

# Good Practice examples

## in start-up activities initiatives

collected by **ASNOR- Associazione Nazionale Orientatori**

(Roma)

# ASNOR



**ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE ORIENTATORI**



Ente accreditato dal Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca per  
la formazione del personale della Scuola DM 05/07/2013 - Direttiva 90/2003

# Preliminary research

A start-up is a *human institution* designed to deliver a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty. It is an experiment that precisely means that you have a hypothesis and a theory through you can make specific predictions.

Everyone works on new products knowing that most of the time you can failure, but the biggest waste that product development faces today is not building things inefficiently but *build things very efficiently that nobody wants*.

Therefore we can build a sustainable business around a particular product, but it is important *to practice and to learn principles* geared to the start-up context.

This is the reason why this document provides a preliminary answer to the key question: **how work** the best practices from the European start-ups examples, paying particular attention on Sweden and Latvia.

Sweden has seen a number of start-up companies operating in technology and gaming space. While in Latvia, is growing the TechHub centre in Riga, with a great implementation in other countries.

Many youth are showing to join a start-up now. Even though they do not have the instruments to make a real business project such as analysis of market, economical skills, collect data.

Hence why, VET4StartUp represents a powerful vehicle that can illustrate through some of the Best practices **how to develop faster the process of creating global players from the successful European tech companies**, with the precious creation of a huge network among several actors.

The aim to choose 4 GPs in Sweden and 1 in Latvia arose from their compelling features:

- Innovative for the improvement of human life (Virtual Grasp)
- Implementation of education and jobs in another country (Help to Help)
- Environmental impact (Greenely)
- Build- Measure- Learn (Think in Helderberg and TechHub in Riga)

# Document background

This document contains 5 examples of good practices of start-up projects in Sweden and Latvia. Certainly, this work has been integrated by a preliminary research on websites, articles and video useful to understand better the framework whom to highlight these good practices across Europe.

The criteria used to select GPs are:

- \_ Tech and business in several sectors
- \_ Improvement of human life and new jobs
- \_ Education
- \_ Implementation
- \_ Digital intelligence

# Good Practice #1

## Virtual Grasp

Many students and PhD students at The Royal Institute of technology (KTH) of Stockholm have had entrepreneurial ideas, and along their studies they have started companies. Mostly of the time with interesting international Start-up Inspire, that gave them the opportunity to travel to Silicon Valley and to see how their business concept suits the American market in particular.

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship strategy is based on 8 Innovation Action Lines. In each Action Line it is selected the most promising research results, disruptive technologies and business strategies. Then they package them in Innovation Activities and start-ups. Start-ups are sourced either through the Idea Challenge, the largest European start-up contest in information technology, or through a direct application to the Business Development Accelerator.

Virtual Grasp is an award-winning innovation for both rehabilitation and computer gaming. It is an innovation that can be useful in order to rehabilitate stroke patients, as well as in computer gaming.

### *How it works*

Virtual Grasp is a computer user's hand filmed by a camera. The movements that are filmed by the camera direct a hand shown on the computer screen. Therefore there is no need for either a keyboard or computer mouse to play a computer game or use different software.

At KTH Royal Institute of Technology they have worked on teaching robots to grasp items and it is quite advanced research, and it has led to new ideas.

The two inventors of this project wanted to apply their research in a huge and more concrete context. They have started to manage their job with Visual Grasp in 2011, during they had started to investigate the commercial aspects of the project together with KTH Innovation.

### *Sector:*

ICT

### *Who:*

University of Stockholm,  
The Royal Institute of  
Technology

### *What:*

PhD students Start-Up  
Award

### *Where:*

Stockholm

### *Links:*

<https://www.kth.se/en/csc>

<https://www.kth.se/en/almni/kth-opportunities-fund>

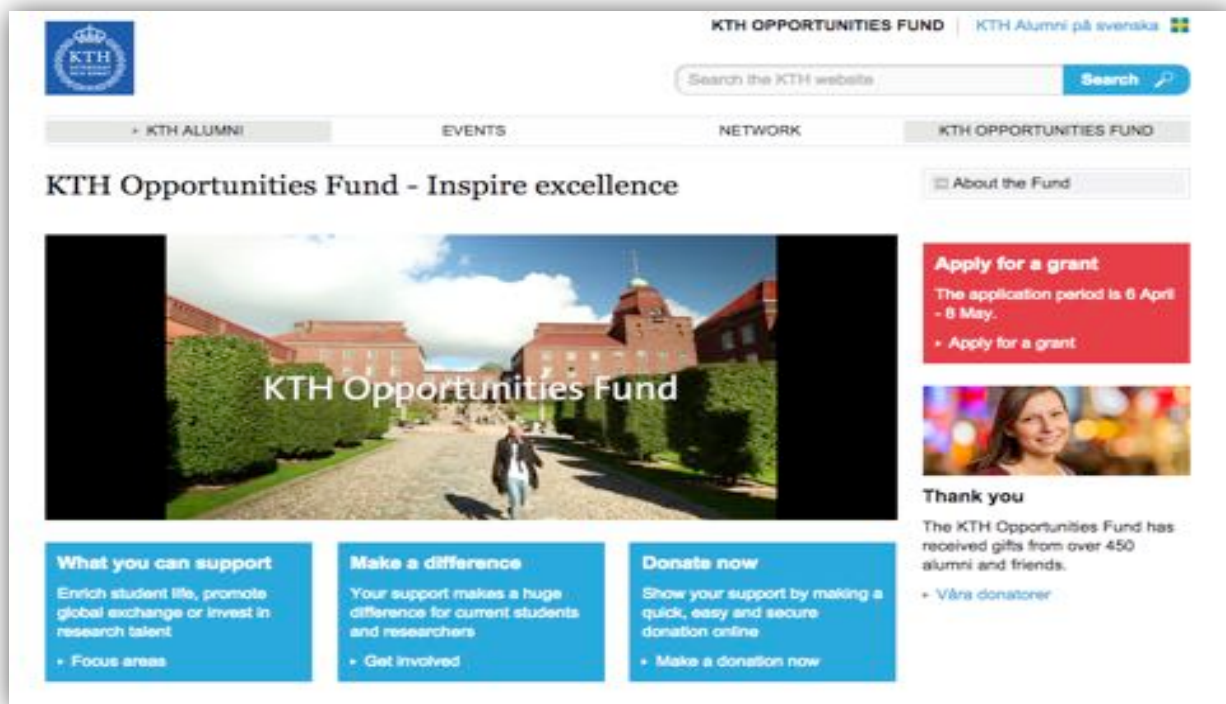
### *KTH Students Start-Up Award*

The pioneers of this innovation are two researchers (PhD students) Dan Song and Kai Hubner, that rewarded 10,000 SEK for the best start-up project by the entrepreneurial programme organized by Stockholm Innovation and Growth, and KTH Innovation. They have been doing research at the department of Computer Vision and Active Perception at the School of Computer Science and Communication at KTH Royal Institute of Technology between 2007 and 2012.

The project gave them the chance to learn more about several facts related with entrepreneurship. Especially, it gave them the opportunity to help and support people with various motor disabilities.

At the moment, they are looking at the value of Visual Grasp for different customer segments such as gaming, rehabilitation, and robotics industry.

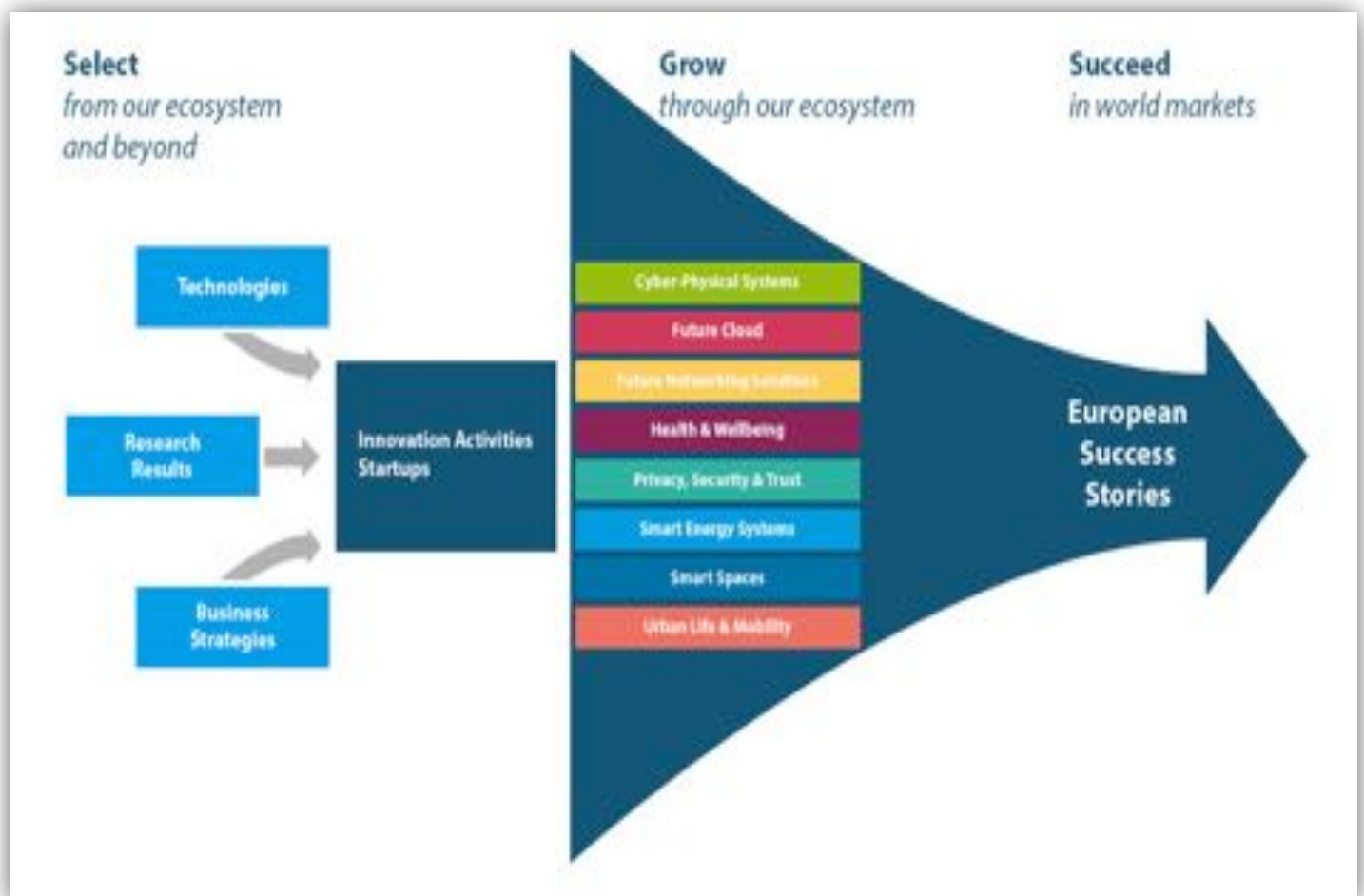
University of KTH, The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm  
 (front page of website and logo)



PhD Students at KTH, inventors  
 of start-up project Virtual grasp



Chart of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy on KTH website



## Good Practice #2

### Help to Help

KTH paying attention on this project, it showed the value of it for universities and research centres, indeed:

- It is important to *build an entrepreneurial reputation in education and research*. To realize a remarkable link between educational and research programmes as well as at the level of technology and society.
- *Accelerate the human capital agenda*. Recruit interns or employees who have followed a certified blended tech/entrepreneurship curriculum at Master or Doctoral level.

Help to Help is a foundation with the ambition to create and implement real conditions for positive changes in developing countries by contributing to education and job creation.

#### *How it works*

Firstly, Help to Help sponsor university and college education for young people in Tanzania. Because they believe the country needs its own teachers, engineers, doctors and lawyers. They raise money to cover the student's school fees through their website, through events and close partnerships with companies.

Secondly, its concept is based on the creation of a network between students and future employers from the local business life.

Since 2013, Help to Help arranges workshops and employability trainings for students in their talent network. In November 2013 the first workshop was successfully co-hosted with the Swedish automobile company Scania. These workshops prepare the students for the labour market and expand their professional network.

#### *Sector:*

Tertiary sector and Social media

#### *Who:*

University of Stockholm, The Royal Institute of Technology

#### *What*

Students Start-Up Award

#### *Where:*

Stockholm

#### *Links:*

<https://www.kth.se/en/csc>

<https://www.kth.se/en/almni/kth-opportunities-fund>

<https://www.helptohelp.se>



This organization believes in building relationships, they want to shorten the distance between donors and students, and that is the reason why they developed their interactive crowd funding website.

Help to Help’s vision is to create long-term positive development that supports the “right students”. Which means it invests in who will be able to share knowledge and create opportunities, which can prove benefits to the society.

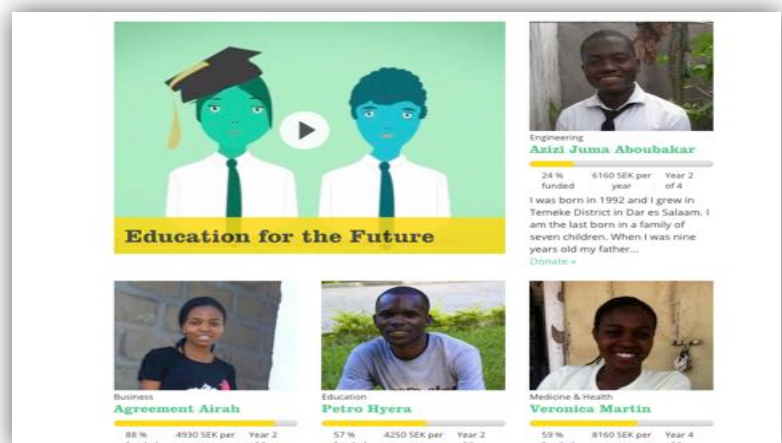
It follows three main values: knowledge, creativity and transparency.

To make all these processes simple and efficient, Help to Help has used modern tools like the introduction of social media to students. By co-operating with potential employers in Tanzania, they help their students build their professional network and give them an insight to how the business world works. As well as co-operating with banks and payment companies, they have been able to minimize their administration expenses.

Foundation Help to Help Logo



Student community.



## Good Practice #3

### Greenely

KTH pays attention on the spread of some value propositions such as:

- The *acceleration* of commercial *growth*, that it will help to find European and customers for your products and solutions; promote fundraising in order to mobilize investor network in Europe and to find a company; find a big corporation to put together forces.
- *Attracting relevant talents* in order to promote multidisciplinary talents.
- Take into account a *pan-European ecosystem* with access to Pan-European multidisciplinary environments. That means to joint meetings and projects in Co-Location Centres across Europe where to find a large diversity of information, technology experts and entrepreneurs. Where faces universities, research centres, start-ups.

Greenely has changed the energy behaviours developing a new mobile application to help Swedish households use energy more efficiently.

#### How it works

It uses algorithms and analysis of energy data from the smart grid. Greenely makes energy behaviour part of everyday life. The service is fully software based on will now be tested in a live trial together with hundreds of customers.

Greenely has developed a new way of guiding households towards a more sustainable energy usage through a mobile application, without any hardware requirements. The app makes a temperature prognosis, relieves household conditions and historical trends with big data algorithms to visualize the households' energy behaviours through a personalized living energy tree.

The purpose of the project is to verify the scale benefits of smart grids for Swedish households and the energy system. The project will run during 2015 and gather new insights by studying the household's energy behaviours.

#### Sector:

Mobile App

#### Who:

University of Stockholm,  
The Royal Institute of  
Technology

#### What:

Students Start-Up  
Award

#### Where:

Stockholm

#### Links:

<https://www.kth.se/en/cs>  
c

<https://www.kth.se/en/alumni/kth-opportunities-fund>

<https://www.greenely.com>

They can connect their customers, products and data with new technology and customer behaviours in product development.

The ambition of this company is to digitalize and revolutionize the energy sector through IT.

Greenely, during the last years, has won several awards. The management group of the company has also visited Silicon Valley and developed relations with researchers from Stanford University and gained knowledge about the energy market in California, in many ways more developed than the Swedish one.

Without a network and personal contacts with potential customers, partners and talents, there is a limited chance to success.

### Founders of Greenely



The App Greenely



The energy tree of Greenely



## Good Practice #4

### Think

Sweden's first lean start-up incubator of start-ups in the process of growth.

#### *How it works*

Think Accelerate is a platform that illustrates a program for early stage start-ups highly talented and motivated. It helps to develop them in the first three month, giving them tools and skills to success as soon as possible and in the best way ever. Start-ups are guided towards an ideation process, to develop prototypes and they are linked with investors.

It does not have any cost of charge for the first three month. It gives the opportunity to the start-ups to work smart, hard and make progress. Moreover, they provide support to start-ups through mentors and business coaches during the accelerator period. These mentors have great experience in entrepreneurship and as company leaders, all of them with various and different skills and experiences. It is implemented a long term strategy for the accelerator, communications and marketing, being a resource for the start-ups in the accelerator.

The other important help provided to start-ups is about professional advice and an important framework of training and workshops to lead the first steps of entrepreneurs.

After three months of intense work, start-ups can involve in this program and have the opportunity to join to a unique group of business angels and investors at Demo Day.

Which requirements Start-ups must have to attend this program?

1. Internet must be in start-ups DNA
2. They are working on new items
3. They are in the early stages of developing their venture

#### *Sector:*

Business development partner

#### *Who:*

Lean start-up incubator

#### *What:*

Team of accelerator and project managers

#### *Where:*

Helsingborg

#### *Links:*

<http://thinkinkubator.se/>  
[www.thinkaccelerator.com](http://www.thinkaccelerator.com)

<http://thinkaccelerate.com/tag/how-to-start-a-startup/>

[www.economictimes.com](http://www.economictimes.com)

## How to start a Start-up

Before starting a start-up, it is suggested to take a lot of time. It is recommended to spend one/two days straight per week and think of own IDEA.

At the base of a start-up project there are four points to take into account:

1. Great IDEA
2. Great PRODUCT
3. Great TEAM
4. Great EXECUTION

The definition of the *idea* is very broad, but you do not have to spend a lot of time on it. And what could seem a bad idea is a GOOD IDEA. It is recommended to think first of the public. Focusing on their changing needs. In fact, beginning with their demand is more appropriate to create supply.

Do not create a market that does not exist. Vice versa think about what happens in the world.

Do not waste time. This is the right time to show the own idea. Moreover, the idea must be clear, simple, with few words. The sight must be direct towards new technologies through new perspectives.

It is important to meet-up potential co-founders. Working with companies is a manner to create relationships with them.

Talking with customers is essential to build something that they can love it. It is precious to consider feedbacks in order to growth. Asking, for instance, what users love? What they could pay for? What would make them recommend it?

To guide the building of a start-up there is an intuitive work. In other words, it means to watch carefully and to trust in the own instinct.

## Where to start?

Initially, a future entrepreneur should be involved in a workplace. He could learn a lot about that job. Spending one/two months in order to understand how that place (internally as well as at local level, etc.)

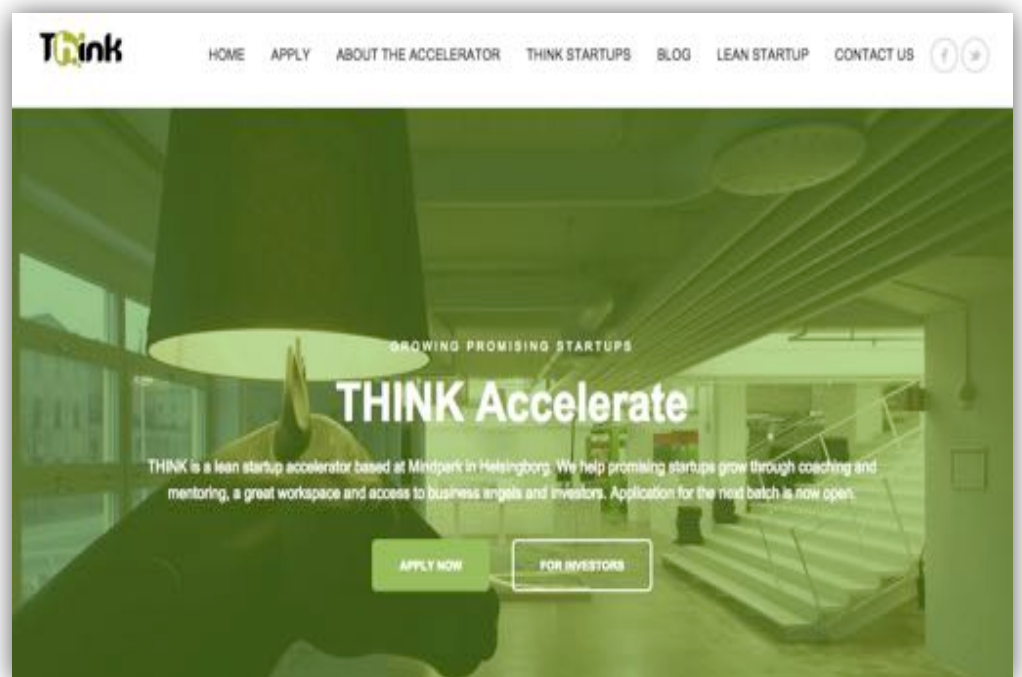
works too. Thanks to that experience he will become expert in that field. At that stage, without doubts he can truly believe in his project mostly because he is more aware, and consequentially people trust in him and his project.

However, he has to identify the customer segment, and keep in mind a storyboard user experience to know how to resolve problems, and improve his knowledge in the field using surveys.

Two are the keys to succeed in a start-up: creativity and sustainability.



The platform of Think website







The start-ups requirements

### What we look for


These are the criteria we take in consideration when handling your application. We look for a certain type of startups. Internet is in your company's DNA, you are doing something new, and you are in the early stages of developing your venture.




**Digital Startups**




**Scalable Business Model**



**Ideally Team of Two or More**



**International Ambition**



**Dedicated and Driven Entrepreneurs**

## Good practice #5

### TechHub Riga

It is a unique environment where technology start-ups can go up faster, improve their professional network, collaborate and have a fun. The non-profit foundation TechHub Riga opened its doors in February 2012, with a launch attended by a pan-Baltic start-up crowd, international guests as well as the Latvian Minister for Economics and ambassadors from the UK and USA. Starting with about 20 members, it is grown to over 100 members from over 30 start-up teams. TechHub Riga organizes regular meetings. During the last 2 years, many of Latvia's most successful fast-growing start-ups have emerged from TechHub Riga. They have inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs to follow their footsteps and to expand many other desks for resident members.

#### *How it works*

The goal of the foundation is to create the environment for successful start-ups that spark innovation, growth and jobs. TechHub creates spaces around the world for tech entrepreneurs to meet, work, learn and collaborate, and runs a load of events, advice sessions etc. They use to provide physical and virtual spaces that enable technology start-ups to smartly work, develop faster and increase their chance to succeed. Thanks to their vision of global community. TechHub offers flexible workplace, access to an energetic community, the resources of a global community, the energy and shared knowledge of a tech conference and trough the tool of a social networking.

#### *Member benefits:*

1. Be part of a network that supports the many steps of start-up projects, and help them to find solutions as well as make friends, find mentors, build business relationships. All this it is useful to be constantly encouraged and motivated.

2. Beautiful locations to welcome them when they arrive, where to join many moments with several workers and people with whom create links and stay in touch.
3. Take part on events is completely free.
4. The new projects are promoted by a large social media network, blog and newsletter every month.

Online platform of TechHub Riga



Some of the people belonging to the community TechHub





This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission/National Agencies cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein



"Good Practice examples in start-up activities initiatives" developed under Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership VET Project "[VET4Start-Up](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

**Contact****ASNOR**

Associazione Nazionale Orientatori  
Piazza del Popolo, 18  
00187 Roma (Italy)  
Web: [www.asnor.it](http://www.asnor.it)

**Authors:** Vasco Filippo and Perrone Francesca

**Layout design by:** Euro-Net

**Publisher:** Euro-Net

Free publication, **February 2015**