

**Press Release  
Brussels, 1 July 2009**

## **First EHFA Executive Leadership Forum Demonstrates Strong Optimism For The Future Of The Health & Fitness Sector In Europe**

Industry leaders representing facilities in 14 countries from across the European Union came together for a three day conference which considered the future development of the European Health and Fitness industry.

The European Leadership Forum, 22-25 June 2009, was an initiative coordinated by EHFA, the European Health & Fitness Association and conducted by **Professor Cyril Bouquet from IMD**, the world's leading business school from Lausanne Switzerland.

Sponsoring partner Deloitte joined CEOs from 17 operators including Aspria, Curves, David Lloyd, Fitness First, Fit4Free, Health City, High Five Health Promotion, Holmes Place, LA Fitness, Nuffield Health, Optisport, SATS/Spent, Solinca, Sportcity and Vivafit.

The group participated in a number of thought provoking case studies from outside the fitness industry, ranging from airlines, wine and watch industries to entertainment (Cirque du Soleil). A number of valuable contributions were made by speakers from within the group on how the health sector and our fitness sector could complement one another.

Some interesting business exercises were facilitated by Prof Bouquet which gave some valuable insights on business development and business success in a competitive environment.

The need to join forces across Europe and to build lasting infrastructures to facilitate the growth of the fitness industry was debated, such as the European Register of Exercise Professionals, market research, data collection and benchmarking – measures that would put the fitness industry in a similar position to other mature sectors.

Participants discussed the need for strong representative bodies such as EHFA to look after the industry's interest in Brussels.

A highlight of the program was **Dr Fons Trompenaars**, world renowned author and speaker on "Business and Culture", who gave his views in a dynamic and humorous speech on "Servant Leadership across Cultures".

*"This initiative was very much needed at this stage of development of the industry"* said **Johannes Grabisch** from leading operator Fitness First.

**Fred Turok**, Chair of LA Fitness, and Fitness Industry Association UK, gave his view on the future which he summed up in his presentation "Innovate or Stagnate". Turok said: *"For me, this event was about three things: the need to become better at what we currently do; the need to innovate dramatically to create our own future; and the need to unite behind the common cause of transforming our industry and putting EHFA in a position to lead the change."*

New CEO of leading Nordic operator SATS, **Olav Thorstad** said: *"This meeting was an ideal opportunity to meet colleagues from other countries and get a crash course on the European industry landscape"*.

**Harm Tegelaars**, EHFA President commented: *"This event is an illustration of the facilitating role that the EHFA seeks to play across the European Health and Fitness industry. We would like to add value to our sector by organising thought provoking events for our members that will stimulate entrepreneurial and innovative thinking. I am delighted that the need for strong National Associations in each country in the EU was recognised and clearly supported by the participants. These National Associations in their turn would support the EHFA and thus provide the infrastructure to deliver a clear European strategy for our industry and a strong communications network. This will enable EHFA to set out the industry's support of the EU Health Agenda and help them to stem the obesity epidemic and help combat a number of other chronic diseases which can benefit from regular quality physical activity. In other words "More people, More active, More often."*

More information: [www.ehfa.eu](http://www.ehfa.eu)

Attached: photo



**First EHFA Executive European Leadership Forum, Santpoort, the Netherlands, 22 – 25 June 2009**

Participants (left to right):

**1<sup>st</sup> row:** Brian Morris (Aspria); Joao Silveira Lobo (Sonae /Solinca ); Joanna Dase (Curves Int.); Harm B. Tegelaars (EHFA); Pedro Ruiz (Vivafit); Stefan Ludwig (Deloitte); KP Doyle (Nuffield Health, Wellbeing)

**2<sup>nd</sup> row:** Johannes Gabrisch (Fitness First); Nick Coutts (Holmes Place); Paul Kienstra (High Five Health Promotion); Nick Backhouse (David Lloyd); Lennart Meineche (Trygfonden); Peter Innemee (Sportcity / Fit4Free); Herman Rutgers (EHFA)

**Top row:** Evert van Anken (Deloitte); Fred Turok (LA Fitness / FIA); Olav Thorstad (SATS); Gijs den Hartog (Optisport); Rene Moos (Health City); Cyril Bouquet (IMD).