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Leading FLOSS organizations worldwide join forces to launch the first international network of FLOSS Competence centers.

Sharing experience, defining best practices, and evaluating possible synergies to foster the development of FLOSS across 4 continents.

Berlin, Chennai, Madrid, Maribor, Newry, Paris, Portadown, Raleigh, Sao Paulo, Tokio (TO BE COMPLETED), DATE TBD, 2009.

As a result of the first ever International FLOSS Competence centers Summit, organized by Qualipso as part of the Open World Forum, 11 leading FLOSS promotion organization worldwide join forces to create the first ever international network of FLOSS Competence centers.

Open Source Software is currently revolutionizing IT innovation and strategies and becoming a fundamental source for software innovation and digital fairness. For years now, some visionary communities in industry and public sector bodies have developed dedicated structures to support this move, disseminate knowledge and help enterprises and governments leverage Open Source to increase competitiveness, innovation and economic growth. While they all come from different backgrounds (Innovation clusters, academics, etc.), focus (e-gov, manufacturing, education, etc.) and business models (public or private funding), all of them have common goal : support the adoption and dissemination of open source.

To share experience, define best practices, and strengthen synergies, 11 leading Competence Centers have decided to found a worldwide network of FLOSS Competence Centers, to collaborate on the promotion of FLOSS.

This network will provide:

1. A Manifesto for FLOSS Competence centers, written and signed by all network members. The Manifesto is available at www.flosscc.org.
2. Exchanges and synergies between participants, plus a yearly FLOSS COMPETENCE SUMMIT at the Open World Forum, the leading global summit bringing together decisions-makers from across the world to discuss the technological, financial and social impact of open technologies,
3. A collaborative Web site (www.flosscc.org), where experiences on how to conduct a successful FLOSS Competence center will be exchanged.

Each Competence center will act locally in its geographical region, working as a meeting point and knowledge repository in its area. Competence centers will also collaborate in a worldwide community exchanging experiences, methods, and solutions to expand and spread knowledge on FLOSS. These centers will work as catalysts, fostering trust and reliability of FLOSS, not only in the software industry but also in society as a whole.

As a result, the Network of Competence centers should:

- ◆ be a meeting point for FLOSS users, developers, students, educators, researchers, and other enthusiasts both at the individual and institutional levels;
- ◆ stay up-to-date with FLOSS technology, market, and trends;
- ◆ provide and extend trust in FLOSS methods, tools, and solutions;
- ◆ act as a neutral player within FLOSS matters, trends, and studies;

- ◆ develop, maintain, and publish their work under a free/open license; and
- ◆ explore new innovation and collaboration opportunities by using FLOSS.

Michael Tiemann, President of the Open Source Initiative and Vice President of Open Source Affairs at Red Hat, confirms that: "This unique initiative will further enhance FLOSS initiatives in a sustainable manner world wide. All together the Competence Centres will form a network which will enable to share experiences about FLOSS acquired from different perspectives, different cultures and different visions. And all final results will be made freely and openly available to the entire FLOSS community by people talking the same language and sharing the same problems. This represents a notable step towards a true global knowledge economy."

By sharing a common ethics and culture of collaboration, Competence centers will promote synergies among educational institutions, industry, government, and communities, helping the dissemination and application of knowledge on open standards and technologies, and promoting the development of Information Technology in a way that benefits the entire human society. Furthermore, Competence centers aim to stay one step ahead in FLOSS market and trends, providing a point of contact among the industrial, academic, and community parts of the FLOSS movement, encouraging the effective use of FLOSS technologies.

Prof. Fabio Kon from the Department of Computer Science at the University of São Paulo and head of Centro de Competência em Software Livre Qualipso, explains that "Competence Centres leverage the efforts carried out by the FLOSS communities, relaying them towards innovative academic research and industrial-quality development in a way that is in harmony with the culture and ethics of the communities. Joining our forces in national and international networks will strengthen our action both locally and globally."

Here is the list of Competence Centres which have joined FLOSSCC.ORG:

- ◆ COKS - Open Source Competence Centre – Slovenia
- ◆ Fokus Qualipso Competence Centre – Germany
- ◆ International Medical Informatics Association Open Source Working Group IMIA OS WG
- ◆ IPA Open Software Center – Japan
- ◆ Morfeo Qualipso Competence Centre – Spain
- ◆ National Resource Centre for Free/Open SourceSoftware (NRCFOSS) – India
- ◆ Open Source Solution Centre - Northern Ireland.
- ◆ USP Qualipso FLOSS Competence Centre – Brazil

(TO BE COMPLETED)

All key FLOSS Competence Centers worldwide will be welcome, and are warmly invited to join this open initiative.

More information and the list of member organizations of the international network of FLOSS Competence Centres at <http://www.flosscc.org>.