

VIENNA, - 21 May 2009

The Great Place to Work Institute today announced that Microsoft Corp. has won the Best Large Workplace in Europe 2009 award for the second year running.

The institute honours companies that make significant investments in people to provide exceptional working environments, practices, benefits and recognition. The awards are the culmination of its annual survey and report on the 100 Best Workplaces in Europe.

In addition to the blue ribbon Best Large Workplace in Europe 2009 award, Microsoft also received recognition as one of the top three nominees in two European Great Place to Work Special Awards in the employee Fairness and Pride categories at a gala ceremony at the Great Place to Work European Conference 2009 in Vienna.

The Best Workplaces lists are the world's largest annual study of workplaces. More than 1,350 companies in 16 European countries participated in this year's evaluation process. All 16 of Microsoft's local offices that entered made the 100 Best Workplaces in Europe list.

"People are at the heart of business, and a highly skilled, motivated and passionate team is critical for success. So it is fantastic to receive the Best Workplace in Europe award from the Great Place to Work Institute for the second year running. Investing in people and creating a work environment that utilises the latest technology has enabled staff to transform the way they work and interact with colleagues, delivering a strong work-life balance and a highly motivated and empowered team," said Jean-Philippe Courtois, president, Microsoft International, senior vice president.

"Microsoft is a worthy winner of the Best Large Workplace in Europe 2009 award," said Palle Ellemann Knudsen, managing director for Great Place to Work Institute Europe. "It is impressive that companies like Microsoft are proving that even in tough times investment in people can drive business success. Microsoft should be proud of its achievement and hard work as a responsible employer in driving new and innovative ways of working."

Microsoft has made significant investment in office environments, flexible benefits and technology to empower and enable its staff. The new office in the Netherlands is a flagship example of how the company is creating a New World of Work for its employees. The office is designed for 70 percent occupation of staff at any point, and employees organise their work patterns to suit their work-life balance. Instead of the office being a 9am–5pm destination, it is designed to be a meeting place for when people need to come together. This model is being implemented across Europe with new offices in Belgium, Norway and in France in the near future.

Microsoft also has rolled out its unified communications technology to its staff globally. This has given employees more freedom in their working patterns and also is saving the business more than \$212 million annually.

Local Microsoft offices across Europe won top positions on national Best Workplaces lists in the 16 countries evaluated by the Great Place to Work Institute, including No. 1 spots for Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Spain.

More information on the Great Place to Work Institute and the 100 Best Workplaces in Europe 2009 report is available at, <http://www.greatplacetowork-europe.com>.

About The Great Place to Work Institute

The Great Place to Work Institute is dedicated to helping organizations understand and practice the qualities and behaviours that lead to the creation of great workplaces. This effort leads to enhanced quality of work life for employees and improved financial performance for the organization.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential.

About Microsoft EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa)

Microsoft has operated in EMEA since 1982. In the region Microsoft employs more than 16,000 people in over 64 subsidiaries, delivering products and services in more than 139 countries and territories.

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