



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Rewarding entrepreneurial mindsets thanks to the Leadership Awards 2017



- Irene Andreou, Fanny Raulin, Leonard Orth, Chloe Irving, Greta Jarmalavičiute, Sean Arnold, Edina Bako, Jovana Malisic, Shanga Aziz and Jonah Lowenstein won the 'Alumni Leadership Award' supported by AXA at JA Europe 28<sup>th</sup> [Company of the Year Competition](#).
- JA Europe's 'Company of the Year Competition' celebrates the best 200+ young entrepreneurs across 36 countries in Europe.
- The 'Alumni Leadership Award' supported by AXA recognises 10 standout individuals for their remarkable leadership skills, role model behaviour, team solidarity and enthusiasm also known as alumni spirit.

**Brussels, Belgium, 13 July 2017.** 10 outstanding personalities impressed the JA Alumni Europe jury, recognising their peers for their entrepreneurial attitude. Students that have participated in entrepreneurship education programmes such as the JA Company Programme have higher ambitions for their future career choices (job or further education) than those that have not. They also become more self-motivated in their efforts in the learning process and they claimed to engage more out of a desire for learning. This is crucial to spur a more entrepreneurial mindset in Europe.

Over 200 students gathered in Brussels on 11-12 July to celebrate the top mini-companies from across Europe. 37 student-teams competed as part of JA Europe's flagship JA Company Programme, which gives them an opportunity to set up and run a real business.

Learning to run a company from top to bottom, JA Company Programme students create and market real products and services. The success of the programme is largely due to the wide support from business volunteers, who act as mentors, offering expert advice to the students. Partnerships between education and business are essential to closing the gap between classroom theory and real-world challenges. In the 2015-2016 school year, more than 317,000 students across 40 countries in Europe participated in the JA Company Programme.



By involving AXA business volunteers in JA programmes, the partnership provides students with the tools necessary to better understand the world around them, understand financial risks, build an entrepreneurial mindset and make well informed financial decisions later on.

**Koen Lukasczyk**, Chief Talent & Employee eXperience for Human Resources – AXA Belgium, added: *“At AXA, we are committed to empowering young individuals with the necessary skills they need to succeed. An entrepreneurial mindset is critical for today’s youth, and providing opportunities for students to learn these vital skills is at the heart of AXA’s early career strategy. We enjoyed being a part of the competition and were inspired by the commitment, hard work, and dedication of all the young individuals.”*

**Tereza Spišáková**, International Coordinator for JA Alumni Czech added: *“In JA Alumni Europe, we thrive to further develop and empower former participants of JA programs and connect strong individuals into even stronger network. Coming back to the competition after few years and being a jury member, serves as an example of such personal and professional development. We are honoured that we had a chance to meet such extraordinary and devoted young leaders this year and we are looking forward to welcoming them in our network.”*

**Caroline Jenner**, CEO for JA Europe, added: *“This competition is a team effort, but together with AXA we want to celebrate all the individuality and leadership that makes it all happen. Young people sometimes underestimate that having an entrepreneurial attitude can represent one of their best assets, not only when entering the workforce but in everyday life, too. AXA is fully committed to equipping young people with the practical training and skills they need to be prepared for today's economic challenges.”*

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### **About [JA Europe](#)**

JA Europe is Europe's largest provider of education programmes for entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy, reaching 3.5 million students in 40 countries in 2016. JA Europe brings the public and private sectors together to provide young people in primary and secondary schools and early university with high-quality education programmes to teach them about enterprise, entrepreneurship, business and economics in a practical way. JA Europe is the European Regional Operating Centre for JA Worldwide®.

### **About the [AXA Group](#)**

The AXA Group is a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, with 166,000 employees serving 103 million clients in 64 countries. In 2015, IFRS revenues amounted to Euro 99.0 billion and IFRS underlying earnings to Euro 5.6 billion. AXA had Euro 1,363 billion assets under management as of December 31, 2015.

The AXA ordinary share is listed on compartment A of Euronext Paris under the ticker symbol CS (ISN FR 0000120628 – Bloomberg: CS FP – Reuters: AXAF.PA). AXA's American Depository Share is also quoted on the OTC QX platform under the ticker symbol AXAHY.

The AXA Group is included in the main international SRI indexes, such as Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and FTSE4GOOD.

It is a founding member of the UN Environment Programme's Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Principles for Sustainable Insurance and a signatory of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment.

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### **About [JA Europe Alumni](#)**

JA Alumni Europe is the official alumni organisation of JA Europe. The mission of this organisation is to provide former participants of JA programs with further opportunities and experience, encourage them to strengthen their passion for entrepreneurship and build international networks of like-minded people. It was established in 2004 and currently gathers 10.000+ members from 20+ countries across Europe.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Philippe Giot  
JA Europe  
+32 2 893 44 39  
[philippe@jaeurope.org](mailto:philippe@jaeurope.org)

Julien Parot  
Director of Press Relations and Group Reputation AXA  
+33 1 40 75 59 80  
[julien.parot@axa.com](mailto:julien.parot@axa.com)