

The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award announces support from Microsoft and entrepreneurship education specialist

Two weeks remain for the submission deadline (4th March 2015)

Athens, 18 February 2015 – The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award (HEA) announces support for award winners and finalists from IT giant Microsoft and the Athens branch of global entrepreneurial education programme, ‘Kick’. These new pledges will significantly enrich the range of business support services offered to winners of the award. Furthermore the undertaking from ‘Kick’ offers scholarships not only to the winners but to all ten finalists.

Microsoft is the worldwide leader in software, services, devices and solutions. Acknowledging the significant contribution of the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award in stimulating development and prosperity in Greece, Microsoft Hellas (www.microsoft.com/hellas), will now offer innovative software to this year’s award winners, contributing to their sustainable operation through the optimization of their organization and development.

‘Kick Athens’ (www.kickathens.gr) has pledged up to 10 free places on its intensive six-week business start-up education courses. The ‘Kick’ programme seeks to guide entrepreneurs through the early stages of business creation, equipping participants with the knowledge and insight to create a sustainable business from the outset.

Jimmy Athanasopoulos, Director of the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award, stated: “It is a great honour to see that companies with significant global presence have chosen to support Greek entrepreneurship and have acknowledged our efforts through these valuable contributions to our winners and finalists. Microsoft Hellas and ‘Kick Athens’ are part of our growing family of supporters and are also ambassadors for good business practices and success in entrepreneurship. HEA’s supporters have already helped HEA’s eight previous winners to make a contribution to the Greek economy with the collective creation of many hundreds of direct and indirect jobs.”

The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award was founded in 2012 based on the belief that entrepreneurship is key to Greece’s future prosperity, especially during the economic downturn. The HEA, which is managed and funded by the Libra Group on behalf of The Hellenic Initiative, is open to both experienced and budding entrepreneurs, whose business plans exhibit sustainability, innovation and financial rigour, whilst creating jobs predominantly in Greece.

Each year, the HEA declares between one and five winners, providing them with all the necessary resources to bring their business ideas to fruition. The HEA 2015 Winners will share funding of up to €700,000, provided by the Libra Group and HEA's Partners. In addition, each winner will receive mentorship from a highly experienced business professional, as well as business support services from – mostly Greek – companies. These span providers of legal, accounting, marketing, IT, communication and HR services.

Entries are welcomed from individuals or groups with a new business idea, whether or not they have prior business experience, as well as established, privately-held companies which can prove that they have an all-new business concept which is not related to their core activities and cannot be funded through existing resources.

The names of the finalists will be announced at the beginning of May 2015. The winners will be announced at the end of May 2015.

– Ends –

About the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award:

The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award was founded in 2012, aiming to support established and budding entrepreneurs by providing funding, support services and mentorship for start-up businesses. The Libra Group has committed over €7 million to the programme which will help entrepreneurs in Greece to generate economic growth in their homeland. The award partners are Piraeus Bank Group which has contributed to the training and education of participants since 2014, through its subsidiary, Excelixi Center of Sustainable Entrepreneurship; the Australian based property investment and development company, Jalouise Pty Ltd., and Mr Dimitri Goulandris.

Amongst the winners' supporters are Antidote, Lykourezos Law Offices, People for Business, Reed Smith, S&Team and SAP Hellas.

www.hellenicaward.com

About the Libra Group:

The Libra Group is an international business group comprising 30 subsidiaries operating across five continents. The Group has principal operations in shipping, aviation, real estate, hospitality and energy as well as a range of diversified investments. Developed from a shipping business founded in 1976 and owned by the Logothetis family, Libra is distinguished by a combination of traditional values, new ideas and an agile mindset that allows it to take advantage of opportunities. For more information please visit www.libra.com

About the Hellenic Initiative:

The Hellenic Initiative (THI) was founded in 2012 and is a global, non-profit, secular institution whose vision is to mobilize the Greek diaspora and philhellene community to develop sustainable financial programmes and businesses improvement programmes in order to lead Greeks to long term prosperity.

www.thehellenicinitiative.org

About Microsoft:

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services, devices and solution. All **Microsoft**[®] products have been designed aiming to expand personal and business opportunities. Information on Microsoft may be found at:

www.microsoft.com/hellas .

The Customer and Partner Experience Department is the company's live communication channel with a wide audience using its services. The Department's goal is customer satisfaction, through the continuous optimization of the technological infrastructure and services. For more information, you may visit: www.microsoft.com/hellas/cpe.

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About Kick:

Kick was launched in Seattle by Michal Libes, a 'serial' entrepreneur and very soon spread across the world. Kick is now operating in four continents and opened in Greece last September. For more information, you may visit: www.kickathens.gr

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