

Press release: for immediate release

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IMPROVING EUROPE'S SKILL BASE: NEW IT CAREER PORTAL LAUNCHED

ICT industry leads multi-stakeholder action to develop long-term European e-Skills strategy

Leaders of the IT sector have launched a new initiative to promote e-Skills in Europe, at the [e-Skills conference](#) held in Thessaloniki, Greece. Set up under the leadership of the [e-Skills Industry Leadership Board \(ILB\)](#) and supported by the [European Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry](#), the pilot e-Skills career portal is a keystone in long-term strategy to address the skills gap in the IT sector.

With demand for IT workers set to rise to 250,000 per year by 2010¹, the members of the ILB - British Computer Society, CEPIS, Cisco Systems, CompTIA, Econet, EITO, ECDL Foundation, European Software Association, EXIN, Global Knowledge Network, Hewlett Packard, Inlea Foundation, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle, Prometric and Siemens Enterprise Communications – have taken up the challenge to meet this demand.

The [eSkills career pilot](#) portal demystifies careers in the IT industry, provides IT-related learning resources and guidance on qualifications in the field. Designed as a port-of-call for ICT careers, the portal intends to be an information point for young people, providing them with appropriate guidance and support in choosing their path for ICT careers.

In the next months, young people will be invited to discuss online with early-career IT professionals, recruitment experts and career advisors via the forthcoming community section of the site.

Mr Jan Muhlfeit, Chairman Microsoft Europe and Co-chair of the e-Skills ILB, confirmed that industry is responding to the call to action of the EU Council to focus on challenging the problem of digital illiteracy and lack of ICT skills. He said: **“With the evolution of web 2.0, and increasing use of technology among young people, now is the ideal time to engage them more concretely in IT careers, and lay building blocks for the future.”**

Mr John Edwards, Technical Director for European Public Sector, Cisco and Co-chair of the ILB added: **“So far we have made a very important contribution to the success of the e-Skills strategy in enabling establishing a scalable and sustainable multi-stakeholder partnership to develop and maintain the e-Skills career portal. The European Commission has been instrumental in the process, and we are now looking to engage a wider range of stakeholders.”**

Mr Marc Durando, Executive Director of [European Schoolnet](#), a network of 31 Ministries of Education in Europe, partnering with the ILB on the Career Portal flagship project, underlined: **“The e-Skills career portal is a contribution to reaching the Lisbon objectives, and equipping citizens with the skills and competence to succeed in the knowledge economy. It's also key in our overall approach to address falling interest in maths, science and technology education across our member countries.”**

¹ Figures released by CEPIS, the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research and Eurochambres
www.cepis.org/files/cepis/docs/20071213120052_EU%20annual%20shortfall.pdf

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Further information:

a) e-Skills 2008 Conference

The conference is organised by the European Commission and CEDEFOP, the European vocational training organisation, in partnership with the e-Skills Industry Leadership Board. It will bring together experts from government, ICT industry, social partners, academia and other stakeholders. The conference will present and discuss best practices, flagship projects and report on progress made:

<http://eskills.cedefop.europa.eu/conference2008/>

b) Pilot e-Skills career portal

The pilot portal is now available at <http://eskills.eun.org>. Additional tools and services will be unveiled in the coming months.

c) e-Skills ILB

Founded on 7 June 2007 in the presence of Vice-President Guenther Verheugen of the European Commission, with the vision of "Fostering 21st century e-skills and digital literacy of Europe's workforce and citizens for a competitive, innovative and inclusive Europe," the e-Skills Industry Leadership Board" (e-Skills ILB) is set to lead the ICT sector's contribution to the development and implementation of a long term e-skills and digital literacy agenda in Europe.

The e-Skills ILB works in partnership with public authorities across Europe, other industry sectors, SMEs and all relevant stakeholders, building upon the European Commission recommendations and other reference initiatives on e-Skills. Current e-Skills ILB members include: British Computer Society, CEPIS, Cisco Systems, CompTIA, Econet, EITO, ECDL Foundation, European Software Association, EXIN, Global Knowledge Network, Hewlett Packard, Inlea Foundation, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle, Prometric and Siemens Enterprise Communications (see <http://www.e-skills-ilb.org/>).

d) European Schoolnet

European Schoolnet (EUN) is a unique not-for-profit consortium of 31 ministries of education in Europe created in 1997. EUN provides major European education portals for teaching, learning and collaboration and leads the way in bringing about change in schooling through the use of new technology (see www.europeanschoolnet.org or www.eun.org).