

**Florence, 9 September 2014**

**WELFARE AND SOCIAL NEEDS, THE FOCUS OF THE CONFERENCE “SOCIAL INNOVATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CREATION OF START-UPS”**

- **Approximately 200 projects submitted for Unipol Ideas, the Unipol Group’s business incubator for social innovation: among these, over 80 ideas looking for solutions to new and old welfare problems.**
- **14 innovative “Made in Tuscany” ideas: the aspiring Tuscan entrepreneur lives in Florence, has an average age of 34 and wishes to innovate the welfare sector.**

Today in Florence, at Impact Hub, the conference promoted by Unipol, “*Social innovation: an opportunity for the creation of start-ups*”, was held.

The event saw the participation, among others, of **Simon Willis**, CEO of the Young Foundation, **Enzo Manes**, Chairman of Intek and Fondazione Dynamo, **Andrea Rapisardi**, Chairman of LAMA Development and Cooperation Agency, and **Pierluigi Stefanini**, Chairman of the Unipol Group.

The Deputy Mayor of Florence, Cristina Giachi, also participated in the debate.

The event focused on social innovation as a driving force and tool for emerging from the crisis, through new instruments and methods for the production of economic value and employment growth, in response to the arising questions of a social nature.

*“The Unipol Group, which has always been close to the world of companies and social organizations, believes that commitment to the development of social innovation is a consistent summary of our proximity to productive sectors and, at the same time, of the continuous search for new welfare models - stated the Chairman of the Unipol Group, **Pierluigi Stefanini** - For this reason we are actively committed to the promotion of new experiences able to produce innovative forms for the creation of economic and social value”.*

During the conference, Unipol presented the excellent results of the first phase of **Unipol Ideas**, the business incubator for social innovation dedicated to entrepreneurs with innovative ideas that are economically and socially sustainable and able to contribute to reducing inequality and improving citizens’ quality of life.

Unipol Ideas, born with the goal of transforming innovative ideas into job opportunities, was presented on 19 May 2014 and registered the participation of approximately **200 projects** at the closing date of the call for tender on 10 July 2014, most of which related to the areas of welfare (43%) and mobility (34%). **32%** of the ideas were submitted by **teams under 30**, while a further 48% by **teams under 40**.

The 10 best start-ups, to be chosen by 15 September 2014, will be the protagonists of a two-month intensive acceleration programme for the search for business partners and investors, which will be followed by a four-month support period with the purpose of indicating the best financing opportunities for the growth of the business.

As far as Tuscany is concerned, **14 projects** were submitted, most of which related to the areas of **welfare (6)** and **resource enhancement (4)**, while the remaining ideas concerned **mobility (3)** and **credit and finance (1)**. The aspiring Tuscan entrepreneurs have an **average age of 34** and mainly come from **Florence (6)** and **Pisa (4)**, followed by **Massa Carrara (2)**, **Livorno (1)** and **Grosseto (1)**.

The launch of the business incubator is one of the initiatives fuelling the commitment to promote the entry of young individuals into the labour market as stated in the Three-year Sustainability Plan, presented at the event by the Group Chairman. This commitment includes other initiatives, such as signing a protocol with the Ministry of Labour for the project Garanzia Giovani.

During today's event, the **EU Investment strategy - role of Social investment** was also presented, a research project created by the **Young Foundation** and supported by the Unipol Group with the aim of analysing social investment in the main European markets. The research and orientation project is a part of the more comprehensive project for European investment policy developed by the think-tank European Policy Centre (EPC), which will formulate recommendations for the investment policy of the next European Commission.

The location of the event, **Impact Hub Firenze**, is a venue created a few months ago with the aim of facilitating meetings between individuals, companies and organizations wishing to develop projects and start-ups with a profound social impact. Inaugurated in February, Impact Hub Firenze is a part of an international network of over 60 venues and 7000 members throughout the world; in Italy alone, there are seven Hubs (Florence, Milan, Rovereto, Trieste, Rome, Bari and Siracusa). Thanks to the presence of this community, each registered member has the chance to stay in contact with other Hubbers and professionals from all over the world, thus benefiting from solutions, practices and approaches that have already been experimented in other contexts.

#### **Unipol Gruppo Finanziario S.p.A.**

Unipol is one of the leading European insurance groups, the second in the Italian market (first in Non-Life business), with an insurance income of €16.8bn at 31 December 2013.

Unipol adopts an integrated offer strategy, providing a full range of insurance and financial products, being particularly active in supplementary pension and health sectors. In the insurance business, the Group operates primarily through its subsidiary UnipolSai Assicurazioni S.p.A., which was founded in early 2014 following the merger of three historic companies operating on the Italian market, Unipol Assicurazioni, Fondiaria-SAI and Milano Assicurazioni, as well as Premafin, financial holding company of the former Fondiaria-SAI Group. UnipolSai Assicurazioni and the parent company Unipol Gruppo Finanziario S.p.A. are both listed on the Italian Stock Exchange.

The Unipol Group is also active in direct MV insurance (Linear Assicurazioni), healthcare (UniSalute) and oversees the bancassurance channel (Arca Vita Group and Popolare Vita Group).

Finally, Unipol operates in the banking business through the network of Unipol Banca branches, and manages significant diversified businesses in the real estate sector, in the hotel industry (Atahotels) and in agricultural business (Tenute del Cerro).



# COMUNICATO STAMPA

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