**PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 8th July 2019

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**ThinkYoung empowers Brussels’ youth by teaching coding skills: 5-days Coding Summer School will equip future programmers with critical 21st century coding skills**

* This year, approximately 50 students, aged 11-14, will attend the ThinkYoung’s Coding Summer School
* Students will learn about creating mobile apps, small blog in HTML5, and converting HTML-based games into mobile apps
* Kids will work with robotics, Ozobots and micro drones

The CSS has hosted **more than 460 students with over 25 nationalities**. This year, in the 6th edition of the school, we are welcoming almost 50 participants, **70% of which are girls.**

After the CSS 2018 success in Brussels and Amsterdam, ThinkYoung would like to expand the CSS to other regions outside Europe. The CSS provides students with a unique experience of a school characterised by innovative approaches in a non-formal educational setting, addressing the real needs of both the youth of today and the skills required by the labour market. It provides an amazing insight into the world of coding and technology. A variety of exciting areas will be covered, these included using HTML to create blog, mobile app and a video game. Furthermore, additional activities include robotics, Ozobot and micro drones. Taking place between the **8th and the 12th of July in Brussels,** it will be open to youngsters, aged 11 to 14. This year’s CSS aspires to host 70% girl participants, challenging the myth that coding and IT are skills that only interest boys.

Education throughout Europe is struggling to adapt to, and to address, the needs of the future job market. It is estimated that the number of unfilled vacancies in ICT will increase to 756.000 by 2020, due to the lack of skills, creating a declining competitiveness of the EU market. It is predicted that around 85% of all EU jobs will require basic digital skills. Teaching staff are struggling to keep up with the high levels of training needed to gain the necessary competencies in the ICT, while schools are under pressure to provide more support for teacher qualifications and training. Another problem for schools is due to the high demand for ICT professionals, who are often lured away by ICT companies’ better-paid jobs.

ThinkYoung’s research papers on the Skills mismatch and STEM, exposed **a significant gender gap in coding skills** and pursuing careers in STEM and ICT fields. While girls do well in using computer software, such as word processing, presentation software, and social media, they lack significant digital competences, for instance coding, spreadsheet, database language and web development skills. In no other STEM subject is the gender gap larger than in the ICT sector. Young women do not choose studies and even a smaller number chooses a career related to ICT. The Commission's study ‘Women in the digital age’ (2018) confirms this tendency with only 24 out of every 1000 female tertiary ICT graduates - of which only 6 pursue a career in the digital sector. Moreover, the study shows a decrease in this number when compared to 2011. At the CSS, **we would like to break the traditional stereotype that ICT isn’t for women and bring technology and the variety in this field closer to girls.**

*“Since 2012 we have published the Skills Mismatch report, where we analyse why young people’s skills do not match employers’ demands, both in different industries and job positions. The 2014 edition of our research focused on STEM. Europe has a long and successful history of scientists, mathematicians, and engineers. It is time policy makers put STEM at the centre of their agenda in order to put Europe back on track. While we wait for them to do something, we have taken the initiative to change things bit by bit.”*

Andrea Gerosa, Founder of ThinkYoung

**About ThinkYoung**

ThinkYoung is the first think tank that focuses on young people. It was founded in 2007 and has expanded to have offices in Brussels, Geneva, Madrid and Hong Kong. It is a not-for-profit organisation, with the aim of making the world a better place for young people, by involving them in decision-making processes and by providing decision-makers with high quality research on youth’s conditions.

**For further information, please contact:**

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Silvia Romeo

+32 486718722

silvia@thinkyoung.eu