



Contact: Loïc Comolli, NESsT Co-CEO, lcomolli@nesst.org +1 (415) 644-0509

- **Private Equity industry in Central and Eastern Europe surpasses fundraising goal**
- **€314,000 have been committed to the Private Equity Shares Campaign to benefit the work of NESsT, an international organization that supports social enterprises across the region**

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY (OCTOBER 31, 2011) – NESsT, an international nonprofit, announced today that the Central and Eastern European private equity industry has successfully raised **€314,000** to benefit efforts to support social enterprises in the region. To date, close to **20 private equity firms** have come forward to “give back” to the region in which they have invested over the last decade. Leading global and regional private equity firms have made financial commitments, including: **Advent International, Arx Equity Partners, CVC Capital Partners, Deloitte, Enterprise Investors, Mid Europa Partners, and Warburg Pincus**; as well as individuals from **3TS Capital Partners, Value4Capital, CMS Cameron McKenna, EBRD, Hermes GPE, and Squire Sanders Dempsey**.

Six private equity investment professionals supported the launch of [Private Equity Shares](#) with the goal of raising €300,000 for NESsT’s portfolio of social enterprises in CEE. “NESsT has demonstrated the need to invest in entrepreneurial solutions that have a social impact. Private equity has an important role to play to support this initiative to reach scale,” says **Robert Manz of Enterprise Investors**. Manz is joined by **Joanna James (Advent International), Daniel Lynch (3TS Capital Partners), Saki Georgiadis (Hermes GPE), Joseph Schull (Warburg Pincus), and Thierry Baudon (Mid Europa Partners)**, each of whom personally contributed to the campaign, and developed a groundswell of support from industry leaders.

The venture philanthropy approach that NESsT applies is a good match for the private equity industry. NESsT assists in the development of viable “**social enterprises**” – businesses created to further a social purpose in a financially sustainable way. The social enterprise **Viitor Plus Association** in Romania, for example, promotes sustainable development by producing environmentally friendly shopping bags as an alternative to the 27.6 million plastic bags used each year in the country. The enterprise also runs campaigns to educate the public about responsible shopping and consumption.

Private equity also provides pro bono assistance and expertise to NESsT and to social enterprises in its portfolio by reviewing business plans, assisting with investment decisions, and mentoring social enterprises. “Through NESsT we’re able to give back in a way that relates well with our core investment strategy,” says Joanna James, Managing Director for CEE at Advent International. “NESsT applies a ‘venture philanthropy’ approach. They ‘invest’ philanthropic capital in social enterprises and further support them with time and advice. Ultimately, they seek to exit their

Argentina – Brazil – Chile – Ecuador – Peru – Croatia – Czech Republic – Hungary – Romania – Slovakia - USA

investment by ensuring the social enterprise is able to stand on its own feet financially. We believe this approach is one of the best and smartest ways to invest in long-term development of the social sector in the region.”

NESsT has operated in CEE since 2001, assisting hundreds of local social enterprises in the region, and now includes a portfolio of more than 70 social enterprises in 10 countries across Central and Eastern Europe and South America. “NESsT’s goal is to identify and support a portfolio of high impact and sustainable social enterprises that create lasting change in local communities,” says Loïc Comolli, NESsT Co-CEO. “We have demonstrated that, by investing in social enterprises, we can provide access to employment, products and services, and universal rights to marginalized groups excluded from society. By modeling our approach on private equity, we can monitor the social and financial performance of our portfolio over the long term.”

The NESsT Private Equity Shares Campaign is closing in November. For 2012 NESsT is looking forward to further grow Private Equity Shares with the involvement of continued and new supporters. Interested firms and others can get involved by contacting NESsT directly.

NESsT is hosting a reception for current and prospective supporters of Private Equity Shares on **Thursday, 3 November at 18:30 at the CEE Private Equity Forum, at the Bloomsbury Hotel in London**. The reception will also feature the presentation of the International Venture Philanthropy Award to an individual from private equity that has demonstrated excellence and leadership in promoting social enterprise in CEE. The reception is sponsored by **Squire Sanders & Dempsey**.

NESsT (www.nesst.org): Founded in Budapest in 1997, NESsT develops sustainable social enterprises that solve critical social problems in emerging market countries. NESsT acts as a social enterprise catalyst by providing financial capital, training and mentoring, and access to markets for a high-impact portfolio of social enterprises in emerging markets. We combine the tools and strategies of business leadership, entrepreneurship and investment with the mission and values of the social sector to enable our portfolio to: better plan, improve management capacity, grow, and increase their social impact.

Private Equity Shares: <http://www.nesst.org/private-equity-shares/>