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LorF Scoops Best For Italy – Community Impact Award at the B Corp Italian Summit 2018

Launch of #WorldFriend: live the real world

PRESS RELEASE

Innovative B Corp start-up LorF distinguished itself at the B Corp Italian Summit 2018, held at Opificio Golinelli in Bologna, where it took the Best For Italy 2018 – Community Impact Award with the highest score in the community section for its Benefit Impact Assessment (BIA), a strict protocol that measures a company's economic, environmental and social performance.

What does it mean to be a B Corp? It means not focusing solely on the profit motive and instead being a part of the community with a commitment to improving welfare for all, striving for a new equilibrium where the concepts of *For Profit* and *For Benefit* can coexist.

In view of this, LorF has launched the **loveorfriends** app to **foster social inclusion** by encouraging real-world encounters with Facebook friends; the aim is to spur people to spend **only as much time on social media as strictly necessary in order to arrange real world interactions**. The **loveorfriends** app started out as a way to have fun with Facebook friends: **users decide the who-where-when in order to arrange meetings at bars, cafés or restaurants**, with the point being to put social media to one side, at least for a time, **and socialise in the real world over something to eat or drink**.

Andrea Buragina, co-founder of LorF, said the company was honoured to have received the Best For Italy 2018 – Community Impact Award, describing it as recognition for the attention paid to the community. “We want to get people out of the virtual world and into real world interactions” he explained. LorF has put social inclusion and addiction to social networks at the heart of its business model, and in line with this objective it is now preparing to launch the **#WorldFriend** campaign, which seeks to **underline the uniqueness and the importance of experiences lived in the real world**.

As regards the Benefit theme, LorF's social commitment is not restricted to the issues of social inclusion and social media addiction, but also extends to Autism, because social exclusion is a key concern in the Autistic syndrome.

A *Benefit Corporation* is not merely an organisation that is sensitive to sustainability, but an enterprise that has taken steps to participate in the creation of a new business culture, in the form of a new economic and social model. Becoming a B Corp entails opening up to scrutiny across a range of areas (governance, environment, employees,

stakeholder community), with only those organisations that successfully pass all the tests being eligible for B Corp status.

Italy is the European leader by number of B Corps with 81 certified companies, followed by the Netherlands with 62, and France on 53. This figure puts Italy in the world top ten by number of B Corps, although the index is dominated by the USA, where the movement originated, with 1,151 certified firms. However, that should not detract from Italy's performance on turnover, which is close to Eu1.5bn, putting the country in 5th place on the world ranking of B Corps by this measure.

One fact should be seen as significant: doing business while having a positive impact on society and without being a burden on the environment is not only possible, it is in a company's own interests.

The **B Corp Italian Summit 2018** took place in Bologna on 28 November, and was an opportunity to take stock of the objectives achieved in recent years by all Italian B Corps, as well as a chance to share points of view and reflect on the challenges in store for the coming year. Challenge was the chosen theme addressed by adventurer and mental coach **Alex Bellini, who gave testimony as to how the right attitude/mindset can be the winning factor in overcoming challenges, whether faced by organisations or individuals.**

*Founded on Saint Valentine's day 2017, **LorF** is an innovative start-up and Benefit Corp that supports projects for those affected by Autism. LorF has attained B Corp certification, the highest standard for socially responsible companies. **loveorfriends** is an app that promotes social inclusion, encouraging users to swap the virtual world for the real one: the goal is strategically related to the Benefit objectives because it is the very lack of social interaction that lies at the heart of the Autistic syndrome. People with Autism, as well as those with Asperger's Syndrome, are potential users of loveorfriends. LorF has also created and promoted the **HomeMate** project, which uses technology to offer people with Autism greater independence; in support of this LorF produced the video "Did you know Autistics change the world?", which uses positive examples of Autism to illustrate not only what the Syndrome is but also the potential future financial burden it poses to the community, a problem that the assisted autonomy project HomeMate could help to alleviate.*

With the aim of raising awareness of the possibilities for social inclusion offered by humanoid robotics and the purposes it can serve for individuals and the community, LorF ran the #RobotFriend Competition, becoming the first app to offer its users the chance to meet and interact with a humanoid robot.

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