

PRESS RELEASE

EU PARLIAMENT MEMBERS VISIT THE LARGEST OPTICAL FIBRE PLANT IN EUROPE

PRYSMIAN WELCOMES EU REPRESENTATIVES IN ITS PLANT IN DOUVRIN, FRANCE, TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF EUROPE'S TELECOMS NETWORKS

PRYSMIAN'S SVP VANHILLE: "AS WW LEADER WE ARE READY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED TLC NETWORKS THROUGH OUR KNOW-HOW AND STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGIES"

Milan, June 16, 2016 - Today, a cross-party group of MEPs visited Europe's largest and most modern site for the production of optical fibre, in Douvrin, France. With the European Commission's telecommunications review rapidly approaching, the framework for progress in this area will soon be defined. The outcome of this review will determine whether Europe develops a high performing telecommunications network and therefore attains the gigabit society and next generation connectivity to which it aspires.

Prysmian Group, world leader in the high-technology cables and systems industry, hosted the group, providing a guided tour of its state-of-the-art facilities. Following this, participating MEPs contributed to a policy debate on the Prysmian premises, raising issues of ICT investment, the forecast expansion in demand for data, and the connections between optical fibre and 5G.

Austrian MEP Paul Rübiger (EPP) commented on the visit, "Prysmian's presentation of optical fibre technology has impressed on me that this is the foundation for the telecoms networks of the future. As Chair of the Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel, I am keenly aware that I and my fellow European legislators have a responsibility to educate ourselves on the issues surrounding the transition to this technology and understand how we can best facilitate it."

The demand for data in Europe is expected to rapidly expand in the coming years, driven by developments such as the Internet of Things, media sharing and autonomous driving. Techniques such as vectoring applied to legacy copper networks may in the short-term be able to provide a response to this consumer demand. However, as MEP Dominique Riquet (ALDE, FR), President of the Intergroup on Long Term Investment and Reindustrialisation, noted, "In the long run a shift to optical fibre is essential to meet this exploding demand and ensure that Europe's telecoms networks are future-proof."

The conversation also picked up on the links between mobile connectivity and fixed infrastructure, previously raised by Commissioner Oettinger, who claimed that 5G mobile would not be possible without the widespread roll-out of optical fibre. Recalling this point, MEP Flavio Zanonato (S&D, IT) commented "There are of course challenges, for example in terms of the level of investment required, associated with the move to optical fibre, however we should not lose sight of the positive vision that this will facilitate, from 5G to the gigabit society".

The EU's Digital Single Market strategy places the availability of reliable, trustworthy and high-performance networks firmly at the centre of its vision. Philippe Vanhille, Senior Vice President of Prysmian's Telecoms Business commented, "As a leading multinational, which manufactures state-of-the-art products in Europe for Europe, Prysmian Group is proud to contribute to the realisation of this vision". The policy debate revealed a growing consensus on the central role of connectivity. In response to this, it is essential that the Commission places the appropriate emphasis on modernising the telecoms framework and creating favourable conditions for investment in next generation telecoms networks.

Prysmian Group

Prysmian Group is world leader in the energy and telecom cable systems industry. With almost 140 years of experience, sales of about €7.5 billion in 2015, over 19,000 employees across 50 countries and 88 plants, the Group is strongly positioned in high-tech markets and offers the widest possible range of products, services, technologies and know-how. It operates in the businesses of underground and submarine cables and systems for power transmission and distribution, of special cables for applications in many different industries and of medium and low voltage cables for the construction and infrastructure sectors. For the telecommunications industry, the Group manufactures cables and accessories for voice, video and data transmission, offering a comprehensive range of optical fibres, optical and copper cables and connectivity systems. Prysmian is a public company, listed on the Italian Stock Exchange in the FTSE MIB index.

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