

PRESS RELEASE**JA Europe students solve Brussels' traffic congestion**

- The 7th European finale of the Sci-Tech Challenge took place on 25 May at the European Parliament including an award ceremony and a panel debate hosted by Adina-Ioana Valean, Vice-President of the European Parliament, in the presence of Pascal Smet, Brussels Mobility Minister.
- Winning team from Romania proposed to solve Brussels' traffic congestion problem by offering an integrated approach to increase efficiency of existing public transport, whilst producing additional energy.

[Brussels, 25 May 2016] JA Europe and ExxonMobil have been working together to inspire young people to pursue STEM-related studies and careers through the [Sci-Tech Challenge initiative](#). By encouraging European youth to consider careers in STEM, the Sci-Tech Challenge helps equip a skilled workforce, ready to drive innovation and growth in Europe.

Caroline Jenner, CEO of JA Europe reiterated the significance of such programmes, saying *“At a time when the European Commission is finalizing a New Skills Agenda for Europe, stressing the need for greater STEM competences and transversal skills, the Sci-Tech Challenge is definitely a good practice to empower and stimulate students in the field of science, mathematics and engineering.”*

During the European Online Challenge on 14-15 March, students from the 10 participating countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia and the UK) were asked to find innovative solutions to reduce Brussels' traffic congestion dramatically in a fuel and cost efficient way. The jury, composed of Pascal Smet, Brussels Ministry of Mobility, Pablo Garcia from s3innovation, Nikolaas Baeckelmans from ExxonMobil, Malcolm McDowell from the European Commission and Jarle Tommerbakke from the EE-HUB selected the best 3 teams (Belgium, Romania, and the UK) to come to Brussels in order to defend their project in the European Parliament.

The 2016 winning team from Romania - [Chiparca Alexandra, Craciun Ioan Daniel, Florescu Tiberiu, Botezatu Vlad-Andrei, Cristea Radu Stefan] - was chosen during an award ceremony hosted by Adina-Ioana Valean, Vice-President of the European Parliament. Selected based on its team spirit, the team came up with an integrated set of ideas to produce electricity from transport, improve public transport and incentivise commuters to use it by introducing an entry tax for individual commuters whilst building parking lots at outskirts and organising company transport for employees. Billboards would guide drivers to avoid traffic jams and could create income via advertisements.

Winning team member and aspiring IT programmer, Vlad-Andrei shared his experience: *“I improved many skills during the competition, from the start when we got our task back in Romania to the moment we presented our solution in front of the jury. Those skills are entrepreneurship, mostly because we had to pretend being little leaders with the power to actually change an entire city; public speaking, because*

we were in the situation of presenting our ideas in front of important people; and last but not least, creativity, a crucial skill to develop innovating ideas”.

By having experienced employees participate as role models in the programme, ExxonMobil actively helps students understand the vital importance of STEM skills for a range of exciting professions, which will contribute to spur innovation and technology development in Europe. **Nikolaas Baeckelmans, Vice-President EU Affairs at ExxonMobil**, summarizes: *“ExxonMobil is proud to be part of a collaboration with JA Europe. The Sci-Tech Challenge has great reach across our region, has great importance for the future as Europe as a whole faces a STEM skills gap – and in addition, clearly benefits the students taking part in the program”.*

About the [Sci-Tech Challenge](#)

For the seventh consecutive year, the Sci-Tech Challenge aims to encourage students, aged 15-18, to consider Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) oriented careers, raise awareness of the importance of STEM skills and how these can be applied in enterprising ways to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

The Sci-Tech Challenge currently takes place in ten European countries. It gives close to 5,250 young people in secondary schools the opportunity to participate in the programme each academic year. Over 100 employees from ExxonMobil participate as volunteers. 180 teachers experience the Sci-Tech Challenge each academic year.

About [JA Europe](#)

JA Europe is Europe’s largest provider of education programmes for entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy. In 2015 we equipped 3.5 million students in 39 countries with the knowledge, skills and attitude they require to start a business or get a job.

JA works with the education and business communities as well as governments to provide young people from primary school to university with experiences that build the skills and competences they will need to succeed in a global economy. JA Europe is the European Regional Operating Centre for JA Worldwide®.

About [ExxonMobil](#)

ExxonMobil, the world’s largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, uses technology and innovation to help meet the world’s growing energy needs. ExxonMobil holds an industry-leading inventory of resources and is one of the world’s largest integrated refiners, marketers of petroleum products and chemical manufacturers.

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