

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **VODAFONE QATAR DISCUSSES KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES IN LINE WITH AMANTECH**

**Doha, 21 May 2014:** Following the launch of its aid programme for online child and youth digital safety, AmanTECH which stands for “Safe Technology”, Vodafone Qatar hosted the Malta Communications Authority and the Insafe Network to discuss opportunities for knowledge transfer and best practice sharing in the space of digital parenting and cyber-safety.

The delegation visited Qatar between 12-14 May and met with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, ictQatar, Reach Out to Asia, the Family Consulting Centre, the Social Rehabilitation Center (Al-Aween), and MADA Assistive Technology. The delegation included Bernard Agius and Mark Spiteri of the Malta Communications Authority, Managers of Information and Society and the BeSmartOnline! (BSO) project and Janice Richardson, Senior Advisor of the Insafe Network and European Schoolnet.

The delegation, led by Dana Haidan, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability at Vodafone Qatar, heard from these key Qatari stakeholders on how Qatar is addressing internet safety and how internet is impacting minors and their families in Qatar and shared Maltese and European experiences in the field. The delegation also discussed the role civil society and the private sector play in Qatar’s national initiatives. Additionally, the delegation presented strategies undertaken in Malta and Europe over the past 12 years to protect and support children, youths, parents and society at large and showcased activities spearheaded by the Insafe Network and BSO project, as case studies.

Some of these activities and initiatives comprised school lessons on digital citizenship and footprint for 10-15 year olds; talks for parents at local councils; a helpline for advice on online safety; ChildWebAlert, a 24/7 hotline service that offers the public to anonymously report child abuse related content; information days on internet safety which happens during national activities such as the World Children’s Day, Spring Festival Malta and the Bicycle Marathon; professional development sessions for professionals working with children; collaboration with MCAST arts and design section for students studying for an arts and design course with a number of resources on the theme; ‘Flimkien man-nanniet fuq il-komputer’ which is a competition held to mark Safer Internet Day 2012 targeting children aged 10 to 12 years and their grandparents at which children were encouraged to do an activity with a grandparent using a computer; and a Youth Panel which empowers young people to voice their opinions as well as share their ideas on how to create more effective awareness about internet safety. The Youth Panel also acts as the national champion for positive content and participates in the wider Pan-EU Youth Panel.

Dana Haidan, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainability at Vodafone Qatar, said: “We are very honoured to host such an esteemed delegation with considerable knowledge in the space of

digital parenting. When we launched AmanTECH, we made a solid commitment to ensure that this programme is a long-term initiative and with an outreach to stakeholders from the various walks of our community. Their visit is a continuation to the dialogue we started earlier and is one in a series of activities we have planned for year one of AmanTECH.”

On behalf of the BeSmartOnline! project and the Malta Communications Authority, Mark Spiteri thanked Vodafone and all the Qatari entities for hosting the delegation and for giving them the opportunity to learn from their best practices in the field. He said that “with the Internet being a primary driver of globalisation, the challenges faced by youths and parents in Malta and Europe are very similar to those in Qatar”. “This visit has been an invaluable opportunity to observe Qatar’s bold strategy that seeks to balance between promoting ICT as an integral part of life and education, whilst also securing a safe online environment for the wellbeing of the younger users” he added.

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) is the national regulatory authority of the communications sector in Malta. The authority regulates electronic communications, eCommerce and postal sector, and is also responsible for elements of the national ICT strategy such as eInclusion, Internet safety and Internet governance.

BeSmartOnline! (BSO) is a national concerted initiative in Malta aimed at promoting online safety for children and young people. The initiative is coordinated by the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and implemented through a consortium that includes the Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the Office of the Commissioner for Children. The Consortium is further supported by strategic partners that include the Malta Police Force, the Ministry for Education, independent schools, the University of Malta, and Aġenzija Żgħir (the National Youth Agency).

Insafe is a European network, comprised of 31 national awareness centres (27 of the EU member states, plus Iceland, Norway, Russia and Serbia). Every national Centre implements awareness and educational campaigns, runs a helpline, and works closely with youth to ensure an evidence-based, multi-stakeholder approach to creating a better internet.

AmanTECH is Vodafone Qatar’s aid programme for online child and youth safety. AmanTECH aims at promoting digital literacy amongst parents and improving children’s digital safety.

In its first year, AmanTECH will reach out to 50,000 students aged between 5 to 17; 15,000 teachers; and 25,000 parents. The programme will adopt a three-pronged approach with a focus on awareness, education and technical support. This will entail a number of awareness campaigns during 2014, an online source for information and tips for parents and teachers, magazines and newsletters, ongoing education and discussion groups for parents, teachers and mothers, and dedicated Vodafone Tech Experts to impart valuable knowledge and advice for digital parenting, in addition to how-to guides and children’s educational games.

For more information please visit [www.vodafone.qa/AmanTECH](http://www.vodafone.qa/AmanTECH)

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**About Vodafone Qatar Q.S.C.**

Vodafone Qatar Q.S.C. ("Vodafone Qatar") is the holder of the Second Public Mobile and Fixed Telecommunications Networks and Services License in the State of Qatar.

Vodafone Qatar switched on its mobile network on 1 March 2009 and shortly after started delivering great value to its customers with a range of exciting products and services.

Having built a world class converged IP network, Vodafone launched fibre-based consumer and enterprise fixed-line services commercially in October 2012 and is expanding its fibre services in conjunction with Qbn deployment of Fibre to Homes and Corporates.

Vodafone's objective is to be the most admired brand in Qatar and the Company is committed to providing world class telecommunications infrastructure to support His Highness the Emir's Qatar National Vision 2030.

Please visit [www.vodafone.qa](http://www.vodafone.qa) for more details.

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