



The e-Skills Certifications Consortium

“THE HAMBURG DECLARATION”

**TOWARDS A STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR
E-SKILLS IN EUROPE IN 2004**

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS, MEMBER
STATES AND ACCESSING COUNTRIES GOVERNMENTS, RELEVANT
STAKEHOLDERS AND THE “EUROPEAN E-SKILLS FORUM”**

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<http://www.comptia.org>

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TOWARDS A STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR E-SKILLS IN EUROPE IN 2004

The July 2003 draft EU Constitution¹ underlined the importance of education and vocational training for the future of Europe when it called on the European Union (EU) to implement a policy that would support national initiatives in this field, in particular by “**stimulating cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms**” so as to “**facilitate adaptation to industrial change**”.

This high-level vision derives from the consensus that evolved at the “European eSkills Summit”² in Copenhagen, 16-18 October 2002 and which was reflected in the Council Conclusion on ICT and e-business skills adopted on 5 December 2002.

Policymakers, industry, social partners and the ICT training sector concluded that the success of the EU in leveraging Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to promote productivity and competitiveness as part of the “Lisbon Strategy”³ of structural reform depends critically on the availability of an adequately trained, ICT literate workforce.

The subsequent “Copenhagen Declaration”⁴, issued jointly in December 2002 by Ministers for Education and Training, made enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training a key element of the EU efforts to create “the future European society”, and called for investigation into how “**recognition...of qualifications...could be promoted by developing ...common principles for certification**” and by “**involving the social partners**”.

The current inability of formal, public education channels to respond quickly enough to fast-changing skills needs, and provide specific skill sets within a reasonable timescale, is placing a burden on high-tech and end-user companies alike, obliging them to invest substantial amounts of their own money in often basic ICT training and education.

Since the Copenhagen e-Skills Summit, there has been a growing acknowledgement that industry and other non-formal qualifications should play a more prominent role in helping governments identify and respond to those needs. Now more than ever, e-skills acquired through formal public channels are proving inadequate preparation for a professional lifetime

¹ See <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00848.en03.pdf> , pages 92-93

² See <http://www.e-skills-summit.org>

³ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html

⁴ See http://www.eu2002.dk/news/news_read.asp?iInformationID=24995

in an ICT-embedded information society. Moreover, a lack of capacity within formal public sector training channels means governments alone cannot ensure an adequate supply of workers with the required e-skills. Together, these factors constitute a major constraint on labour market mobility and serve to inhibit the growth of lifelong learning across Europe's workforce.

Accordingly, the ICT industry, as represented by the companies present at the Hamburg 2003 conference of the European e-skills training industry, hereby calls for urgent action to break down barriers separating "public" from "private" e-skills development as an essential part of EU efforts to support innovation, maintain employment and raise productivity levels.

Public Recognition of Industry ICT Training Certifications

The Declaration⁵ of the "European eSkills Summit" of 2002 called on stakeholders "**to seek a means to recognise those qualifications which have been achieved outside the formal education system**".

The European ICT training industry welcomed the establishment by the Commission of the European eSkills Forum and actively supports its activities, including the preparation of its report and the formulation of policy recommendations to be released in June 2004.

In this context, the European ICT training industry now proposes a strategic roadmap for e-skills in 2004. Furthermore, it is calling public and private actors concerned (governments, business and cultural institutions) to actively support the "European eSkills Certifications Consortium"⁶ which is seeking to develop a framework for managing the recognition of ICT training industry qualifications in the EU.

Doing so would provide a vital impetus in the EU as a whole to ensure that Europe has the skilled workforce it needs. In this context, commercial ICT training qualifications must be properly benchmarked, giving affording employers and employees greater certainty about the real value of industry ICT training certifications. Furthermore, public sector recognition of industry and other non-formal training certifications would:

- Comply with the recommendations of the eSkills Summit 2002 Declaration and the European Convention's call to EU Member States to "stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms"
- Introduce much needed flexibility and mobility into the labour market by making it easier for employees to retrain in high-demand skills and to gain qualifications that are widely recognised by employers
- Support EU objectives in the field of "lifelong learning" by reducing barriers to e-skills acquisition between the public and private domains.

⁵ See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/ict/policy/ict-skills/es-decl.pdf>

⁶ See <http://www.comptia.com/sections/publicpolicy/escc.asp>

Recommendations

The European ICT industry is proposing to achieve key and visible progress in 2004 and thus calls on policymakers across the EU to enhance ways in which the public sector can support industry's work in the field of e-skills and training provision. It is proposing for 2004 a strategic roadmap for e-skills in Europe. Concrete measures include:

- Organise early 2004, in the context of the European Commission's activities in support of e-skills, a specific workshop on the issue of industry certification in co-operation with the European eSkills Certification Consortium; the main focus of this workshop would be to consider the development of a EU e-skills Meta-framework.
- Use the results of this workshop as a contribution to the final report of the eSkills Forum to be released in June 2004;
- Organise a European eSkills Summit in 2004 as a follow up to the activities of the European eSkills Forum and the 2002 eSkills Summit under the Danish Presidency to promote the report of the eSkills Forum and foster the efficient implementation of its policy recommendations;
- Ensure in 2004 political and financial support for public-private partnerships which seek to develop an operational framework and a timetable for the recognition of industry ICT skills by national formal education and vocational training systems;
- Facilitate eligibility for public funding, including fiscal incentives, for institutions, employers or employees who choose to provide or to take recognised courses;
- Facilitate the localisation of key industry-standard e-skills certification programmes and associated curriculum, to encourage the rapid take-up of industry-required qualifications in all countries within the EU;
- Extend by the end of 2004 the principle of mutual recognition of qualifications beyond university education ("Bologna Process") and vocational training ("Bruges Process") to include workplace-obtained qualifications and certifications.

With the "Barcelona 2001" and "Athens 2002 Declarations"⁷ we firmly reiterate that the provision of ICT training and education is a crucial public task requesting the mobilisation and the recognition of all relevant actors, notably the European ICT training industry. Unless policymakers recognise the competence and expertise of companies and other private and autonomous training entities in skills development for the knowledge-based economy, it will be impossible for European human resources to reach the quality and the levels of training - specially in e-skills - that employers demand.

⁷ http://www.comptia.com/sections/publicpolicy/workforce_coalition.asp