



## **Fit for the future – KLM Open sees launch of project which unites the golf industry to increase youth participation**

The 2015 KLM Open is the venue for the launch of an ambitious project to unite the golf industry in its quest to increase participation in golf across the EU and promote golf to the next generation of young players.

The **GoGolf Europe** project will support five European countries – the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France and Portugal – in a three year initiative designed to test innovative new access pathways to golf for European youth while also documenting the unique health benefits which the sport can provide to all.

The new **GoGolf Europe** project has successfully secured co-funding from the European Commission under Erasmus+, the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020.

Led by the European Golf Association (EGA), the project will unite the National Golf Governing Bodies of the five participating countries alongside the PGAs of Europe, the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment and the University of St Andrews as the official research partner. Alongside the funding support from the European Union, co-financing will also be provided by the European Tour and the EGA.

The **GoGolf Europe** launch event at the Kennemer Golf and Country Club on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September will use the prestigious setting of the KLM Open to showcase the project. As the project aims to increase youth participation in golf, the launch will actively involve local children who will get a behind-the-scenes view of the European Tour championship venue and the chance to play golf and receive coaching with local professionals.

Richard Heath, General Secretary of the European Golf Association (EGA), the organisation leading the project, commented: *“Europe has excellent capacity for golf with over 6,700 courses and some 7.9 million citizens already playing the sport. Nonetheless, we are facing significant challenges in effectively engaging young people to take up the sport and we are actively seeking innovative new solutions for growing youth participation”*.

Florence Brugmans, youth coordinator of the Netherlands Golf Federation, stated: *“We are delighted to host the launch of the GoGolf Europe project – increasing youth participation in golf is high on our agenda in the Netherlands. We think the GoGolf project can make a difference in enthusing youth for the sport. We are pleased to be part of a project that unites the entire golf sector in pursuit of this goal.”*

Fredrik Lindgren, Head of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability at the European Tour said: *“The European Tour players were all inspired to start playing in their youth, and the European Ryder Cup team's successes have led to innovative legacy programmes in the countries hosting The Ryder Cup, so*



*we are proud to stand alongside our Golf Europe partners and further support the structured development of the sport in Europe with GoGolf."*

More information on the GoGolf Europe project can be obtained by contacting the EGA office at [info@gogolfeurope.eu](mailto:info@gogolfeurope.eu)

#### NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

The Europe 2020 strategy, which outlines the European Union's vision for the 21st century, included sustainability as a key driver for economic growth and resource efficiency. In this context, the GoGolf Europe project's ambition to grow the sport of golf in a sustainable way is in line with, and contributes to realising, Europe's 2020 vision.

The GoGolf research project is funded by the European Commission under Erasmus+, the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020. It will be implemented over three years.

The GoGolf project aligns with Golf Europe's strategy to promote golf as a growing sport, valued as a force for good in European society. Golf Europe is a group of Europe's major golf stakeholders collaborating to develop the sport and enhance golf's contribution to European society.

The European Golf Association (EGA) represents the sport of golf throughout Europe and works on behalf of 46 member countries and their respective National Golf Authorities. Approximately 7.9 million European citizens play golf in an industry that contributes over €15.1 billion to the European economy.

In conjunction with the EGA, the project will unite the National Golf Governing Bodies of the five participating countries: the Czech Republic, France, Estonia, the Netherlands and Portugal, alongside the PGAs of Europe, the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment and the University of St Andrews as the official research partner. In addition to the funding support from the European Union, co-financing will also be provided by the European Tour and the EGA.

Financial partners include the EGA and the European Tour.

#### **About The European Tour**

The European Tour is committed to celebrating the game of golf from the origins of the professional game, building a proud history of achievement, sportsmanship and integrity as well as showcasing our diverse global talent and rich landscapes. The European Tour's innovative approach enables us to embrace the world, combining championships of tradition with new tournaments in the cities and countries of the future. The European Tour International Schedule, which from 2009 has incorporated The Race to Dubai, is a thriving global brand which, in 2015, will feature a minimum of 48 tournaments spread across five continents; the European Challenge Tour focuses on the up and coming players of the future; while the European Senior Tour provides a new start for champions celebrating their 50th birthday. The European Tour's corporate identity features the iconic silhouette image of six-time Open Champion Harry Vardon who gives his name to The Harry Vardon Trophy, presented to the player who is crowned European Tour Number One and winner of The Race to Dubai at the end of the season.