

FIRST LEGO[®] League tackles the 'Power Puzzle' Challenge

This international competition challenges 400 Spanish boys and girls to draw up a scientific project on energy resources and build a robot to carry out a series of tasks

In Spain there are two regional phases, one held in Madrid on 2 December 2007 and the other in Barcelona on 16 December 2007, before the grand final in Barcelona on 20 January 2008

Madrid, 26 November 2007.- More than 400 boys and girls aged 10 to 16 from the whole of Spain are taking part in the FIRST LEGO[®] League competition, designing robots from Lego[®] parts and drawing up painstaking projects involving hours of work on the management and conservation of energy resources. There are two classification rounds, one in CosmoCaixa Madrid (2 December 2007) and the other in CosmoCaixa Barcelona (16 December 2007) and the Spanish Grand Final in CosmoCaixa Barcelona (20 January 2008).

The FIRST LEGO[®] League is an international robot-building competition for children, fruit of the alliance between FIRST and LEGO[®] cemented in 1988. Since then a new challenge has been announced worldwide each September to "fire up" the children's imagination and defy them to solve it by research, teamwork and robot building. Using the technological equipment of LEGO[®] MindstormsTM and many LEGO[®] parts, the children work with their trainer to build and program a robot to solve the annual challenge, based on a real-life problem. To do so they have to investigate on internet, talk to scientists, visit libraries and bookshops and develop a presentation of their project. Working on such a project hones the participants' creative skills, sharpening up their analytical thinking, communication and teamwork abilities while also increasing their technical and scientific knowledge.

The participants prepare for the competition by working for eight months in teams of 3 to 10 members under the eye of an adult mentor. The challenge in this year's competition is the "Power Puzzle"; the children will study the way of managing and conserving energy, the environmental impact of our energy uses, what we could do to improve the current situation, etc.

There are three categories: the time-trial robot competition, presentation of the technical robot project and presentation of the scientific research project. The regional phase in Barcelona involves the participation of 32 teams, while 13 teams are taking part in Madrid. The winners of the Spanish competition are then eligible for the Open European Championship – competing against the best European teams – or for taking part as guests in the April World Festival in Atlanta, USA, where they will be able to swap notes with all the participants in the robot competition hosted by FIRST around the world. This year over 110,000 children from 43 countries have enrolled for the competition.

By building and experimenting, children live through the entire process of creating ideas, solving problems, and overcoming obstacles. The *FIRST* LEGO League International program goes out to meet children in their own world and helps to shape a positive perception of science and technology. Children's natural curiosity and creativity are priceless allies in the challenge of developing innovative solutions to technology problems, sometimes glimpsing possibilities that would otherwise be overlooked. They are also participating in a worldwide challenge that opens their eyes to the global picture, working together in a joint initiative carried out in over 40 countries. The international competition encourages them to take part in continental and worldwide events.

The Spanish technology company GMV is the exclusive sponsor of the FIRST LEGO[®] League in Spain.

More Information on First

FIRST is an acronym standing for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology". It is a non-profit-making worldwide organization that seeks to change children's current view of science and technology, making science maths, engineering and technology as interesting to children as sports and other fun activities.

FIRST was founded in 1989 by Dean Kamen and its remit is to design attractive and groundbreaking programs for developing self-confidence, knowledge and life skills, while encouraging the youngest citizens to identify opportunities in the world of science and technology.

(www.firstlegoleague.org / www.roboteca.org)

More Information on Lego[®] Group

LEGO[®] is a private family firm based in Billund, Denmark. Founded in 1932, it is one of today's leading firms in the manufacture of children's games. LEGO Group is committed to the fostering of creative skills among children.

(www.lego.com)

More Information on Cosmocaixa

"La Caixa" is a financial institution committed to meeting the needs and concerns of today's citizens. The charity "La Caixa", with a budget of 303 million euros, is the biggest private foundation budget-wise in Spain, the third biggest in Europe and the eighth in the world. Through its charity work "la Caixa" plows back a large part of its profits into society, thus complying with its founding spirit of improving the life of all citizens.

The aim of "La Caixa"'s Environment and Science program is to bring scientific knowledge closer to the public at large, doing so through its science centers CosmoCaixa Barcelona and CosmoCaixa Madrid and all the activities it carries out in collaboration with other institutions from the whole of Spain.

(www.cosmocaixa.com)

GMV is a privately owned Spanish technology group founded in 1984 and trading on a worldwide scale in the following sectors: Aerospace, Defense and Security, Transport, Telecommunications and IT for public administration and large corporations. In 2006 it chalked up a revenue of 66.5 million euros working with a 750-strong staff. The company's growth strategy is based on continual innovation; 10% of its turnover is spent on R&D. **GMV** hence ranks fifth among all Spanish firms in terms of returns on the European Community's Sixth Framework Program for Research and Technological Development and holds several international patents. GMV is currently one of the world's two foremost suppliers of satellite control centers; as a firm it boasts Europe's third biggest participation by volume in Galileo; it is the main supplier of C3I command and control systems to the Spanish army and the nation's top supplier of telematic systems for public transport.

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