

A new Skills Agenda for Europe: Unlocking the full potential of digital and key enabling technologies

BRUSSELS (March 16th 2016) - The European Commission is preparing a New Skills Agenda for Europe which should be adopted in May 2016. Digital and Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) are a key priority of the EU's industrial policy for growth, competitiveness and jobs. This was the theme for the high-level conference "[Skilling up for the future of Europe: STEAMing ahead through Digital and Key Enabling Technologies](#)" taking place in The Hague today. Over 200 policy makers, business leaders and experts discussed the actions needed to develop the digital and KETs skills required to fuel the economy, jobs and growth in Europe and in the Netherlands. Keynote speakers included in particular HRH Prince Constantijn of the Netherlands, Marietje Schaake, Dutch MEP, Markku Markkula, President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Harry van Dorenmalen, Chairman of IBM Europe. European Commissioners Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Marianne Thyssen and Günther Oettinger delivered key messages about the importance to mobilise all relevant stakeholders and foster partnerships to fill the skills gaps and reduce unemployment. Several national Digital Champions also participated at the event which is part of the eSkills for Jobs 2016 campaign.

Europe's economic growth and competitiveness on the world stage strongly rely on the innovation and the successful transformation of its industry. For the EU28, 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.

"Nearly all future jobs will be digital, and new technologies require new skills. Educating a future workforce and reskilling the current is a massive challenge that can only be addressed if governments, business, educators, training institutions, parents, kids and all other relevant stakeholders work together" said Prince Constantijn of the Netherlands. Marietje Schaake, Dutch MEP, stated "Kids benefit from knowing how to write code in order to develop their talents and be better prepared for the jobs of the 21st century. They should also be aware of the privacy and security challenges of the Internet, and the increasing influence of algorithms on their lives, our societies and economies. There is no time to waste: this should be a priority of the Dutch government's education policies. It is also key to introduce digital skills in all teacher training programmes."

The "[eSkills for Jobs](#)" campaign fits in to the European Commission's efforts to transform Europe's economy to the new digital reality and close the gap between the number of job seekers in Europe and the number of unfilled digital jobs. Few years ago this gap had been estimated at almost a million of unfilled vacancies for 2020, but since the launch of the EU e-skills strategy and the "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs", it has shrunk to 756,000 open positions anticipated out of which 530,000 are for ICT practitioners and around 226,000 are at ICT management level. After a severe decline, this is due to an increased number of people entering digital education and training.

“The digital technology industry is ramping up its efforts to address the skills needs in Europe by investing in individual company programmes, developing cross-industry initiatives - such as Academy Cube, and joining Member States multi-stakeholders’ coalitions.” highlighted John Higgins, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE.

"In today's economies, new technologies are a major engine for growth and modernisation of industry. There is a need to strengthen Europe's position as a centre of educational excellence, research and innovation. The Commission will support Member States' efforts and help raise the recognition and the level of digital and KETs skills" said Sławomir Tokarski, Director, Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, Directorate-General GROWTH of the European Commission.

Other important topics addressed at the conference were ICT professionalism and the promotion digital entrepreneurship on Europe. A proposal for a comprehensive European Framework for ICT professionalism should be available in 2017. A [Digital Entrepreneurship Scoreboard](#) assessing how effective member states of the EU have been in encouraging digital entrepreneurship was set up at the end of 2015.

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ABOUT THE eSKILLS FOR JOBS CAMPAIGN

The "[eSkills for Jobs](#)" campaign, part of the EU eSkills strategy, aims to raise awareness on the importance and value of acquiring digital skills in today's technology driven Europe. It involves over four hundred pan-European and national organisations across Europe including companies, associations, education and training bodies and NGOs Its target groups are youth, job seekers, IT professionals as well as policy and decision-makers across Europe. The campaign is coordinated by the Commission and is managed by DIGITALEUROPE and European Schoolnet under a service contract.

The launch of the 2015 campaign took place in Riga on 13 March 2015 at a conference successfully organised with the EU Latvian Presidency. In this occasion, [the Riga Declaration](#) was endorsed by numerous stakeholders. It provided a useful contribution to the Digital Single Market strategy adopted by the European Commission on 6 May 2015. In 2015, as part of the "eSkills for Jobs" campaign, the latest version of the e-Skills [Manifesto](#) was released at the conference on "Transforming Europe towards the Digital Age" organised with the EU Luxembourg Presidency on 15 December 2015 in Luxembourg with the participation of the Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel.

ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies.

DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies. DIGITALEUROPE's members include 60 corporate members and 37 national trade associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: <http://www.digitaleurope.org>

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