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MoneyGram Awarded Exceptional Foreign Entrepreneurs in Italy

The 2017 edition for the first time featured European-wide category

ROME, ITALY (May 25, 2017) - MoneyGram, a global provider of innovative money transfer services, today awarded the winners of the ninth edition of the MoneyGram Awards, that recognize foreign entrepreneurs living and running successful businesses in Italy. The award ceremony took place at Plaza Hotel in Rome, with the attendance of MoneyGram representatives and prominent guests, including Laura Boldrini, President of Italian Chamber of Deputies, and Emma Bonino, former European Commissioner responsible for the European Community Humanitarian Office.

MoneyGram Awards is a unique recognition program that represents MoneyGram's commitment to migrant communities living and working across Europe. Prizes are distributed in the following categories: Profit Growth, Innovation, Employment, Social Responsibility and Young Entrepreneur. An absolute winner, selected by a jury from category winners, receives a prestigious title of Foreign Entrepreneur of the Year.

"With the MoneyGram Awards we want to recognize all those unique entrepreneurs who, in addition to helping families in their country of origin, have added value to the Italian economy and the prosperity of our country. This year, we're also hosting foreign entrepreneurs from the U.K., France and Germany. I hope that in future we'll be able to move this award even further and cover the whole European Union," said Massimo Canovi, MoneyGram's head of Southern Europe.

In 2017 edition, the prestigious title of Foreign Entrepreneur of the Year was handed over to Yafreisy Berenice Brown Omage from Dominican Republic. In 2013, she overtook a supermarket with a little bakery. Five years later, she employs 15 people and reported EUR 1.4 million annual revenue in 2016. On her way to success, Yafreisy Berenice had to overcome serious obstacles but was determined to grow her business and create jobs in Rome that she considers her new home.

The MoneyGram Award develops year-to-year: 2017 edition for the first time recognized entrepreneurs from outside of Italy, who were awarded in International Entrepreneur category. Luljeta Nuzi, originally from Albania, owns a Shpresa Programme in the U.K. which supports immigrant integration, Julie Abisségué from Cameroon is an owner of Arts Design Africa, a digital platform connecting African artists with potential buyers; Ramy Al-Asheq from Syria runs "Abwab" newspaper published in Germany and acting as communication platform facilitating refugee integration.

The finalists of MoneyGram Awards come from all over the world – this year they represented 18 countries, such as Romania, Brazil, Lebanon or Albania; all editions in total featured foreign entrepreneurs from more than 30 countries. Madi Sakande, the absolute winner of 2016 edition, shared that receiving MoneyGram Award helped to grow his business that has become more recognizable in Italy.

2017 MoneyGram Awards winners:

Profit Growth

Leart Dhrami from Albania, who currently lives in Rome where he manages La Spiga d'Oro, a bakery with a catering service.

Employment

Constantino Fianza from Brazil, who currently lives in Pescara. His company, Graf Color, specializes in digital printing and employs 20 people. Graf color has several customers including international groups from the fashion industry.

Innovation

Imad El Kanj from Lebanon. After experiencing the civil war in his country in 2005, he arrived in Milan and completed studies at the Bicocca University. El Kanj also holds a diploma at Economics and Finance from the Catholic University. In 2016 he founded [Italy's Got Style](#), the first Italian fashion e-boutique for the fashionable Arabic man and woman. His start-up aims to increase sales opportunities for over 80 renowned Italian brands.

Social Responsibility

Nelly Roxana Rondan Lira born in Peru. She now lives in Turin where she owns La Rustica, a Peruvian-style restaurant, offering the selection of Latin American cuisine. Nelly Roxana participates in various social projects as ethnic cooking teacher.

The MoneyGram scholarship established in partnership with Roma Tre University was awarded to **Ferenschak Volodymyr**. He is a student from Ukraine who showcased unique business management and entrepreneurship skills.

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About MoneyGram International

MoneyGram is a global provider of innovative money transfer and payment services and is recognized worldwide as a financial connection to friends and family. Whether online, or through a mobile device, at a kiosk or in a local store, we connect consumers any way that is convenient for them. We also provide bill payment services, issue money orders and process official checks in select markets. More information about MoneyGram International, Inc. is available at moneygram.com.

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