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New European ways to INNOVEIT

600 innovators from across Europe look at new ways to innovate at the EIT #InnovEIT Forum in Budapest.

#InnovEIT 2015, one of Europe's most important fora on innovation, opened today in Budapest. Taking place from 5 to 7 May, the Forum brings together more than 600 entrepreneurs, researchers, policy makers, business leaders and students from across Europe. The Forum is organised by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), an independent body of the EU set up to develop new ways to boost successful entrepreneurship and innovation.

Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport said: *"The European Commission has made restoring economic growth and job creation its main political priority. Innovation and education have a crucial role to play in this. The EIT is already making a valuable contribution: by fostering a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture and by leading to tangible results – for example helping to bring more than 120 new products and services to the market, creating 141 start-ups across Europe and training 472 graduates."* He added: *"We now need to build on these first results and decide how to ensure the EIT has an even bigger impact in the future. InnovEIT provides a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas that will help pave the way for the next steps."*

Speakers at the EIT Innovation Forum include Commissioner Navracsics, Birgitte Andersen - CEO and Co-Creator of Big Innovation Centre, and Corinne Vigreux - Co-Founder and Consumer Business Managing Director of TomTom. The event will host the EIT Awards 2015, which will recognise the success of European innovators.

"We have 17 enormously talented individuals with great ideas and ardent passion nominated for the EIT awards this year," said Peter Olesen, Chair of the EIT Governing Board. *"They are tomorrow's innovation leaders and I am certain they will each go on to emulate the success of previous winners."* Such winners include Kate Hofman, who won the EIT 2013 CHANGE Award for "GrowUp", an urban farm concept and David Tacconi, who won the EIT 2013 Venture Award for Riablo, a rehabilitation product. Since winning, Hofman has built a prototype, taken on staff, raised over £1m in funding and is currently building her first commercial farm. Tacconi has enjoyed huge international exposure and a growing network of investors since his success at the awards.

Nominees for the EIT Awards are from:

- Denmark: Regnar Paaske (EIT Venture Awards);
- France: Pascal Boulanger (EIT Venture Awards) and Xavier Pain (EIT Innovators Awards);
- Germany: Arno Zimmerman (EIT CHANGE Awards) and Markus Loechtefeld (EIT Innovators Awards);
- Italy: Stefano Calderano (EIT Venture Awards), Emanuela Zaccone (EIT Venture Awards), Steven Tait (EIT CHANGE Awards) and Bruno Crispo (EIT Innovators Awards);
- Spain: Rajat Aghabi (EIT Innovators Awards);



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- Switzerland: Govinda Upadhyay (EIT CHANGE Awards) and Gian Autenrieth (EIT Innovators Awards);
- The Netherlands: Rolf Huiberts (EIT Venture Awards), Jelmer van Veen (EIT CHANGE Awards) and Sander de Vries (EIT Innovators Awards);
- United Kingdom: Hidde-Jan Lemstra (EIT Venture Awards) and Zhenyu Lin (EIT CHANGE Awards).

“The InnovEIT Forum is a great chance to study all the elements of innovation in action. Innovation is what creates sustainable jobs and growth. That growth has a trickle-down effect on everything around us, our communities, our cities and our society,” said Birgitte Andersen, CEO of Big Innovation Centre, UK. *“We work with innovative companies, thought leaders and ‘what works innovators’ to act as growth catalysts by fostering innovation, particularly across cultures, technologies, sectors and disciplines. Organisations like the EIT tackle this problem by bringing people from business, higher education and research together and creating a bridge that connects researchers to industry and entrepreneurs to new markets, with powerful results.”*

More Information

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More information about the nominated entrepreneurs and their ventures is available at:
<http://eit.europa.eu/innoveit#awards>

Press pictures are available at:
<http://eit.europa.eu/innoveit#media>

About the EIT

The EIT is an independent body of the European Union set up in 2008 to spur innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe to overcome some of its greatest challenges. It brings together the so-called ‘knowledge triangle’ of business, education and research labs to form dynamic cross-border partnerships – Knowledge and Innovation Communities, KICs - that develop innovative products and services, start new companies, and train a new generation of entrepreneurs.

The EIT – Making Innovation Happen

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

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The EIT is a body of the European Union

