PRESS RELEASE /

Maia, 29th September 2020

SONAE IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD INCLUSION & DIVERSITY PRACTISE IN EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

- **The European Round Table for Industry, which brings together 55 European company leaders, has released a good practise guide that includes successful examples among Sonae companies.**
- **Paulo Azevedo, Chairman of Sonae, presides the ERT commission in charge of Inclusion & Diversity in companies.**

The European Round Table for Industry has released today the toolkit "ERT I&D Toolkit", for the promotion of Inclusion & Diversity in organisations, which gathers examples of good practise in 20 of the biggest European companies in different sectors, among them two initiatives implemented by Sonae Companies.

The publication addresses various dimensions of Inclusion & Diversity, namely gender, age, disability, ethnic groups, LGBT+ or support to victims, with the goal of accommodating demographic diversity[1] and cognitive diversity[2]. In this toolkit you may find two projects by Sonae companies, dedicated to generational diversity. "Reverse Mentoring" by Sonae MC clearly demonstrates the advantages of joint work and experience exchange between fellow workers of different generations. Contrary to usual practice, in this programme, younger workers shared their knowledge with senior colleagues. As for "Sonae Arauco Knowledge Academy", due valorisation was given to the expertise of senior colleagues who, anticipating the time to leave Sonae Arauco, have the opportunity to share their skills with fellow workers at different stages of their careers through an innovative training experience, which makes us of new learning methods. With these projects, it is possible to value each age group and, most of all, to take advantage of diversity, more and more present within our companies.

Paulo Azevedo, Chairman of Sonae and Chair of the ERT Committee on Jobs, Skills & Impact, states: "This compendium of 25 case studies provides some concrete actions that contribute to a more inclusive company culture, to unleash the full potential of a diverse workforce. They are the basis for continuous exchange of experiences and best practices among companies led by ERT Members and as such, this is permanent work in progress".

He adds: "Although each company is different and there is no single nor instant solution, we hope that these examples, across the various dimensions of inclusion & diversity, will inspire and stimulate more inclusion. The more companies commit and engage in these kinds of

For more informations, please contact:
DIOGO SIMÃO
Diretor / BAN Corporate & Media Relations
M. +351 93 652 86 39 // E. ds@ban.pt

initiatives–weaving I&D into their values and company culture–the faster will be the pace of change."

Frank Heemskerk, Secretary General of ERT commented "Today's release builds on the #EmbraceDifference pledge made by ERT Members in November 2018 and on our established annual reporting of Voluntary Targets for Women in Leadership, which has been in place for about 8 years now. We look forward to sharing these case studies with the wider business community in the coming months, continuing to learn about emerging aspects of I&D and ultimately driving the development of best practise."

Long term commitment to Equality & Diversity

Sonae's commitment to gender equality led to adherence, development and fostering of various national and international initiatives. For instance, together with ERT, in 2013, Sonae developed and subscribed the "ERT Women Initiative and Voluntary Targets", having set up voluntary goals that seek greater gender diversity, not only for positions in top management structures, but also in intermediate management positions. In November 2018, Sonae signed the first European commitment towards inclusion and diversity, transversal to various industries, entitled *Embrace Difference (Diversity & Inclusion)*, with the aim of fostering the creation of an atmosphere and work conditions that are adequate for all employees to reach their full potential, through: inclusive culture and leadership, definition of goals and objectives, clarification of responsibilities such as equal opportunities.

The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) is a forum that brings together around 55 Chief Executives and Chairs of leading multinational companies of European parentage, covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT strives for a strong, open and competitive Europe, with the EU and its Single Market as a driver for inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity. Companies of ERT Members have combined revenues exceeding €2 trillion, providing direct jobs to around 5 million people worldwide – of which half are in Europe – and sustaining millions of indirect jobs. This group of companies, which includes Sonae, invests more than €60 billion annually in R&D, largely in Europe.

The guide on Inclusion & Diversity by ERT is available here and the website for the initiative is here.

[1] Demographic diversity describes the unique environment facing employees with specific traits such as gender, race, religion, physical disabilities and sexual orientation.

[2] Cognitive diversity describes differences in perspective or information processing styles and how individuals think about and engage with new, uncertain, and complex situations.