SPEECH DI SHERYL SANDBERG

Thank you. I am so honored to be here in the Eternal City.

So Facebook's mission is very simple to say and very hard to do which is to bring people together and build community. And I think it's fair to say that there's no better place to talk about community and connection than Rome. This is the city that connected the ancient world not just with roads, but with ideas and created the rules for the communities that live on in our laws and our governments today.

Now Facebook, we are not quite so ancient. We will celebrate our 10th anniversary in October. And now we have offices both in Milan where we started and here.

But Italy is home to some of our most dedicated community leaders. There are 31 million Italians on Facebook and of those 27 million are in a Facebook group. That's more as a percentage than almost anywhere else in Europe.

So today we're coming together to celebrate some of those communities and the people who keep them going with 30 amazing leaders who will join us this afternoon.

Now I don't have a chance to mention all of them so I'll just mention a few.

Francesca who I just had the honor of meeting started a Facebook group called Fight the Stroke. When her son was just 10 days old, she and her husband found out that he had had a stroke. They don't even know exactly when. And they started this group to support other parents who would be going through or have been going or would go through a similar experience. Some members of the group say it's the only place where they feel truly understood. And this is incredible: they worked together to develop their own rehabilitation program, which then went into clinical trials which showed better results than the existing models. Absolutely amazing.

Is she here? Where are you? Yes, hiding behind. Stand up! Stand up!

Federico built Social Street International for neighbors on the street to build relationships and help each other. This is so successful that it has inspired over 700 groups around the world.

And Gioa started IMDM. Mother of two, very passionate about helping other mothers to start businesses. And her group is enabling small business owners to connect with one another. Over 4000 women now rely on this group to support or start their own business.

These three are just a few of the incredible leaders we have here today. So I want to thank all of you and the millions more like you around the world for giving your time and your energy to build communities that help people through hard times, lift them up and help them find their life's work. We are so grateful to you.

At Facebook, we want to help more people take advantage of opportunities that come when you can access the benefits that the internet and online communities can bring. Very often this starts with economic opportunity. Three out of every four businesses in Italy alone use Facebook for their business. Almost half say they have hired more employees due to the growth since joining Facebook, from what they get from Facebook and Instagram. These are real jobs and real communities across this country and around the world.

Yet we know that too many people feel locked out of these opportunities. They can't start a business, they can't find a community, they can't find a job because they don't have the right skills. This is a challenge all over the world and research shows that it is a real challenge here. 8 of 10 small businesses in Italy think digital

skills are very important when hiring, but the OECD says that only 1 in 3 Italians have the skills to use the internet to its full potential.

At Facebook we believe deeply that technology should not leave anyone behind. And at Facebook we want to put our resources to help more people thrive in the digital world. Last year we committed to training a million people and businesses in Europe by 2020. And today I'm so pleased to be here to announce that we're building on our biggest investment in Italy to date. The Binario F community hub – the amazing place where we are all here together today.

We opened Binario F last year to provide a space where businesses, family, academics and NGOs could come together to learn digital skills. We have great partners. The Italian Privacy Institute used this space to run trainings on GDPR. Renowned professor Quattrociocchi ran sessions on fighting misinformation. The Digital World Foundation and Skuola.net trained everyone from students to older people.

And the response has been so strong that today we're announcing a major investment and expansion to keep up with demand. We are making this space five times bigger so the local communities have room to run their own events. We are offering new programs and events for NGOs so that they can better reach people and raise awareness around their causes. And as part of the government's Repubblica Digitale project, we're creating a brand-new project to support digital inclusion. Everything from youth entrepreneurship to digital skills for older people and refugees.

Our goal is to train almost 100,000 people here by the end of this year alone. Now we can't do this on our own. The partners we work with are so important to the effort and they are already having a great impact.

Freeformers is our community hub's partner. They've already trained 13,000 people. And the Digital World Foundation works with us on our SheMeansBusiness campaign for female entrepreneurs and have already trained 4,500 women in Italy.

All of this is possible because of these amazing partners and teams. Now we hope the work that these organizations do here at Binario F and around Italy is going to help more Italians make the very most of the internet. Whether that's finding a community that matters to them, whether that's starting a business online or using new technology to stay in touch with their friends and family.

Now for all of this to happen we know that we need to address the challenges we face. We know that bad actors try to use Facebook to interfere in elections. And we know that people try to spread bullying and hate speech on platforms like ours, including ours. And we know we have to earn back trust on privacy.

We are focused on fixing these problems and protecting our community. We are now able to block billions of fake accounts. Over a million a day that are inauthentic or trying to spread misinformation.

For last month's European elections, we required political advertisers to verify their identities, built a searchable archive of all the political ads, worked with fact checkers across the EU including Pagella Politica here in Italy and we know that this work is having an impact. Stanford said that interactions with false news have declined by half since 2016 around the world. And A.G.COM has said that the amount of misinformation has decreased over the last year.

We now have 30,000 people – 3 times as many as just 2017 – working on taking bad content down and protecting people on our platforms, and we've committed to publishing our progress very publicly and very transparently so people can hold us accountable.

We still have a lot of work to do, but we're making progress. As just one example, we are now proactively able to find and take down 65% of the hate speech we remove without anyone reporting it to us.

Now we still have a ways to go – 65% is not good enough – but that's up from just 24% less than two years ago so you can see the progress we're making.

facebook

In the last year we've updated our privacy settings, we've launched better tools for accessing and downloading your data, and we're building a new platform that's even more focused on privacy – and will keep less data around.

The challenges we face at Facebook and the challenges the internet faces are unprecedented – and the solutions will never be perfect, because people will always try to interfere in elections and bad actors will always try to spread hate and that means that we, we at Facebook, we as a community, need to stay vigilant.

We are very aware that we can't do this alone. That's why we're working with amazing partners like we have here today, and we're also calling on governments to come up with new regulations on harmful content, on data privacy, on elections and more.

We are determined to be part of the solution, because we know that technology can be a force for good.

The internet - this new technology - is an amazing thing. It gives everyone the power to use their voice, to start something, to organize. It is this power that enables people to change their lives, to find opportunity to build community and like these three amazing leaders have shown us, to bring other people along with them.

But it's also why governing the internet is so challenging and why we believe we all have to work together to get this right and ensure that the benefits of technology are available to all of us.

Because the benefits are so clear in the stories we hear today, in the people who are supporting one another, who are building communities, in the jobs that are being created, in the conversations that are being started and the simple joy that just comes from connecting with someone you love.

I believe deeply in a world where these experiences are open to everyone where parents like Francesca can use technology to help other parents, where neighbors like Federico can bring us all closer together and where women like Gioia can inspire a new generation of female entrepreneurs.

None of this happens without all of you – the community leaders, the educators and the institutions who are working to give everyone access to opportunities so as we open this new expanded Community Hub we are and I am honored and grateful to work with all of you.

Thank you

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