**EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE WEEK WRAPS UP WITH TRIBUTE TO BREADTH AND DEPTH OF E-MFP’S MEMBERS’ WORK IN DEVELOPING BETTER MARKETS**

*Over 400 practitioners, investors, academics and support providers gather at Abbaye de Neumünster in Luxembourg**to present on market-driven innovations in financial services in the global South*

*31 Workshops, 4 plenaries, 5 Action Groups*

*Kompanion Financial Group from Kyrgyzstan wins 5th European Microfinance Award for environmental innovation*

Luxembourg

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For Immediate Release

[European Microfinance Week](http://www.e-mfp.eu/european-microfinance-week-2014/information) ([#EMW2014](https://twitter.com/e_mfp)), organised by the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP) concluded Friday in Luxembourg, with a tribute to the breadth of engagement by European microfinance stakeholders in developing better markets in the global South.

With this year’s attention on “Developing Better Markets”, 31 workshops at European Microfinance Week covered subjects including Social Performance Management, agri-finance, conflict zone financial services, digital and technological innovations, green microfinance, downscaling strategies, responsible investment, and client-driven product diversification.

Four plenaries throughout the conference included a distinguished panel bringing their experience of market crises experienced and avoided, in a session [on overindebteness](http://www.e-mfp.eu/blog/managing-overindebtedness-lessons-crises-past), and five [Action Group](http://www.e-mfp.eu/action-groups) sessions on Wednesday (including remittances, the environment, university collaboration, rural outreach and youth financial inclusion) which presented their collaborative work over the past 12 months, and planning the deliverables to be achieved by this time next year.

Thursday saw the long-awaited ceremony at the European Investment Bank for the [5th European Microfinance Award](http://www.e-mfp.eu/european-microfinance-week-2014/5th-european-microfinance-award), won by Kompanion Financial Group in Kyrgyzstan, from an initial list of 26 candidates. Organised jointly by the Inclusive Finance Network Luxembourg (InFiNe), e-MFP and the Government of Luxembourg, this year’s award recognised excellence and innovation in Microfinance and the Environment – aimed at institutions that are “integrating environmental governance into the DNA of their business and that are promoting initiative(s) that go above-and-beyond business as usual to incorporate environmental sustainability”.

Kompanion was recognised with the €100,000 prize for its Pasture Land Management Training Initiative, which provides a specialised “Credit for Conservation” loan linked to a training program for livestock farmers on grazing land management and preservation.

According to Olesya Paukova, Kompanion’s Director of Development Services, spoke afterwards of what this award means: “With the prize money we plan to develop a “mobile classroom” to reach the herders in remote pasture lands and provide trainings in more villages across Kyrgyzstan. We will also develop video materials to be used in public schools in remote areas. These materials will connect students in those areas with our livestock management experts who will present the best pasture land management practices, which will increase our outreach even further.”

European Microfinance Week 2014 wrapped up on Friday evening with a tribute from Anne Contreras, Chair of the e-MFP Board, who spoke in the closing plenary on the remarkable breadth and depth of working being done by the European microfinance sector, and the linkages that e-MFP and its partners are making in “Networking with the South” (which remains the Platform’s logo) and developing new markets that are sustainable, scalable, inclusive and fair.

“The title of this year’s conference, *Developing Better Markets*, demands buy-in from a whole range of stakeholders: regulators from various markets, financial institutions from international commercial banks down to small village NGOs and savings groups, and of course the diversifying range of entities involved in providing inclusive financial services to the poor in new – and better – markets”.

“This diversity, and the range of e-MFP’s members is reflected in the content of European Microfinance Week – which grows more varied and fascinating with every passing year – including green microfinance, agriculture, savings, Social Performance and much more”, she said, adding how optimistic this conference made her feel about the prospects for inclusive finance in developing markets.

Contreras closed European Microfinance Week by announcing the dates for next year’s tenth conference, to be held from 18-20 November 2015.

This year’s conference, run for the ninth straight year by the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP), brought together over 400 opinion-leaders, top management of banks, funds and other financial institutions, practitioners, academics, analysts, raters and industry commentators to present key innovations, challenges and the work conducted in the previous year by e-MFP’s several dedicated Action Groups.

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e-MFP is a multi-stakeholder organisation representing the European MF community, and comprises banks, financial institutions, government bodies, consultancies, NGOs researchers and academics. Its aim is to promote cooperation among European microfinance bodies working in developing countries. It facilitates high-level debate and research on key issues in inclusive finance, and is an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders to share Best Practice in a rapidly-evolving sector.

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