

Name: **Michela Michilli**

Function: Head of "EU Programmes & International Initiatives" Unit

Organisation: FILAS

Welcome speech

Dear participants,

In quality of INNO-DEAL Project Director, I am pleased to welcome you here in Ljubljana to attend the project's Final Conference.

First of all I would like to thank Vice Mayor Jadranka Dakić to represent today the City of Ljubljana, Mrs Darja Radić, the State Secretary of the Slovenian Ministry of Economics and RDALUR Directress Lilijana Madjar who has co-organized with Filas today's event.

A special warm thank to all high level speakers that has joined us for the conference and to Mr Reinhard Buescher, Head of Unit of Innovation policy development, and Alex Talacchi, INNO-DEAL project officer, who, on behalf of the European Commission, have honoured us all with their participation.

When three years ago we decided, as Filas, to submit INNO-DEAL project the European economic scenario was quite different, and Innovation was seen as a means to increase SMEs competitiveness and pursue to objectives of more Innovative European Union.

Nowadays, facing a global economic downturn, financing innovation may represent one of the key weapons to tackle the recession, to guarantee the survival of SMEs that intend to act in the world arena.

The European early-stage venture capital market is currently experiencing major changes. With private funds – once the bedrock of start-up investment for entrepreneurs – moving away from the early stage, it is not just entrepreneurs but the economy as a whole that will be affected.

The shift comes at a time when there is real pressure for Europe to build great global companies to match those of the US, India and China as well as a harder environment in which to start a new business. The public sector has become considerably more important as an investor and Business angels also have become more significant in terms of support.

Within this context, INNO-DEAL project has studied, throughout its duration, possible ways to find shared ways among European partners to increase the support for start ups, especially in the early stage phase. Private-public partnerships are definitely needed in order to increase the critical mass of support and mobilize as much resources as possible for highly innovative companies.

One of the ideas of INNO-DEAL Project, consisted in helping SMEs to breakthrough at international level, being sustained by the establishment of a “transregional network of support” among the twelve INNO-DEAL partners.



Taking into consideration the case of Lazio Region, we noted that a high level of public and private support for the innovation support didn't imply that the start ups would have had the conditions, also in terms of technology, to act in a global economy scenario.

Recently Filas' Observatory for Innovation has published a research in which it appears clear that start ups in Lazio Region that are able to create international partnerships from the very beginning have bigger chances to have success, and reach in shorter times competitive positions in the market, rationalising costs and sharing knowledge and experiences.

In Lazio Region, the innovative SMEs from the three main clusters (Life Science, Aerospace, Creative industries) are seeking for international partnerships, either with other SMEs or with larger companies, possibly supported by agreements at regional / national level with local authorities, Universities, Scientific parks.

Therefore INNO-DEAL project, in helping regions to develop their trans-regional cooperation activities for sharing experiences and instruments, has followed an approach that could facilitate the spontaneous aggregation of interest and creation of international partnerships within the most innovative sectors of the twelve partners Regions.

Throughout the whole duration of the project, the partners of the INNO-DEAL Consortium have worked in order to strengthen the relationships among different organizations and stakeholders that are committed to finance and support the creation of innovative companies.

And we are quite happy that today we can celebrate the signing of five different cooperation agreements that intend to be the playground for a joint support of innovative companies.

Today's Conference will offer a hint on the importance of providing solutions and possible ways to ensure a successful innovation support, and we'll try to take into account as much as possible the constraints and the troubles that are affecting the global economy.

A special attention today will be paid to the five cooperation agreements that have been created within INNO-DEAL project, which represent different ways of cooperating at trans-regional level. They have been built through a mediated (but not mandated) aggregation of interests that has been pursued throughout INNO-DEAL project among development agencies, incubators, and other relevant public and private stakeholders of the involved territories.

I like to inform you that Filas' General Director, Mr Stefano Turi, will reach us in Ljubljana during the lunch break and that he will contribute to the conference with a closing address. I wish us all a fruitful conference and I hope that INNO-DEAL Final Conference will represent an important occasion for you to further exchange knowledge and to boost your cooperation activities.