PRESS RELEASE

10 "IMPRESE VINCENTI" AROUND THE WORLD: INTESA SANPAOLO AWARDS INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- **10 small and medium-sized foreign companies operating across Central and Eastern Europe and Egypt have been selected**
- **Synergies between the International Banks and Banca dei Territori Divisions to develop an international supply chain capable of attracting investment to Italy and enhancing the value of Made in Italy worldwide**
- **Partnership with Bain & Company, ELITE-Euronext Group, Gambero Rosso, Cerved and Microsoft Italia, NATIVA, Circularity and Coldiretti, as well as Digit'Ed, Tinexta and AICCON**

Milan, 9 June 2026 - **Ten outstanding international businesses** took centre stage at the fifteenth event of **Imprese Vincenti** ("Winning Companies"), Intesa Sanpaolo's programme dedicated to promoting SMEs, which concluded the roadshow of this sixth edition with an event entirely devoted to the best companies from the economic and cultural contexts of Central and Eastern Europe and Egypt.

These businesses distinguished themselves through their ability to innovate, grow and contribute to the development and integration of geographically dispersed supply chains, not only as exporters but also as strategic nodes within value chains, playing a leading role in nearshoring trends and the ESG transition.

To accelerate the development of an international supply chain capable both of attracting foreign investment to Italy and further enhancing the value of Made in Italy worldwide, Intesa Sanpaolo has strengthened the synergies between the **International Banks Division** and the **Banca dei Territori Division**, led respectively by **Paola Papanicolaou** and **Stefano Barrese**. In this context, the Group reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the growth of both Italian and international companies, with the aim of increasing their competitiveness and fostering greater integration among production supply chains.

The International "Imprese Vincenti"

Held at Intesa Sanpaolo's *Gioia 22* skyscraper in Milan, the event showcased **10 "Winning Companies" from 8 countries in which Intesa Sanpaolo operates through its International Banks network.**

Representing **Albania** was Italcostruzioni, a company specialising in precision mechanical processing with a strong export orientation. **Croatia**'s Aircash is an innovative fintech company that has revolutionised the distribution of digital payment services. **Egypt** was represented by Salcef, active in the development of sustainable mobility solutions and major infrastructure projects, while **Romania**'s Rekord was recognised for its manufacturing excellence in technical outdoor footwear, competing in high value-added international markets. From **Serbia**, Diopta stood out for having developed a scalable business model in the optical sector based on operational efficiency and reliability, while Agroitaly represents an agri-industrial business evolving towards high value-added crops. **Slovenia**'s Incom is a leading food industry company distinguished by a strong internationalisation strategy and continuous product innovation. Minit **Slovakia** has created a highly scalable business model that enabled its transformation from a family bakery into a European network. Finally**, Hungary** was represented by Prolan, an IT company developing railway automation and energy management solutions with a strong innovation focus driven by research and development, and Catone, which has established a logistics and production hub for the agri-food sector in Budapest, with a strong emphasis on innovation and quality.

These companies operate in diverse yet strategically important sectors for European economies: from food & beverage to high technology, from advanced manufacturing to infrastructure and agri-food, all united by their ability to create value through innovation, sustainability and international integration.

Paola Papanicolaou, Chief Intesa Sanpaolo's International Banks Division: *"Today's event reflects a geoeconomic trend that has now become structural: the growing integration between Italy, Central and Eastern Europe, and Egypt along increasingly interconnected industrial, commercial and financial routes. In a world where value chains are becoming shorter, more regionalised and increasingly focused on resilience, the role of a Group such as ours is also to build industrial connections, not merely financial ones. For Intesa Sanpaolo, collaboration among different Divisions and our international presence represent a strategic lever for supporting businesses in the highest-potential markets, strengthening their competitiveness, investment capacity and presence within Italian and European supply chains. Among the many outstanding companies we have encountered, the ten selected Imprese Vincenti embody this journey: businesses firmly rooted in their local territories, yet already capable of operating within a broader industrial geography. Supporting their growth means contributing to a more integrated, international and competitive production ecosystem."*

Stefano Barrese, Chief Intesa Sanpaolo's Banca dei Territori Division: *"The synergy between our Divisions enables our Group to maintain constant dialogue with the communities and territories in which it operates, generating unique value for the real economy and the business community, whose needs, potential and strengths we observe every day. Through the Imprese Vincenti programme, over the years we have built a highly effective relationship with 800 companies, including international ones, creating a genuine high value-added community thanks also to the support of our partners. Since 2020, we have provided SMEs with more than €138 billion in financing, including €13 billion for extraordinary finance transactions and €15 billion for sustainability-related projects. These outstanding Italian companies with a strong growth orientation will remain at the heart of the Banca dei Territori Division's strategy and of the synergies envisaged under the new business plan presented by our CEO Carlo Messina, because the growth of businesses is also our growth."*

As part of the programme, these companies will receive support from Intesa Sanpaolo and the project partners throughout every stage of their business lifecycle, encouraging investment in intangible assets (intellectual property, R&D, supply chain development and training) and in the key pillars of growth: international expansion, sustainability, protection, innovation, digital transition and extraordinary finance.

Intesa Sanpaolo's International Banks Division

The Division operates in 12 countries through 11 commercial banks and serves 7.4 million customers. It is present in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Egypt.

Imprese Vincenti: The numbers behind excellence

Since 2019, approximately **18,000 SMEs** have applied to participate, including **4,000** this year alone. Among them, the **150** companies selected for Imprese Vincenti 2026 – including 10 international companies – were chosen for having launched projects or achieved significant results in generating economic value and social impact through innovation and research, digital and ecological transition, exports and internationalisation, generational succession and business scaling, as well as training and employee welfare initiatives. All of this is combined with careful management of industrial and environmental risks, enabling these businesses to remain resilient and sustainable over the long term. Together, these companies employ approximately **150,000 people** and generate around **€35 billion in revenue**.

To capitalise on the experience gained over the years, this year's edition will contribute to the activities of the Imprese Vincenti **Community**, a structured network of national champions that will promote systemic initiatives and support the promotion of Made in Italy worldwide, also through the Imprese Vincenti Observatory, which will be developed in collaboration with The European House Ambrosetti. In 2025, twelve of these companies took part in Intesa Sanpaolo's mission to the United States, organised in Silicon Valley.

Opportunities in Eastern European markets: data from Intesa Sanpaolo's Research Department

International geopolitical tensions and the conflict in the Middle East have contributed to reshaping the geography of opportunities in global markets. A recent survey conducted among Intesa Sanpaolo professionals supporting companies in their internationalization processes indicates that in 2026 Eastern European markets will offer the best growth opportunities for Italian exports.

These are economies with solid growth prospects also in the 2027–2028 period: Central and Eastern Europe (CEE; Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania, and Serbia) are expected to show average annual GDP growth above 2.5%, supported by consumption, investment, and ongoing productive modernization. These areas therefore represent one of the main development poles for Italian companies, both in terms of trade and productive and commercial investments.

Economic ties between Italy and CEE and SEE countries are already highly significant. In 2024, the stock of Italian foreign direct investment in the area reached €46.5 billion, increasing compared to the previous year. Of this amount, €21.4 billion is invested in CEE countries and €25.1 billion in SEE countries. In the same year, investments from these economies into Italy exceeded €11 billion.

The direct presence of Italian companies in the region is particularly significant. Over 3,500 companies controlled by Italian groups operate in CEE and SEE countries (about one quarter of the Italian total), employing around 338,000 people and generating a turnover exceeding €52 billion. More than half of these employees work in manufacturing, especially in fashion, mechanics, transport equipment, rubber and plastics, and metal industries. In services, there is also a strong presence of financial and insurance activities.

Trade relations are also steadily strengthening. In 2025, Italian exports to CEE and SEE countries rose to €66.3 billion, compared to €48.4 billion in 2019 (+37%). At the same time, imports increased from €42 billion to €59 billion (+40%). Italy's trade balance reached €7.3 billion, highlighting the strengthening competitive position of Italian companies in these markets.

The partner ecosystem – The Imprese Vincenti partner team is composed of Bain & Company, ELITE–Euronext Group and Gambero Rosso, Cerved and Microsoft Italy, Coldiretti, NATIVA and Circularity, together with Digit'Ed, Tinexta and AICCON. The specialist divisions of Intesa Sanpaolo are also involved, including the International Banks Division, Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center and Intesa Sanpaolo Assicurazioni."

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Intesa Sanpaolo

Intesa Sanpaolo, with €430 billion in loans and more than €1.4 trillion in customer financial assets at the end of March 2026, is the largest banking group in Italy, with a significant international presence.

It is a European leader in wealth management, and operates an integrated Wealth Management, Protection and Advisory platform, built on fully owned product factories and distribution networks working under full strategic control.

With a world-class position in social impact, Intesa Sanpaolo is also committed to decarbonization and to supporting clients in the sustainable transition.

The Bank's network of museums, the Gallerie d'Italia, hosts its owned artistic heritage and cultural projects of recognized value.

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