



European e-Skills Summit Declaration 16–18 October 2002, Copenhagen

The competition for highly skilled workers is worldwide, in particular in the field of ICT and e-business.

At the European Council in March 2000 in Lisbon, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union set the ambitious target for Europe to become, by 2010, “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.”

As the Commission’s communication on the e-Economy of November 2001 has illustrated, information and communications technologies and their productive usage are of critical importance to make this vision happen. This requires well-educated and highly skilled people to take maximum advantage of the new technologies, not only in the high tech industries but in all economic sectors.

To raise the digital literacy in society and to promote the further development of specialised skills in the field of information and communication technologies is a matter of high priority, both for governments and enterprises as there are, despite the current economic downturn and consolidation of the high tech sector, still important structural skills mismatches in this key area for economic growth and prosperity.

The challenge remains to attract the best talents and to strengthen human capital investment in order to fully use the potential of ICT and e-business in support of the Lisbon targets. This requires increased and sustainable efforts from all stakeholders, from governments and enterprises as well as from educational systems and universities.



KEY MESSAGES

The Economic and Social Partners together with other key stakeholders represented at the summit believe that it is vital to ensure that:

1. the European based businesses are able to recruit and retain people with the right ICT and e-business skills and knowledge to drive improved productivity and competitiveness;
2. citizens of Europe are equipped with the skills and knowledge to benefit from the opportunities presented by the Information Society;
3. Europe strives to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world and the most attractive place for skilled people to live and work.

Therefore, to achieve these goals in the context of eEurope Action Plan 2005 there is an urgent need:

- To continue and further strengthen the efforts to close the still existing e-skills gaps and mismatches;
- To better understand and forecast the future requirements and to identify the main obstacles which hamper the development of e-skills in Europe;
- To increase, at all levels, the efforts to match the content and delivery of education and training to the needs of employers of ICT and e-business professionals;
- To promote sustainable and socially inclusive measures for the further development of e-skills and their productive use in all economic sectors;
- To implement the Bologna declaration in all EU Member States in order to facilitate the mobility of skilled people, by promoting certified and generally recognised end user and professional qualifications in the field of ICT and e-business;
- To enhance co-operation between all stakeholders in vocational education and training;
- To fully implement eEurope 2005 Action Plan built around widening and accelerating the availability and use of broadband technologies;



- To foster private-public activities (i.e. industry-government partnerships), when those are deemed the most appropriate and effective solutions, in developing new e-skills and promoting their diffusion across all sectors of the economy;
- To develop an information society and digital economy enriching the quality of life and unlocking the power of information without a digital divide;
- To promote within the eEurope Action Plan 2005 initiative, the e-Learning initiative and the Sixth Research Framework programme, services, technologies and applications facilitating access to Life Long Learning, in particular in the form of e-learning.

The European e-skills Summit has provided an open forum to achieve a common understanding and discuss the problem of e-skills among all stakeholders. The participants call upon all decision makers to take further actions as the e-skills gap and mismatch continue to be a challenge for growth and better jobs in Europe, despite the current economic downturn.

THE EUROPEAN E-SKILLS SUMMIT

Invites the European Commission

- To foster and facilitate a structured dialogue between stakeholders including governments, employers, and trade unions to agree on common definitions for e-skills, to monitor the evolution of demand and supply, to study and propose appropriate policies and programmes and to promote co-ordination and greater co-operation between the various initiatives aiming at reducing the ICT and e-business skills gap and mismatch in Europe;
- To explore the development of common cross-border qualification and certification guidelines to assist mobility of ICT and e-business professionals, in particular to seek a means to recognise those qualifications which have been achieved outside the formal education system;
- To further analyse the supply and demand and to develop forecast scenarios with the active contribution of relevant stakeholders and statistical bodies;
- To benchmark and disseminate good practice in support of EU and Member



States policies, aiming at reducing the e-business and ICT and e-business skills gap and mismatch as well as to develop a dialogue with our major trading partners on this issue;

- To promote within the eEurope 2005 initiative, the e-Learning initiative, and the Sixth Research Framework Programme lifelong learning strategies and technologies for employees, in particular in the form of e-learning;
- To raise awareness of the need for e-skills, how to access training opportunities and high-quality learning resources and attractive multilingual digital content on which they depend;
- To prepare, by the end of 2004, a report about the results achieved, the remaining barriers and further actions needed.

Invites the Member States and Candidate Countries

- To promote the adaptation and flexibility of ICT and e-business curricula and to foster co-operation between schools, universities, and enterprises, to better match market and social requirements;
- To take specific actions to promote social inclusion, with special emphasis on the integration of unemployed people, women and minority groups into the knowledge-based economy by stimulating digital literacy diffusion;
- To stimulate the development of e-skills by advanced e-government solutions;
- To widen and accelerate the availability and use of broadband technologies;
- To create the conditions for the sustainable deployment of e-learning;
- To reinforce digital awareness with campaigns and training initiatives oriented to stimulate the acquisition of competence in basic e-skills in all European citizens;
- To intensify their efforts to attract and retain the best talents from all age groups, gender, and social origin in the European Union and to develop, where appropriate, new initiatives and measures to help industry and SMEs, to access the talent and skills pools which are critical for their competitiveness.

Invites the European Investment Bank

- To step up its involvement in the long term financing of ICT and e-business components favouring the development of e-skills in the private and public



sectors in Europe, as well as the financing of intangible assets of ICT and e-business investment (including training programs);

- To encourage the development of those government-industry activities in the area of e-skills whose structure and balance will deliver efficient results;
- To cooperate with the European Investment Fund to support as appropriate initiatives in the area of e-skills at all stages and levels

Invites the Economic and Social Partners

- To create a favourable work environment for the further development of e-skills, with the view to strengthening and promoting lifelong learning and to maximising all human capital;
- To agree a common classification of ICT and e-business skills as a basis to forecast supply and demand of ICT and e-business skills, address the ICT and e-business skills development needs of enterprises and individuals and support the mobility of skilled people in Europe;
- To define new job e-skills profiles needed by the market, with a special focus on the needs of user industries and SMEs;
- To continue and reinforce efforts to promote the attractiveness of ICT and e-business careers, in particular with respect to women, unemployed people, people with disabilities and minority groups.
- To assist the European Commission in the establishment of an e-skills Forum enabling the social partners and other key stakeholders to work together to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

And finally,

Invites the European citizens

- To take notice of and to contribute to develop the opportunities linked to e-skills for their professional career and their personal development.