eSKILLS WEEK 2012

e-Skills and Jobs

The Copenhagen Declaration

e-Skills and Jobs: the Copenhagen Declaration

Governments, industry, NGOs, academia and other key stakeholders from thirty-six countries have joined forces with the European Commission to call for further action to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy Digital Agenda Flagship initiative – jobs for growth.

Austria, Albania, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and ICT industry leaders – all partners of European e-Skills Week 2012 - are implementing this major campaign to raise awareness of the importance of e-Skills in equipping citizens with the skills needed for Europe's growth.

e-Skills are of fundamental importance. They enable European economies to take advantage of productivity gains through IT in business, meet the growing industry demand for IT-skilled staff and increase opportunities for individuals in today's difficult job market.

The European e-Competence Framework (ECF) is helping Europe to deliver education reforms initiated by National Ministries (e.g. Education, Economic Affairs, Innovation, Interior depending on the country) and strongly supported by industry. Education and training systems must secure the appropriate development of digital competence for all citizens to act as the foundation for developing high level professional e-Skills for jobs.

The European e-Skills Week 2012 is a citizen-oriented initiative that firmly sets Europe as a global leader in building an innovation culture. The European e-Skills Week 2012 partners are actively encouraging and supporting the continuous efforts by the European Commission and member states to generate a healthy wave of small-to-medium size enterprises manned by digital champions from across the European Union while at the same time facilitating the process of large organisations investing and growing their global competitiveness.

To keep on succeeding collectively, European economies must unlock the potential of e-Skills to fuel growth and jobs. Key players involved in the European e-Skills Week 2012 are committed to the essential principles contained in the 'e-Skills Manifesto' and summarised below:

1. *Commit to be more competitive through investment in ICT and ICT skills. Digital technology opens the world to European business and Europe to global business, enabling Europe to compete more effectively on the world stage. For the EU 27, eliminating barriers to the expansion of the digital economy based on the free flow of information and knowledge could deliver 4% additional GDP growth over the next ten years, a gain of €500bn and similar in scale to the growth dividend achieved as a result of the EU's historic Single Market programme of 1992.*

2. *Address youth unemployment in Europe through e-Skills. With a 21.6% jobless rate among the 15-24-year olds, Europe fares less well than other regions of the world, including the US and Asia-Pacific. Youth unemployment will be lowered by providing young people with the e-Skills needed for jobs, in turn enhancing the competitiveness of industries across the board. Job creation can be stimulated through digital technology with 2.6 new jobs created for each low skilled job IT makes obsolete.*

3. *Foster IT leadership. Innovation in the management and use of IT will optimise business value in Europe. IT must be aligned with business objectives – affording business leaders more e-Skills. IT professionals with greater business knowledge will be able to bridge the gap between IT practice and board room goals.*

4. *Commitment to life-long education and training. From basic digital competence to e-Skills, education and training systems must be designed in a holistic manner, linking academic theory to practical skills required for employment and life in the digital world. Improvement of curricula for computer science and programming and scaling up of ICT infrastructure and pedagogy in schools is an urgent necessity. Long term cooperation between employers and education is fundamental in ensuring skills acquired in education and training remain relevant for life. Basic digital competence for all is a pre-requisite for eInclusion and development of e-Skills.*

5. *Invest in innovation. Delivery of leading edge IT will be achieved by amalgamating cutting edge research with the best of corporate and public sector experience on the ground. This will foster innovation in the professional and personal management and use of IT to enrich the lives of every European citizen.*

6. *European leadership of global standards. Digital tools generate entirely new forms of collaboration reflected in many new business models which create new jobs. Effective cross-platform integration relies on the development of common standards for interoperability, as well as European standards to define and develop skill sets among professionals, such as the e-CF. Driving the development of professionalism in Europe can position Europe as centre-stage for increasing competitiveness and delivering business value.*

7. *Commitment to cooperation. The internet has evolved into an interactive Web 2.0. Mass-collaboration has been made instantly possible, emphasising the importance of e-Skills and IT awareness. Whether for experts working on research, game creators developing new software, architects designing a new project or designers shaping a new model, having the skills to use the internet facilitates teamwork, anytime, anywhere, in every business sector.*

8. *Commitment to solidarity in a Digital Europe. Beyond mass-collaboration, the internet is yet unparalleled in bringing together individuals keen to share knowledge, entertainment, passions and political engagement. In a world confronted with ageing and excluded populations, digital technology and e-Skills help senior citizens and other vulnerable populations to stay more autonomous and reap the rewards of the digital world. In this context, the opportunities given by the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations needs to be also exploited. Sound knowledge of e-Skills will nurture greater solidarity in a modern Digital Europe.*

9. *Prioritise e-Skills policy and scale-up implementation. The EU e-Skills strategy, multi-stakeholder partnerships, solutions, research activities, communication, as well as the European e-Skills Week 2012 have generated important, high-value impacts across the EU. The e-Skills Week 2012 partners call on the European Commission and member states to prioritise e-Skills in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy and ensure that full scale implementation is achieved.*

The guiding principles herewith are designed to chart a path which partners in the European e-Skills Week 2012 are poised to tread. Our commitment will secure jobs, enhance competitiveness of European business, and ensure that all Europeans enjoy the benefits of the Information Society.

References

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