

WMF 2025 calls for global action: innovation beyond borders for a new pact on business, sustainability, and inclusion.

WMF 2025, the largest AI and innovation festival, attracted 73,000 attendees, 700 exhibitors, and 1,000 speakers worldwide.

BOLOGNA, BOLOGNA, ITALY, July 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [WMF](#) 2025, the world's largest international trade fair and festival dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Digital Innovation, concluded successfully in Bologna, Italy. The event transformed the city into a global innovation hub, attracting innovators, startups, institutions, and businesses from over 90 countries to collaboratively envision the future.

WMF - 2025 Mainstage



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Organized by Search On Media Group, WMF 2025 reaffirmed its role as a leading platform for shaping the “business of tomorrow,” a new economic model based on inclusive prosperity. The fair fostered collaboration between companies, startups, institutions, and emerging players focused on socially impactful innovation. The community exceeded 73,000 participants, including over 700 exhibitors and sponsors, 1,000 international speakers, 350 institutions, 3,000 startup and open innovation stakeholders, and 43 international delegations. Partners represented assets exceeding €304 billion. The Startup Competition awarded over €2 million to visionary new companies. The event’s digital platform enabled over 2,800 B2B meetings, reinforcing WMF as a key meeting point for big tech, global brands, professionals, nonprofits, and investors shaping innovation’s future.

A Call for Visionary Leadership and Ethical Innovation

Cosmano Lombardo, Founder and CEO of Search On Media Group, emphasized the urgent need for visionary leadership, political courage, and collective responsibility. He highlighted the contradictions of our times: ongoing conflicts, extreme poverty affecting 700 million people, and 258 million displaced by wars and crises, alongside massive \$253 billion investments in AI

technology. Lombardo called for a “business of tomorrow” focused on social responsibility, cooperation, justice, and inclusive growth over mere profit. The upcoming WMF 2026 in Riyadh, in partnership with Saudi Arabia, will advance this mission by uniting institutions worldwide to address urgent global challenges.

Institutional Support and Government Engagement

WMF 2025 received backing from the Emilia-Romagna Region and partnerships with Visit Emilia-Romagna, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI), ITA, BolognaFiere, City of Bologna, Cineca, University of Bologna, AGID, and the Digital Transformation Department of the Italian Prime Minister’s Office. Philip Morris was the main sponsor. Government representatives reinforced WMF’s focus on ethical technology. Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy, Adolfo Urso, reiterated Italy’s commitment to human-centered, ethical AI aligned with EU regulations. He highlighted initiatives like the AI Hub for Sustainable Development launching in Rome and the Ai4Industry foundation in Turin to foster sustainable, competitive industries. Urso urged collaboration among institutions, businesses, academia, and citizens to build inclusive AI. Minister of Environment and Energy Security, Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, emphasized digital technologies’ role in ecological transition and energy security, praising WMF’s contribution to sustainability and innovation. Anna Ascani, Vice President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, hailed WMF as a cornerstone of national innovation. She announced AI prototypes developed with philosopher Luciano Floridi to integrate generative AI into parliamentary work, demonstrating technology’s role in enhancing democratic institutions.

Insights from Visionary Leaders

Federico Faggin, microchip inventor, warned that while AI is impressive, it only mimics human behavior; risks arise from unethical use such as manipulation. Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi called for a mindful, empathetic approach to technology, stressing the need to nurture human intelligence alongside AI. John Wesley of NVIDIA expressed optimism about AI’s potential to revolutionize healthcare by supporting hospital staff and solving complex design challenges. Michiel Scheffer, Chair of the European Innovation Council Board, stressed a strong European innovation ecosystem focused on AI and deep tech, encouraging collaboration between startups and academia for impactful applications like cancer research and business process optimization. He praised EU funding and international partnerships for global competitiveness. Francesco Ubertini, President of CINECA, warned of Europe’s technological dependency on the US in AI, supercomputing, and CPUs, calling for increased investment and industrial policies to regain technological autonomy. Nicola Gratteri, anti-mafia prosecutor, sounded the alarm on how organized crime exploits digital technologies including AI, stressing the need for ethical oversight to prevent power concentration. Palestinian journalist and poet Plestia Alaqad shared a poignant account on identity and conflict, emphasizing how lived experiences shape perspectives and the importance of dialogue to bridge divides.

Startup Competition and Social Impact Innovation

The Startup Competition finale showcased ventures with strong social and environmental impact. Winners included Invigilo AI Technologies, which uses AI to enhance workplace safety by detecting industrial hazards in real time, and Electra Vehicles, developing AI software to optimize battery life and safety in electric vehicles. These startups embody WMF's mission to leverage innovation for tangible societal benefits.

Culture and Internationalization

WMF 2025 significantly expanded its global reach, hosting delegations from 90 countries across all continents. Highlights included presentations by Invest in Türkiye, the Guatemalan Ministry of Economy, Estonia's e-Residency program, and a strategic agreement with Jordan's Jusur International, including plans for roadshows and events in the Middle East. South Korea received the WMF Award for Most Innovative Country, recognized for leadership in semiconductors, AI, renewable energy, and robotics. The first WMF Saudi Arabia event was announced for December 2026 in Riyadh, marking a key milestone in the festival's international growth. The ITA agency supported the international mission by involving venture capitalists from 16 countries in B2B meetings with startups and innovative SMEs. Exhibitors came from 37 countries, including emerging markets like Mongolia, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Albania, as well as hubs like Singapore, Canada, South Korea, and the UK. WMF also maintained its commitment to supporting Ukrainian startups by offering free exhibition spaces amid ongoing conflict. Bologna is establishing itself as a European capital of sustainable innovation, with collaboration from the Tecnopolo research center and the Leonardo supercomputer, among Europe's most advanced infrastructures. WMF 2025 offered over 90 educational stages featuring 1,000 global experts, focusing on AI applications in marketing, health, ethics, and generative AI. The program also covered SEO, coding, social media strategies, cybersecurity, e-commerce, and content marketing, alongside sustainability, climate change, arts, accessibility, and nonprofit technologies. This reinforces WMF's role as a platform for building an equitable, sustainable, and tech-conscious future.

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