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PRESS RELEASE

“A Way to Sicily” and “Change for Growth”

In 2009 the **UniCredit Territorial Committee for Sicily, headed by José Rallo, co-owner of Donnafugata**, created two important projects designed to promote territorial development.

The **“A Way to Sicily”** project is intended to develop the process of **internationalizing Sicilian companies** and in its first edition is addressed to the agricultural and food, grape and wine, and fruit and vegetable sectors.

“While accounting for 24% of the value of Italian agriculture output, Sicily has limited capacity to *sell itself* abroad”, says José Rallo. “We need to better valorize what we have and above all take up the challenge of international markets. For the moment the choice has been **Poland, a growing market** with lifestyles and consumption increasingly similar to our own. A market on which Spain, whose products are analogous to ours, is becoming very successful. A salient example: 65% of the oranges Poland imports are from Spain and only 5% from Italy. Today, with cooperation from UniCredit and Bank Pekao (the group’s bank in Poland) we are able to promote the Sicilian brands, offering concrete opportunities for expanding sales of our island’s excellent products”.

These are the figures for the two-day “A Way to Sicily” session held in Palermo November 26 and 27: **87 Sicilian enterprises**, half of them with revenue below 3.5 million euro, and 19 Polish buyers – selected on the basis of distribution channels and reference commodity sectors – led to a calendar of 420 one-to-one meetings.

At the same time, and handled by partners in the project – ICE (the Italian Trade Commission), Informest (an agency for international development and economic cooperation), and the international tax and law department of UniCredit Group – there were 30 consultation tables providing advice on **fiscal, legal and financial issues** and discussing the characteristics, distribution methods and rules for penetrating the Polish market.

Lastly, each company was able to present – for the first time in such a coordinated manner – their businesses and products in a **catalogue** devoted to the project that the UniCredit Group will publish online and in Poland through its Bank Pekao and other project partners.

“Change for Growth” is the **educational project** ideated by the UniCredit Territorial Committee for Sicily that won an award from the **Italian Financial Innovation Association (AIFIn) in the context of its “Bank and Territory” prize**. The award, presented on November 26 at the annual AIFIn conference, was in the “Projects Supporting Local Enterprise” category.



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The project has two phases: the first, concluded last April, consisted of five days of classroom lessons given by experts in UniCredit's Retail Division and by representatives of Sicilian associations and *Confidi* (Consortium for Credit Warrants). The topics dealt with aspects of **marketing, company management, relations with banks, internationalization and associational strategies, safety and leadership.**

The second stage foresees **on-the-job training** at two companies, one Sicilian and the other in northern Italy, selected as examples of best practices nationwide. A tour of the Sicilian company chosen was held on November 18: the nine Sicilian SME beneficiaries of the project spent an entire day at the **Donnafugata winery**, assisted by trainers to facilitate good-practice "fusion" between different sectors and stimulate creativity.

Autoviva Srl, Azienda Agricola Cav. Ganduscio, C.G.T. Srl, Di Quattro Dorotea, Eurofood Srl, Luxe Italia Srl, Mediterranea Digit Srl, Randazzo Team Srl and Solar Enery Impianti Srl were the nine small Sicilian companies distinguishing themselves for potential and growth prospects.

"UniCredit's Territorial Committee intends to **concretely contribute to educating and increasing the entrepreneurial leadership of Sicilian companies**", José Rallo said. "*Change for Growth* in particular is an innovative career-training project, an invitation to small-scale entrepreneurs to change their business mentality, opening up to new organizational models, new marketing policies, social responsibility, etc. A chance for businesses, and banks and businesses, to get together to create new synergies. We are honored that, in addition to having great value for Sicily, our project was considered worthy of a national prize for good practice in backing local enterprise.

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