

## PRESS NOTE

TELECOM ITALIA SUPPORTS THE 'STARTUP EUROPE PARTNERSHIP', THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROGRAMME FOR LEADING NEW TECHNOLOGY STARTUPS

**The announcement was made today during the initiative's first official event held in Naples as part of the Go Global Now event**

**The 'Startup Europe Partnership' will be officially launched on 22 May in Brussels, in the presence of leading members of the European Commission, President José Manuel Barroso and Vice President Neelie Kroes**

*Rome, 13 May 2014*

Telecom Italia is the first company in Europe to support the Startup Europe Partnership (SEP) as a Corporate Member. The initiative was heralded on 23rd January this year in Davos by the Vice President of the European Commission Neelie Kroes and is aimed at large companies interested in taking up the challenge of innovation represented by digital startups, opening up their procurement, investment and acquisition channels.

The aim is to support the growth of European startups and create European companies in the field of new technologies that are able to compete globally.

The announcement was made by Salvo Mizzi, Telecom Italia's head of Digital Market Development and originator of the Working Capital project, during the first official event (Matching Event) of the SEP organised in Naples as part of the Go Global Now event.

*"Telecom Italia is proud to be the first Corporate Member of the Startup Europe Partnership - declared Mizzi. It confirms the Company's commitment to stimulate technological innovation through startups and to increase awareness in the European entrepreneurial fabric of all the opportunities of the digital era, particularly thanks to the experience gained with the Working Capital project, launched in 2009, which this year will also reward the best international digital startups".*

Telecom Italia's involvement in the SEP makes a strong contribution to the European programme, the founding members of which, apart from Telefonica, Orange and BBVA, also include investment funds (European Investment Fund, part of the European Investment Bank Group) and some of the leading European universities (Cambridge University, the IE Business School and the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society).

Telecom Italia's announcement was also greeted with great enthusiasm in Brussels:

*"We are very pleased that Telecom Italia has joined in this important European initiative that brings together big companies and universities with the aim of supporting a wave of innovative startup companies across the continent that are able to succeed at international level – commented Isidro Laso*

**Ballesteros, Head of Startup Europe, European Commission**, attending the Go Global Now event in Naples – *This is definitely good news and we hope other European companies will decide to join at the next Matching Event in Madrid, on 26th June*".

*"Restoring Europe to a position of leadership in the field of new technologies requires integration between startups and big companies – commented **Alberto Onetti, Chairman of Mind the Bridge Foundation and manager of the Startup Europe Partnership programme** - Startups can act as a driving force to develop a capacity for innovation in existing companies. In turn, big companies can allow startups to make a leap forward, giving them scale and international dimension. The Startup Europe Partnership project is based on creating qualified opportunities for interaction between these two worlds. The entry of Telecom Italia today adds an important building block to this structure and - let me emphasise this with a touch of pride - a country like Italy cannot remain on the sidelines of this process but must play a leading role".*

The **Startup Europe Partnership**, coordinated by the Italo-American Mind the Bridge foundation, with British bank Nesta and German organisation The Factory, is one of the 6 actions for entrepreneurship defined as part of the "Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan" (European Commission, January 2012) and is designed to implement some of the key recommendations of the Startup Manifesto.

At institutional level, the Startup Europe Partnership also benefits from synergies with the European Digital Forum.

**The initiative will be officially launched on 22nd May in Brussels, in the presence of leading members of the European Commission, President José Manuel Barroso and Vice President Neelie Kroes**, and will be based mainly on **3 lines of action** (revolving around a single format, scalable and tested in our country thanks to the activities conducted in recent years by the Mind the Bridge foundation, known as the SEP Matching Events):

- **Matching:** a series of international events to be held in major European cities according to the same format. Each event will be a kind of marketplace within which the best European startups will meet the leading companies interested in specific technologies. The ultimate goal of the matching events is to ensure that big companies buy the products and channel the services provided by startups (procurement), invest in startups (seed investment) and potentially make acquisitions (acquisitions/acqui-hiring).

**After Naples, the second Matching Event will be held in Madrid on 26th June, organised in partnership with Startup The Fusion. A further 3 events will take place, one of them on 21st November in London, in association with "Silicon Valley comes to UK".**

- **Sharing:** a repository of best practice used by the best European and non-European companies (taking Silicon Valley, for example, as a reference) in terms of corporate venture and company entrepreneurship programmes. The aim is to reduce the cultural gap and promote "startup cross-fertilisation" Best practices will also be discussed during the Open Session of the SEP Matching Events.

- **Mapping:** a map of the most promising startups and a celebration of success stories among startups and spin-offs that have been able to grow. The aim is to provide visibility for emerging startups and promote reference models.

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