GRENOBLE, Capital of the Alps, Capital of Innovation

Grenoble is a French city with half a million inhabitants, located in the south east of France, in the foothills of the Alps, where nature, well-being and innovation come together. Grenoble's industrials roots and early innovations were the result of its geographic location and the rush of water down from the mountains. Water provided the literal force for the development of the region's metallurgical industries in the 17th and 18th centuries and through an early example that mixed education, research and industry, the region became a pioneer in hydraulic technology with the development of hydroelectricity in the 19th century, what in France was called "houille blanche" or "white coal".

With advances in technology, Grenoble's innovators moved to develop electrical technologies more broadly, including harnessing electrical power for trains, trams and cable cars in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1960s, Grenoble was one of Europe's pioneers in the emerging field of microelectronics, later harnessing these capabilities to develop micro- and nanotechnologies in the form of sensors, imaging systems, and new energy sources. Today it leverages these technologies within emerging Digital Ecosystems.

Ranked by Forbes as the world's fifth most inventive city in 2014, Grenoble is the destination in France most preferred by students (1 inhabitant in 5 is a student) and is the location of CEA (Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives) which is ranked as the world's second most innovative public research institution, the first in Europe. Grenoble also hosts several internationally leading companies in energy (Schneider), in microelectronics (STMicroelectronics) , in medicine (Biomérieux), in machinery (Caterpillar) and in many other sectors. It is also home to a dense cluster of innovative start-ups that has helped to make France the first foreign country exhibiting at the CES Innovation Show in Las Vegas.

Over the past ten years, Grenoble has developed its Innovation Campus "GIANT" *(Grenoble Innovation for Advanced New Technologies)*, that was founded by 8 local Research and Education Institutions and supported by the whole regional Ecosystem, its Industry and its Public Authorities. On its 250 ha campus, located in the new heart of Grenoble, GIANT is the host to more than 10,000 students, 10,000 researchers, 5000 industrial jobs and 40 companies, and generates more than 700 patents and 7000 scientific publications per year. With more than 9000 foreign visitors per year, GIANT is the "international networking station" of the city of Grenoble.

Grenoble, with its DNA marked by Innovation and its international mindset, was a natural place in which to initiate the High Level Forum in 2012, with the vision to create an international community of regional Ecosystems, driven by Innovation and Collaboration, with the dream to transform it into the "World Innovation Ecosystem Forum"!