech we aim to inspire students for STEM related careers. In ExxonMobil we believe that the key to the world's energy challenges lies in technology and innovation. STEM skills, innovation and creativity are important parts of the project and are abilities students use to solve the Challenge.”*

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### **About Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise Europe**

JA-YE Europe is Europe’s largest provider of entrepreneurship education programmes, reaching 3.2 million students in 39 countries. JA-YE brings the public and private sectors together to provide young people in primary and secondary schools and early university with high-quality education programmes to teach them about enterprise, entrepreneurship, business and economics in a practical way. The JA-YE Company Programme is recognised by the European Commission Enterprise Directorate General as a ‘Best Practice in Entrepreneurship Education’.

[www.ja-ye.org](http://www.ja-ye.org)

### **About ExxonMobil**

ExxonMobil is the world’s largest publicly traded integrated petroleum and natural gas company. It operates facilities and market products globally, explores for oil and gas on six continents, and employs more than 77.000 people.

For over 125 years, ExxonMobil has been a leader in the development of energy sources and technology. ExxonMobil is committed to helping meet the world’s energy needs while addressing the challenge of sustainability – balancing economic growth, social development, and environmental protection.

ExxonMobil uses innovation and technology to deliver energy to meet the world’s growing demand. Extensive research programs support operations, enable continuous improvement in each of the business lines, and explore new and emerging energy sources and technologies.

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