

## 4<sup>th</sup> Microsoft EU SME Day

### *From Start-Up to Star*

#### *Call for action for better framework conditions for small businesses*

**BRUSSELS, Belgium – 12 June 2008** —Today, Microsoft hosts its 4<sup>th</sup> annual EU SME Day at the Royal Museum of Art and History and at Microsoft's Executive Briefing Center for European Innovation in Brussels. EU SME Day explores how public and private sectors can work together to better support European high growth entrepreneurs, creating world class leaders in innovative technologies.

Issues discussed include venture capital funding in Europe, the Small Business Act, European Patent Reform, regulation, the European Institute of Technology, and, , and how to motivate young entrepreneurs.

Jean-Philippe Courtois, President of Microsoft International, introduced SME Day as “an opportunity for ambitious businesses from across Europe to showcase the amazing work they are doing, share best practices, and tell decision-makers what Europe needs to do to boost its competitiveness. There is a clear consensus that both the public and private sectors need to do more to help small business catch up with their US and Japanese counterparts and to deliver economic growth and jobs. SMEs need more venture capital, less red tape and more research. Microsoft is doing its part in many ways, such as by entering into IP ventures with SMEs across Europe, sharing its intellectual property with the broadest number of companies possible. For example, at the European Investor Summit preceding EU SME Day, Microsoft announced a new IP venture partnership signed with Signals.”

Through a series of specialized workshops, SME Day delegates will look at public and private capital for high growth companies, how to enable the European Investor community, licensing

innovative R&D technologies to entrepreneurs and the provision of e-skills for SMEs and women in entrepreneurship.

The keynote panel features European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth Ján Figel', SME Union Co-President, Angel Investor and Former President of Business network EBAN Peter Jungen, Vice-Chair of BUSINESSEUROPE's SME Committee Hugh Morgan-Williams and Jean-Philippe Courtois, President of Microsoft International.

Commissioner Figel' said that by bringing together such a wide mix of SMEs, venture capitalists, young entrepreneurs and industry leaders, the SME Day provides an ideal framework for discussing Europe's needs and forming networks and partnerships. The European Commission has a dedicated set of initiatives, such as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and next year's European Year of Creativity and Innovation. These will help to usher in a new era of Innovation and pan-European cooperation, strengthening ties between education, research and business to facilitate the development and application of new technologies.

Microsoft's EU SME Day takes place in the context of the European Commission's ongoing work on the Small Business Act and the Commission proposal for 2009 to be the year of creativity and innovation for Europe. The event is attended by 400 delegates, including SMEs, venture capitalists, and representatives from all EU Member States.

Peter Jungen, Co-President of the SME-UNION, supported the need for improved framework conditions to promote SME growth in Europe pointing out that governments need the entrepreneurs to solve problems which they themselves cannot solve. Mr Jungen stressed that more focus was needed: "If we do not create a more conducive framework for SME growth, Europe will continue to fall behind our global competitors. In the long run, this will mean fewer jobs in Europe, and of a lesser quality. Our discussions today highlighted the need for more and clearer incentives for capital investors and entrepreneurs, encouraging to take the needed risks and to invest in Europe's future. Today, we come together to once again give government concrete recommendations for how they can make a difference- now. Finally governments need to understand that they need more the entrepreneur than the entrepreneur needs a particular government."

SME Day also sees the publication of an important study by the London School of Economics. The study highlights competitiveness amongst European companies and examines which policies are the most effective in promoting growth and innovation at regional and national levels. The LSE study further examines the impact of regulation on Europe's competitiveness.

Attending SME Day are also Microsoft Vice-President Global Corporate Affairs Pamela Passman, Chairman Europe Jan Muehlfeit and Corporate Vice-President of Strategic and Emerging Business Development Dan'l Lewin.

### **News announcements at SME Day**

- IP ventures – the transfer of knowledge and technology through partnership venture with **Signals**.
- **European Union Grants Advisor (EUGA)** signs a **Memorandum of Understanding with the European Software Association**: ESA is the first pan European association joining the European EUGA consortium with HP, Intel and Microsoft among others.
- **EUGA is broadening its horizon and has recently been launched in Turkey and soon in Croatia**. Turkey and Croatia will be the first two accession countries where EUGA is present.
- **Microsoft announce partnership to support the next generation entrepreneurs with European Business Angels Network (EBAN) and TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs)**
- EBAN represents angel and early stage investment market and together with Microsoft will collaborate in the coming years to build capacity for innovative start-up companies.
- Under a global agreement, Microsoft and TiE will work closely in UK / Europe: partnering to foster entrepreneurship and innovation globally by educating, mentoring and networking in UK and Nordics.
- **Microsoft and its European partners are launching a new portal: Partnerships for Growth <http://www.partnershipsforgrowth.eu/>** This external web portal gathers and presents an overview of the different public-private partnerships that Microsoft and its partners across Europe have undertaken.
- Publication of study on **early stage financing** in Europe vs. the US and Asia by **the London School of Economics**.

### **About Microsoft**

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential. Through different IT training and grants programs, Microsoft is supporting its ecosystem, the companies offering products that run on Microsoft software or that service and distribute such software. This ecosystem employs almost 2.5 million people in Europe, representing over a third of IT employment in Europe in 2005 was part of the Microsoft ecosystem.

To support the ecosystem Microsoft has invested in Technology Centres for ISV development to provide local ICT industries with technical, marketing and business guidance from software engineers. These centres exist in Denmark, Croatia, Spain and the Netherlands. Through the Emerging Business programme, Microsoft engage with the 300 venture-capitalist backed businesses in Europe and provide inexpensive licensing of Microsoft technology to start-ups. The programme has over 6,500 partners. Microsoft license some of the technologies developed to smaller companies which can exploit their commercial potential. These Microsoft IP Ventures have already been launched with 3 National Development Agency agreements: Enterprise Ireland, Sitra (Finland), Ministry of Science and Technology (Denmark.).

Microsoft is also part of the European Union Grants Advisor helping SMEs and entrepreneurs to submit their request for grants, with over 130 companies and agencies now partnering in EUGA, including Intel & HP. In 2007, EUGA impacted 113,832 companies. 5,000 jobs have been created by awarded EUGA projects.

### **About Microsoft Europe**

Microsoft has operated in Europe since 1982. In the region Microsoft employs more than 12,000 people in over 55 subsidiaries, delivering products and services.

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