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BCIU Hosts Central, Eastern European Competitiveness Forum in Vienna for Global Entrepreneurship Week 2009

Nov. 15-17 forum spotlights regional entrepreneurial successes, opportunities, government and private sector incentives; provides training, mentors

Vienna, Austria, Nov. 11, 2009 – The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) today announced it will convene a forum on Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Central and Eastern European Competitiveness in Vienna on Nov. 15-17 as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week 2009. The forum brings together a cross-section of the region's U.S. diplomats, policy makers, and established and up-and-coming entrepreneurs to discuss successful start-up sectors in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. The event provides a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs, senior officials and business leaders to network, share perspectives about new strategies for growth and gain access to mentoring and funding resources.

“As we celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week 2009 with the backdrop of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have organized this forum to spotlight and foster entrepreneurship in the Central, Eastern European region,” said Peter Tichansky, President and CEO of BCIU. “The transformation of this region over the past two decades demands attention as does its future. We’re very pleased to join with Global Entrepreneurship Week and the Kauffman Foundation to convene current and future leaders that are driving innovation, competitiveness and opportunity in this important region.”

The forum's welcoming speaker, The Honorable William C. Eacho, III, President Obama's newly assigned Ambassador to Austria, brings a deep entrepreneurial background to his new assignment having invested in alternative energy and technology companies while CEO of private investment company Carlton Capital Group, LLC. Ambassador Eacho will be joined by a diverse cast of participants including U.S. Embassy officials in Zagreb, Skopje and Belgrade; pioneering Hungarian entrepreneur Gabor Boraj of Graphicsoft; and executives from FedEx, Amgen and the World Bank. Leading fashion industry figures from London, including Percy Parker of PPQ, Alexia Somerville and FLUX Magazine Editor Amechi Ihenacho, will be mentoring young Viennese designers.

Senior management and regional representatives from the following organizations are participating in panels and roundtables ([Program Schedule](#)), including the ArcelorMittal Foundation; the

Polish National Capital Fund; the Billion Minds Foundation; the World Fashion Association; Atlas Venture from London; 3TS Capital Partners based in Budapest and Vienna; and the Small Enterprise Assistance Fund. Several regional entrepreneurs and start-up companies will also be participating.





“We commend our partner BCIU and this prestigious collection of participants for organizing this timely forum on Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Central and Eastern European Competitiveness,” said Jonathan Ortman, President, Global Entrepreneurship Week. “In the US companies less than five years old created nearly two-thirds of net new jobs in 2007. Global Entrepreneurship Week heralds the next startup generation who will make jobs, build economies and expand human welfare. We thank U.S. Secretary of State Clinton, U.S. embassies and the dozens of heads of state involved for their support and look forward to sharing results of BCIU’s Vienna conference with our global partners across the six participating continents.”

The approximately 100 participating entrepreneurs headquartered in Central Eastern and Southeastern Europe will commence the BCIU conference with a reception on Sunday, Nov. 15, 6:00 p.m. at the official residence of Ambassador Eacho in Vienna. BCIU will also pay tribute U.S. statesman John C. Whitehead, BCIU Honorary Trustee, for his support of democratic forces behind the Berlin Wall as a private citizen and later as U.S. Deputy Secretary of State.

Video podcasts will be available at www.unleashingideas.org/bciu

About Global Entrepreneurship Week

With the goal to inspire young people to embrace innovation, imagination and creativity, Global Entrepreneurship Week will encourage youth to think big, turn their ideas into reality, and make their mark. From Nov. 16-22, 2009, millions of young people around the world will join a growing movement to generate new ideas and seek better ways of doing things. Tens of thousands of activities are being planned in dozens of countries. Global Entrepreneurship Week is founded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Make Your Mark campaign. For more information, visit www.unleashingideas.org, and follow @unleashingideas on Twitter.

About the Kauffman Foundation

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private nonpartisan foundation that works to harness the power of entrepreneurship and innovation to grow economies and improve human welfare. Through its research and other initiatives, the Kauffman Foundation aims to open young people’s eyes to the possibility of entrepreneurship, promote entrepreneurship education, raise awareness of entrepreneurship-friendly policies, and find alternative pathways for the commercialization of new knowledge and technologies. It also works to prepare students to be innovators, entrepreneurs and skilled workers in the 21st century economy through initiatives designed to improve learning in math, engineering, science and technology. Founded by late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman, the Foundation is based in Kansas City, Mo. and has approximately \$2 billion in assets. For more information, visit www.kauffman.org, and follow @kauffmanfdn on Twitter.

About BCIU

Since its inception in 1955 as a White House initiative under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) has been a neutral, results-oriented partner, facilitating dialogue and alliances between world businesses and political leaders. With members from more than 150 world-leading companies, BCIU provides an ongoing forum for senior business executives to interact with heads of state/government, cabinet ministers and senior government officials. BCIU brokers contacts and organizes custom-tailored events, briefings and off-the-record discussions so that stakeholders may speak candidly about core issues in a direct and timely manner, enabling resolution of problems and promotion of business opportunities in both the private and public sectors of the global marketplace. For more information, visit www.bciu.org.

