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NET4GAS Becomes General Partner of Environmental Olympics and Golden Leaf Contests As They Enter Another Year

Prague, 4 September 2014: NET4GAS has become the general partner of the national life-science contests *Golden Leaf* and *Environmental Olympics* for their upcoming 2014/2015 season. "Instilling a close relationship with nature in children and young people is becoming ever more difficult. For this reason, providing support to natural-science contests has become an integral part of our programme 'NET4GAS Closer to Nature', and for the new annual round that is about to start, we have decided to step up our game and embrace general partnership", says Zuzana Kučerová, who is in charge of the programme at NET4GAS. The contest is hosted by the Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP), and organized by the Young Environmentalists' Association, a youth interest group attached to the ČSOP.

There is no shortage of science contests for children and the youth, but for the most part, the way that they play out is "too academic": the participants meet in a closed room and spend their time by solving tasks or filling in tests. In the end, the results are announced on the same drab premises.

This is in contrast to the Czech Union for Nature Conversation's long-standing life-science contests *Golden Leaf* and *Environmental Olympics*. Their purpose is, quite to the contrary, to entice the young contestants to venture out into nature and to pursue various outdoor activities. The contest itself stresses the importance of the hands-on utilisation of knowledge and skills when it comes to resolving specific issues in the field, and of the development of teamwork. In the finals, the best teams meet once more out in nature with recognised environmental experts, solve puzzles, and try to best each other on the contest's designated nature trail.

"The ČSOP has a long-standing tradition of organizing contests for children and the youth. The *Golden Leaf* will be held for what is already the 43rd time since its inception, and the *Environmental Olympics* will celebrate their 20th anniversary this year. The contests are co-hosted by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Hundreds of organizers and experts across the country are involved in the preparations and logistics", adds Jaroslav Síbrt, the coordinator in charge of both national contests of the ČSOP.

NET4GAS has been working on bringing people "closer to nature" for quite some time by supporting specific projects in the area of nature conservation and environmental protection. The name of the programme through which the firm is developing its corporate philanthropy strategy says it all: *NET4GAS Closer to Nature*. You can find out more by visiting www.blizpriode.cz.

More information on the contests can be found at www.zlatylist.cz and www.ekolympiada.cz.

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The **Golden Leaf** is a national life-science contest for students at secondary schools and academic high schools, which will be held for the 43rd time this school term. The primary mission of the Golden Leaf is to provide a setting in which children with a deeper interest in nature may gather, put their knowledge to the test, and compare their skills in playful competition. Each team consists of six contest participants, who represent a larger group of children (such as a scout group or a class at school). The contest does not merely focus on theoretical knowledge, but also on hands-on work in and for nature. The contest's website can be found at www.zlatylist.cz.

The **Environmental Olympics** are a nation-wide contest in which high-school students measure their knowledge and skills in ecology, nature conservation, and protection of the environment. The virtues of this contest lie in the practical applicability of knowledge and skills when it comes to resolving specific issues in the field, and in the development of teamwork. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the contest. Details can be found on its website at www.ekolympiada.cz.

The **Czech Union for Nature Conservation** is a civic association of people who love nature and share an active interest in nature conservation. Current membership is close to 8000 people. Some of our members hail from the ranks of professional naturalists, but others are enthusiastic volunteers, some are adults and others are children. Everyone can help. Do you love nature? Then join us! For more information, visit www.csop.cz.

The **Young Environmentalists' Association at the ČSOP** (*Sdružení mladých ochránců přírody (SMOP)*) is an interest group that is attached to the Czech Union for Nature Conservation, but has separate legal personhood; it is devoted to working with children and teenagers, and its stated aim and mission is to oversee and support such activities. The Young Environmentalists' Association provides financial and material assistance to youth groups concerned with nature protection, organises life-science contests for children and the youth, and pursues other activities in the area of environmental education and awareness campaigning. Their website can be found at www.mopici.cz.

NET4GAS is the Czech Republic's reliable and safe gas transmission system operator, and pursues a responsible policy of protecting nature and the environment for future generations. The commercial operations of NET4GAS are very closely connected with the issue of nature conservation, and it is this fact that underlies the firm's long-term strategy of corporate philanthropy being implemented within the context of the NET4GAS Closer to Nature programme. Since 2007, NET4GAS has been the general partner of the Czech Union of Nature Conservation, and as of 2014, it is also the general partner of the latter's Environmental Olympics and Golden Leaf contests. The firm also supports various other projects for which the slogan "Closer to Nature" is at the heart of sustainable development. For detailed information on the projects that have received support or the sites that have been opened to the general public, please visit www.blizprirode.cz.



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Full-resolution pictures on request.



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