

Second edition of the “Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo” Award underway

PRESS RELEASE

**THE MARISA BELLISARIO FOUNDATION AND INTESA SANPAOLO
MEET THE FINALIST BUSINESSES, SELECTED FOR THE ABILITY TO VALUE FEMALE
EXCELLENCE AND TALENT**

- The award, set up by the Marisa Bellisario Foundation and the Intesa Sanpaolo Group, promotes the implementation of practical and innovative policies in managing gender diversity.
- There are 110 finalist companies in the award’s second iteration, selected from across all of Italy among the 460 companies who put themselves forward for consideration. These companies will all receive an award at three events in Milan, Rome and Vicenza, during which the most positive and successful experiences will be shared.
- The two winning businesses, one small and one medium-sized, will be announced on 15 June, during the XXX edition of the *Marisa Bellisario “Donne ad alta quota” (Women on Top) Award*
- In Italy, the female employment rate is one of the lowest in Europe, being 55.9% in 2017 out of all women aged between 15 and 64 (only Macedonia and Turkey are lower), though this does constitute a 4.8 percent increase compared to 2010, and the peak rate is 80.8% for women with the highest educational attainment.

Milan, 7 May 2018 – The first of three events involving the **110 finalist businesses in the “Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo” award** is being held today in Milan, in Intesa Sanpaolo’s new concept branch at 8 Via Verdi. The award, founded and strongly endorsed by the banking Group together with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation, is in its second consecutive year, and is exclusively for **small to medium-sized enterprises that stand out from the crowd for promoting women at work and gender diversity management**, implementing policies and strategies designed to ensure equal opportunities and recognition in an employee’s career. The goal is to **invite the business world to gain an insight into female empowerment**, putting the spotlight on the **best and most innovative practices** out there.

In the application stage, which closed on 9 February, stories from 460 businesses were received, with 40% of the companies being assessed as “exceptional SMEs”. **110 businesses made it through the selection stage**, based on the requirements asked for in the call for applications, and are located all across Italy. Whilst waiting until **15 June** for the **two winning businesses** - one small and one medium-sized - **to be announced** in Rome during the **XXX edition of the Marisa Bellisario “Donne ad alta quota” (Women on Top) Award**, all finalists will participate in three events in **Milan, Rome and Vicenza**, organised by the Bellisario Foundation and Intesa Sanpaolo, and will

receive an award that recognises their unique ability to “foster budding talent”, promoting the excellence and capabilities of women.

Taking part in the event today held in Milan were 52 companies hailing from the Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria and Emilia Romagna regions. The companies were received by **Mauro Federzoni**, the Milan and Province Regional Manager of Intesa Sanpaolo, and **Lella Golfo**, President of the Marisa Bellisario Foundation, along with **Manuela Montagna**, Head of Business Products and Services at Intesa Sanpaolo. A round table later took place, chaired by **Anna Maria Roscio**, Head of Product and Segment Coordination of the Milan and Province Regional Regional Department, in which three businessmen and women, **Silvia Bolzoni**, CEO of Milan-based Zeta Service, **Giovanni Gianola**, founder of the F.P.S. Food and Pharma Systems based in Fiorenzuola d’Arda (province of Piacenza), and **Marco Piccolo**, CFO of Reynaldi based in Pianezza (province of Turin), shared their solutions and good practices promoted within their companies to give a bigger platform to and show a greater appreciation for women in work.

The female employment rate and women-led businesses

Findings revealed in **Ilaria Sangalli’s** presentation, an economist of the Intesa Sanpaolo Research Department, have highlighted the importance of **putting women at the heart of strategies promoting the growth** of Italian business, a factor considered to have great untapped potential: **the female employment rate in Italy is one of the lowest in Europe, at 55.9% in 2017** out of all women aged between 15 and 64 (only Macedonia, with 51.7%, and Turkey, with 37.5%, fare worse). With that said, continued improvements have been noted, **with a 4.8 percent increase compared to 2010**, and with the female employment rate reaching **80.8% for women with the highest educational attainment.**

Women-led businesses are also increasing in number: according to data from Unioncamere, there were over **1,331,000 businesses run by women** - 10,000 more than the previous year’s figure, and almost 30,000 more compared to 2014, with a continuing increase that results in **21.86%** of overall businesses being led by women. It should be noted that this growth is **particularly the case in structured businesses:** proof of this is that limited companies managed by women increased by almost 17% in 2017, making the percentage of businesses run by women overall over 21% (totalling roughly 284,000). **Young people’s contribution to this figure also stands out:** more than 170,000 businesses are run by people aged under 35, and those that are also run by women on average constitute 12.78% of women-led businesses overall. 28.7% of businesses run by young people are managed by women, highlighting the high level of interest that young generations of women have in appreciating the value of their work. **The most significant growth of women-led businesses is concentrated in four regions:** Sicily, Lazio, Campania and Lombardy (an increase of 8000 businesses in 2017 in these regions compared to 2016). Concerning business sectors, whilst almost half of the overall amount earned is attributed to an increase in women-led businesses operating in **the tourism sector** and in other service sectors (**e.g. personal services**), in percentage terms the greatest increase compared to 2016 is in fact found in professional, scientific and technical businesses (+3.8%).

The Intesa Sanpaolo Group in support of gender equality

As well its well-established **collaboration with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation**, The Intesa Sanpaolo Group has set up several initiatives promoting gender equality.

For its own employees, Intesa Sanpaolo introduced **an integrated welfare system** that has developed over the years, creating a wide range of tools and services, including the time bank,

company nurseries, more maternity/paternity leave, smart working, and flexible start and finish times, that practically address the issues of inclusion, time management, and more generally, the ability of employees to strike the balance between their personal and working needs within the company. In Intesa Sanpaolo, women make up 54% of the entire company workforce, 40% of executives and middle managers, and 25% of executives. Thanks to the adoption of gender equality policies, Intesa Sanpaolo is **the only Italian company included on the 2018 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index (GEI)**, that assesses the commitment and actions taken by major globally listed companies in the field of gender equality. Furthermore, it has been ranked **64th** in the **Equileap – Gender Equality Global Ranking**, that ranks the top 200 companies in terms of gender equality, compiled by assessing over 3000 listed companies from 23 countries.

For women who work in or manage a company the bank has set up **tailored loans**, such as **Business Gemma**, that benefits from the Guarantee Fund for SMEs and up to a one-year suspension on principal payments, and **specific training programmes supporting business management and development**, with courses created that are based on digitalisation and internationalisation. Also set up by Intesa Sanpaolo is the **Tech-Marketplace**, the digital platform that links demand and supply for technology, both developed thanks to an agreement with Confindustria. **Opportunities to have a discussion** have also been provided in the form of the **WorkHer platform** for example, that boasts a range of mentorship, networking and training projects. To work closely with businesses who have a focus on improving the personal and family welfare of its employees, Intesa Sanpaolo has also made the **Welfare hub** available, the service that companies can use to allow their employees to access a digital, multimedia, and multi-channel platform (that can be accessed from PCs, tablets or smartphones), where they can find goods and services to spend their “welfare credit” on. Employees are able to choose goods and services related to their areas of greatest interest: home and family, health and wellbeing, savings and leisure.

Lella Golfo, President of the Marisa Bellisario Foundation: *“We are very proud to be continuing with the scheme that we launched last year with Intesa Sanpaolo, the Women Value Company Award. The first edition turned out to be a huge success, not only thanks to the high level of participation but also thanks to the excellence demonstrated by the nominated businesses. We are confident that this year we will also find companies that are able to combine market success with the adoption of an innovative welfare system that supports women in overcoming all the hindrances that they encounter in their career. We have always believed that women and Italian SMEs pose a real challenge and constitute a resource for growth and change. And we have found Intesa Sanpaolo to be a partner who is willing to listen and can see the bigger picture, who not only has a modern insight into issues surrounding women, but also into their potential. Together we will continue to invest our energy and resources into giving a platform and visibility to those SMEs who focus on women and innovation, generating wealth and bringing about progress for the country.”*

Stefano Barrese, Head of the Banca dei Territori Division of Intesa Sanpaolo, mentor of the initiative: *“With the second edition of the award, that is confirmation of Intesa Sanpaolo’s shared intentions with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation in our collaboration, we want to keep spreading a message that is clear as crystal: excellence and talent are genderless. As the largest employer in Italy, we have invested and always been committed to ensuring equal skills assessment and compensation within our Group, as well as opportunities for growth based on merit. As the country’s model bank, we support employment and business in all its forms, with the goal of spreading our business model, that is primarily rooted in a focus on people, increasing the number*

of companies, and the understanding that difference is not an issue, but rather a value to give a platform to and on which to build our identity.”

The “Women Value Company 2018 - Intesa Sanpaolo” Award

The “Intesa Sanpaolo Woman Value Company 2018” Award is given to small and medium-sized public and private enterprises (based on criteria set out in European Commission Recommendation 2003 361/EC) that have a majority Italian capital, are not part of a group, and have a strong financial performance track record. They are also to stand out for their application of policies that value women’s work and gender diversity management, including services that maintain a family/work life balance; initiatives designed to guarantee male and female employees a stress-free management of their time within the company (benefits, vouchers, in-house nurseries etc.); flexible organisation of work policies; non-discriminatory merit-based remuneration policies; development and promotion of skills and careers for women, with a strong presence of women in managerial or top-level positions.

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