

**Address by the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti
on the occasion of the Italy-Israel EdTech Task Force 2.0
Tel Aviv - September 17, 2019**

Good morning everyone.

First of all, let me warmly thank Yossi Baidatz and CET for hosting us again and for supporting the Italian and Israeli collaboration.

I am very happy and extremely proud to be here again. This is, as many of you know, the second edition of the Italy-Israel EdTech Task Force.

In these days, the Italian delegation of 20 people is taking part in multiple events organized and hosted by Mindcet, in Yerucham and here in Tel Aviv, for the International EdTech Summit “Shaping the Future” and for the prestigious DLD Innovation Festival.

Congratulations to CET and to Mindcet for yesterday’s inauguration ceremony of their new Innovation Center. Your mission is expanding and renewing its goals through a brand new space, I am sure those are exciting times for you.

Here we are again, working together on the frontier in education. The focus of this year’s meeting - *Human-Machine Pedagogy* - is of extreme relevance. It connects education to artificial intelligence and other substantial technological advancements.

I am very happy to acknowledge that the collaboration between Wonderful Education (*D&D*) from Italy and Mindcet (*Avi Warshavski and Cecilia Weissman*), in Israel, is making this collaboration a reality and is transforming into a stable and rich exchange.

The Italy-Israel EdTech Task Force has a clear goal: to stimulate new connections and increase opportunities for collaboration between Italy and Israel both from an entrepreneurial and a research perspective.

The Italian Embassy in Israel has actively supported, also through my very personal commitment, the birth of this Task Force last year and the presence of the Italian delegation for 2018 and 2019. These are exceptional conditions for the Embassy, but we firmly believe that this type of work in the EdTech domain is too precious and needs continuity.

Innovation - and the State of Israel knows and applies this perfectly - needs continuity of investment!

Today's meeting is of strategic value. It is not only important for cultural exchange and networking: our aim is to create a stable Working Group in EdTech that could maximize interactions and partnerships between the two ecosystems.

Today, the full Italian delegation, is meeting an equivalent Israeli delegation from the EdTech ecosystem, both including representatives from innovation centers, research and academic institutions, publishers, *startups* as well long-established companies.

The ultimate goal is to stimulate cooperation in research and innovation, for which the Embassy has put in place a number of investment tools and a stable funding during the past 18 years.

Italy and Israel are already strategic partners in a number of fields: research cooperation between the two countries has a long tradition, and I have been personally involved in creating the right tools for this cooperation.

The EdTech sector is rapidly growing globally, and many opportunities are there to be seized, at the intersection of artificial intelligence, neuroscience, virtual and augmented reality and many other exciting.

The mission remains the same: innovate the world's pedagogy, and create tangible impact *within* education and *through* education.

Israel, thanks to the work on a global scale of organizations like Mindcet, has been working to become an EdTech Nation, as much as it is, already, a *Startup Nation*.

As I mentioned last year, Italy has a very long tradition in pedagogy and a credible history of scalable and impactful pedagogical innovations. Many educators and children around the world know well the Montessori method, as well as the Reggio Children approach (*today we have a representative*).

One could say those methods anticipated EdTech principles: not to treat pupils and students as recipients of contents but to consider them as humans with a potential to achieve, putting them, their creativity and their different learning

attitudes, at the centre of the experience.

In the last few years, Italy has been undergoing important reforms in education, sustained by a large scale 1.5 Billion Euros plan for digital innovation in schools. The plan is shaping the Italian education landscape, and the private sector has positively reacted to this: now Italy is at the beginning of a growing curve in EdTech.

In a bilateral cooperation, looking for common ground for research and development is not a banale task. It requires all our abilities to join forces and find the kind innovation angles that would benefit from both countries' efforts credibility and expertise.

Today we are here to continue the work towards this goal: find common projects that can convert in long-term research and industrial cooperation. The role of Mindcet (for Israel) and Wonderful Education (for Italy) is crucial for achieving this goal and coordinating this task.

Let me conclude.

Education is an incredibly powerful sector: it has been considered for years as one of the few left untouched by technology and thus, least innovative. Instead, I believe, we believe, it is the one with the biggest potential for truly enhancing Human and Machine collaboration.

Let's enrich this collaboration, and keep the Italy-Israel EdTech cooperation run. The collaboration between Italy, with its long pedagogical, creative and content tradition, and Israel, with its technological edge and focus on innovation, can be strongly beneficial for each other.

Enjoy and make the most of this time together.