

Top Tech Companies: "Women Key to Competitiveness"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 October 2014, Rome: In Rome today, major technology companies **Facebook, Google, HP** and **SAP** recognised top European girls and women in tech, and underscored the need to increase participation of women to promote competitiveness of the European ICT sector. Company representatives presented awards for **2014 European Digital Girl, Woman** and **Impact Organisation of the Year**, and committed industry support for increasing uptake of digital skills and jobs by European girls and women.

"We are proud to support the Ada Awards recognising outstanding girls and women in digital sectors," said head of **Facebook** Brussels, **Ms. Erika Mann**. "Only 30 percent of the 7 million people working in ICT are women," she continued. "But in order to remain competitive, Europe needs to scale-up its digital skills and invest in education for the next generation, particularly for girls."

For **Hewlett-Packard**, support of the Ada Awards reflects a priority to increase leadership by women and promote greater diversity across the board as key performance drivers. "High performance teams are diverse and inclusive in nature," said **Mr. Addie van Rooij**, EMEA Vice President for Human Resources at **HP**. "In many ways, women are more natural leaders for those types of teams," he added.

"Women use technology as much as men," said **Mr. Diego Ciulli**, Senior Policy Analyst at **Google**. "But the reality is that they are under-represented when it comes to creating it and to managing tech companies," he said. "Our goal is to provide girls of all ages with scholarships and the motivation to pursue degrees in computer science and become active role models in the field."

Ms. Esther Roure Vila, Customer Service Engineer at **Cisco** and **2014 European Digital Woman of the Year** agrees that there is a great need for more female role models in tech. "I never had a role model," she said on being recognised by the Ada Awards jury. "Which is why I hope to become one," she continued.

European tech giant **SAP** provides mentoring and shadowing opportunities for finalists of the **Digital Girl Award**, presented this year to Miss Lauren Boyle, a 9-year-old from Ireland, and Miss Manon Van Hoorebeke, 11 years old, from Belgium. This work dovetails with global SAP initiatives that promote the contribution of women to innovation and the digital economy.

Engaging women is also key to addressing the ICT skills gap in Europe and to giving women greater and better job opportunities, according to **Cheryl Miller**, Executive Director of the **Digital Leadership Institute** and founder of the Ada Awards. "With 900,000 jobs going unfilled in the European tech sector by 2020, and women in only 20 percent of leadership and technical roles, it makes sense that tech companies focus on skilling and empowering women to take up those jobs," said Ms. Miller. "The Ada Awards were created to highlight this opportunity, and to inspire more girls and women toward digital studies and careers," she said.

Ms. Fiona Fanning, Director of **CEPIS**, the leading ICT professional network in Europe and a founding partner of the Ada Awards, said that getting more young girls and women interested in technology is vital to sustain the future of the ICT profession. "There are over 500,000 ICT jobs available in Europe," said Ms. Fanning. "And at least half of them belong to women."

Media Contact

(Ms.) Cheryl D. Miller

Digital Leadership Institute

Tel: +32 479 977 767

Email: media@dlia.org

Top Tech Companies: "Women Key to Competitiveness"

The **2014 European Ada Awards ceremony** took place during a high-level European digital skills event hosted by the **Italian presidency of the Council of the European Union** where the following prizes were awarded:

- *2014 European Digital Woman of the Year*: Ms. Esther Roure Vila/Cisco (Spain)
- *2014 European Digital Girl of the Year - 10 and Under*: Miss Lauren Boyle of Ireland (9 years old)
- *2014 European Digital Girl of the Year - 11 and Over*: Miss Manon Van Hoorebeke of Belgium (11 years old)
- *2014 European Digital Impact Organisation of the Year*: STEMettes, England

The Ada Awards are an initiative of Brussels-based **Digital Leadership Institute**, in partnership with the **Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS)**, **DIGITALEUROPE**, the **European Centre for Women in Technology (ECWT)** and **European SchoolNet**. The awards are named for **Lady Ada Lovelace**, the world's first computer programmer, and are an official pledge to the **Grand Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs** in Europe. In their inaugural year, the Ada Awards enjoyed patronage of **European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes** responsible for the digital agenda for Europe.

The **Digital Leadership Institute** is a Brussels-based think and do tank whose mission is to bridge the gender gap and digital divide worldwide. DLI and partners actively contribute to realising the Grand Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs in Europe and the Europe 2020 vision of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

For more information, please visit:

<http://adawards.com/>

<http://dlii.org/>

<http://www.cepis.org/>

<http://www.digitaleurope.org/>

<http://www.womenandtechnology.eu/>

<http://www.eun.org/>

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs-0>

###

Media Contact

(Ms.) Cheryl D. Miller

Digital Leadership Institute

Tel: +32 479 977 767

Email: media@dlii.org