



## Diversity is key to expanding frontiers of future science, says renowned space scientist at ECETOC 40th anniversary celebration

**BRUSSELS, 20 March 2018:** The key to expanding the frontiers of future science is ‘gender diversity’ and inspiring the younger generation, according to one of Europe’s leading space scientists, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock.

Speaking at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the European Centre for Ecotoxicology and Toxicology and Chemicals (ECETOC) at the Bibliothèque Solvay in Brussels, Dr Aderin-Pocock said: “We need to find ways to inspire the next generation to be passionate about science, especially young girls, through positive role models and by communicating the ‘worlds of wonder’ that science reveals.”

Dr Aderin-Pocock continued: “Science today is not very attractive to the next generation. Unless we change that – and fast – we run the risk of scientific progress slowing down in the future.”

Founded in 1978, ECETOC has been a champion of scientific excellence and science-based decision-making in Europe. For the past four decades, it has provided a forum for top scientists from academia, government and industry to work together to develop and promote practical and realistic science-based solutions.

ECETOC Secretary General Olivier De Matos said: “To solve the ever more complex challenges facing the world today, scientists need to find new ways of working together in an open and collaborative environment, with colleagues from both the public and private sectors.

He continued: “We need to tear down the walls and silos that can often limit scientific progress. Instead, we must gather together the very best scientists from academia, government and industry to work together, as well as ensuring that in these collaborations there is a mix of scientific wisdom and experience coupled with youth and fresh thinking. This diversity is the best way to ensure that the frontiers of future science continue to expand.”

The venue for ECETOC’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration could not be more evocative: the Bibliothèque Solvay is the historic home of scientific excellence in Brussels. Established in 1902 by the renowned chemist and entrepreneur, Ernest Solvay, this sociology institute regularly hosted scientists from around the world, who came to share their thoughts and ideas.

For 20 years, the Bibliothèque Solvay played host to the famous Solvay Conferences, whose participants included luminaries and Nobel Prize winners Max Planck, Ernest Rutherford, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Henri Poincaré, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born, Erwin Schrödinger and Albert Einstein.

-ENDS-

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## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. **ECETOC** is a scientific collaboration between top scientists from academia, government and industry. We develop and promote practical and realistic science-based solutions for a safe, sustainable and healthy world.

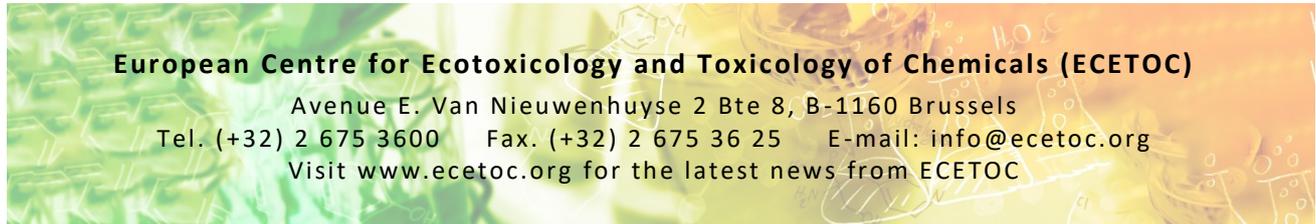
ECETOC aims to create a collaborative space where the best scientists from academia, government and industry work together to develop meaningful research, champion science-based decisions and build a knowledge base of practical and realistic scientific solutions to protect human health and safeguard the environment.

2. **Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock** is a scientist and broadcaster, often referred to as the BBC's 'face of space'. She is the presenter of the astronomical institution The Sky at Night, has fronted a number of space documentaries and regularly appears on science and non-science programmes.

From a modest background and diagnosed with dyslexia, Dr. Aderin-Pocock overcame the naysayers to study at Imperial College where she obtained a degree in Physics and a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering. Since then, she has spent her career making novel, bespoke instrumentation in both industrial and academic environments. She worked firstly for the UK's Ministry of Defence on missile warning systems and hand-held land-mine detectors. For aerospace giant EADS Dr. Aderin-Pocock worked on instruments that ranged from an optical subsystem for the James Webb Space Telescope to a range of projects to monitor the earth's atmosphere.

She now tours the globe speaking to the teachers and children of the world about what scientists do and why, as well as how to become one – with the aim of inspiring the next generation.

She is an Honorary Research Associate at University College London, and she continues her work of engaging the public with science. She augments her 'Tours of the Universe' presentations to young and old with regular TV and radio appearances.



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