

Winner of the JA-YE Europe Company of the Year Competition 2009

ESTONIAN TEAM FIGHTS OFF STIFF COMPETITION FROM 31 STRONG CONTENDERS IN THE JA-YE EUROPE COMPANY COMPETITION 2009

Brussels, 6th July – Student company ‘Touch of Green’ from Estonia won the 20th JA-YE Europe Company Competition with their CO² neutralising plantation service.

The Estonian team had created their company as part of the ‘Company Programme’ and have been trading successfully by offering customers a tree planting service to counterbalance CO² emissions. Customers who have bought their service receive certification outlining how much CO² has been neutralised along with the exact coordinates of the trees that have been planted on their behalf.



226,000 young people created student companies across Europe this year. The top 200 young entrepreneurs were showcased in the 20th JA-YE Europe Company Competition 2009. 400 people witnessed the event hosted by Young Enterprise Netherlands in Rotterdam, the European Youth Capital 2009, and included enterprises from a wide range of industry sectors. An interactive language teaching game from Hungary; An emergency first aid kit from Sweden. ‘MistStyle’ team from Austria showcased their dustbin decorations whilst ‘Small Readers’ from Spain promoted their children’s book which was designed to encourage recycling. To find out more about these companies and all the others who made it to the European finals click [HERE](#).

Richard Pikmets, Finance Manager from Touch of Green explains: *“It’s really great to be the winners and it’s really nice to know that other people believe in our business as well as us. We have managed to create a green and profitable company through co-operation with each other and with our stakeholders. It’s been a great learning experience for us and we’ve gained lots of skills and knowledge. We have now made our student company into a real NGO and we plan to continue trading as a successful business.”*

These enterprising secondary school students have all been running a business through the JA-YE Company Programme and they have each received the support of their teachers as well as guidance from volunteers from the business world. Each student company offers real products and/or services and they have all successfully dealt with the challenges of setting up and running a business.

Speaking at the event Caroline Jenner, JA-YE Europe CEO talked of the importance of skills for employability in the future and the need for more young entrepreneurs in Europe; *“Over the last 20 years the JA-YE Europe Company of the Year Competition has gone from strength to strength and we have seen an increase in quality and innovation of the student teams year after year. Both entrepreneurial skills and more specifically sales skills are on show here and these young entrepreneurs will contribute significantly to Europe’s economy in the future - we applaud them all for their achievements so far.”*

During the competition special juries also decided the following signature awards:-

- The **FedEx Global Access Award** was awarded to **'Toetally UB'** from **Norway** who demonstrated the most comprehensive understanding of global trade with their en pointe shoe that is designed to keep ballet dancers feet warm and help prevent injuries.



- The **HP Responsible Business Award** was given to **'Greblys Company'** from **Lithuania** for their suite of educational tools, including a book and computer games, which are designed to help young children learn the basics principles of recycling in an easy and enjoyable way.



- **Rotterdam European Youth Capital Best Impact Stand Award** was given to **'De Shol'** from **Israel** who made a great visual impact with their company's trade stand showcasing their innovative 'Warm' sleeved fleece blanket.



The winners of the following online awards were also officially recognised at the event:-

- **Accenture Enterprise without Borders High Potential Award** was given to 'Style4fun' from **Italy** and **Sweden** to recognise the joint-venture which had the highest business potential. The company's core product was the 'BeeBox', a high quality hexagonal box system which has been manufactured using recycled material and is designed to store shoes, clothes and small objects.



- **HP Responsible Business Ideas Contest** was awarded to 'solAround' from **Germany** for their innovative concept (renting out rooftops) to promote the uptake of renewable energy in their community.



Notes to Editors

JA-YE Europe Company of the Year Competition

July 2-5, Rotterdam, The Netherlands - Event hosted by **Young Enterprise Netherlands**

Student companies from 32 European countries, winners of their national competitions, were involved in the 20th JA-YE Europe Company of the Year Competition.

Nearly 400 participants took part in the event and in total over 226,000 secondary school students have set up JA-YE student companies this academic year in Europe, offering everything from clothing and accessories for construction workers, a solution to secure private car parks, an interactive manual for education, re-useable multi-purpose bag to a mini-hole punch. These projects are being promoted by JA-YE Europe to help develop the entrepreneurial spirit in the EU, thereby boosting the creation of jobs.



JA-YE Europe (www.ja-ye.org) is Europe's largest provider of entrepreneurship education programmes, reaching 2.9 million students in 38 countries in 2008. Funded by businesses, institutions, foundations and individuals, JA-YE brings the public and private sectors together to provide young people in primary and secondary schools and early university with high-quality education programmes to teach them about enterprise, entrepreneurship, business and economics in a practical way. The JA-YE Company Programme is recognised by the European Commission Enterprise Directorate General as a 'Best Practice in Entrepreneurship Education'. JA-YE Europe is the European headquarters for JA Worldwide.