## DIGITAL EXCELLENCE SUMMIT:

## EUROPE'S MOST CREATIVE YOUNG ICT ELITE PITCHES ITS PROJECTS IN GRAZ AND WORKS ON THE INTERNET OF THINGS IMPROVING SOCIETY

*A smart plant display for cities that combines advertising with the reduction of air pollution is just one of the innovative digital solutions developed by European start-ups and young adults in 2015. This and 12 further digital projects will be showcased at the EYA Festival in Graz.*

From November 18-21 Styria's capital will host once again Europe's most innovative start-up-founders and social entrepreneurs - the winners of the European Youth Award 2015. They will come together with 300 international IT experts and students from all over Europe and discuss and exchange ideas to improve society with digital technologies.

The three-day event will focus on the theme "Stand Up | Start Up | Scale Up". It will not only feature high-level keynotes by internationally renowned speakers like Paul Hughes or Ralph Simon but also make participants work together to come up with concrete ideas and working plans for "Internet of Things"-solutions improving society.

Moreover, Festival participants will be able to listen to experienced and successful managers and entrepreneurs like Arto Puikkonen (gofore), Alexander Decker (t-systems) and Günther Wellenzohn (Infineon). In very small groups they will be allowed to ask all questions they keenly want the answers to.

The highlight of the Festival is the pitching session of this year's outstanding winners in the afternoon of November 19 at the University of Applied Science Joanneum. Winners will showcase their digital best practice projects, explain their motivation and answer questions from the audience and Festival Jurors. The latter will decide on the most impressing one – the Overall Winner of the European Youth Award, the Young Digital Champion.

The Festival reaches its peak at the EYA Gala Ceremony at the Dom im Berg on November 20. The winners will be asked on stage and honored by internationally renowned laudators. After three days of knowledge, networking, inspiration and motivation, all participants will celebrate this unique experience at the after party.

A complete list of winning projects and Festival program can be found at eu-youthaward.org
Photos for download: http://eu-youthaward.org/press/downloads

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**More information for editors:**

**Six categories for Europe's societal challenges**
Projects were submitted and evaluated in six different categories reflecting the goals of the Council of Europe and the EU strategy Europe 2020: Healthy Life, Smart Learning, Connecting Cultures, Go Green, Active Citizenship and Money Matters. All submissions have been scored different points from a technical and strategic point of view. In the first online evaluation round, 60 projects have been shortlisted by 41 Online Grand Jurors. Finally, 17 experts acting as EYA Onsite Grand Jury selected 13 projects as winners of #EYA2015 in the European Youth Capital Cluj-Napoca from September 10-12.

**About the European Youth Award (EYA)**
Called into life by Prof. Peter A. Bruck, honorary chairman of the International Center for New Media, in 2012, the European Youth Award (EYA) is a leading pan-European competition honoring excellence in the use of Internet and mobile applications for social empowerment. Conducted under the patronage of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and Unido, EYA as an annual contest seeks to motivate young people under the age of thirty to produce socially-valuable digital projects addressing the goals defined by the Council of Europe and Europe 2020.