



**PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Growing demand for information tech workforce  
EU industry bodies join for e-skills qualifications**

**Brussels, 29 January 2009:** With unemployment soaring throughout Europe, industry associations and companies have joined forces to promote the re-skilling of the European workforce to meet the growing demand in information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications.

Today "EuroCIO" (the European umbrella organisation of European Chief Information Officers), the "European Software Association" and the "European Schoolnet" (EUN) have joined 15 major European and international information technology companies and organisations in the "e-skills Industry Leadership Board" (ILB) to keep Europe competitive through enhanced computer literacy and ICT skilled professionals\*.

The e-Skills ILB, founded in June 2007, cooperates with public authorities across Europe, small and medium sized companies, social partners and other stakeholders, building upon the European Commission initiatives on e-Skills and life-long learning. With its expanded membership, the ILB is set to lead the contribution of ICT-embedded industries to the development and implementation of a long term e-skills and digital literacy agenda in Europe.

**Michael Gorriz, EuroCIO President,** said:

*"The financial crisis represents both a challenge and an opportunity for Europe. On one hand over 40 percent of Europeans have no basic ICT skills. In view of the pervasiveness of IT this shortcoming is accelerating the social divide. On the other hand companies both on the information technology supply and user side have an increasing need for ICT skilled professionals. Figures from 2008 indicated the demand to reach 250,000 by 2010. Only 180,000 are likely to be available. The economic downturn will probably release the situation. However, the longterm trend of a shortfall poses a threat to job opportunities and Europe's competitiveness in the globalised world. Therefore, it is critical for the success of European industries to re-skill Europe's workforce for the needs of the knowledge-based economy. Industry-based qualifications and certifications are key factors in keeping European industries competitive. This fact needs to be recognized."*

**ENDS**

Notes for editors

\* **e-Skills ILB** members include: British Computer Society/BCS; Council of European Professional Informatics Societies/CEPIS; Cisco Systems; Computing Technology Industry Association/CompTIA; European Grants and Subsidies Consulting/Econet; European Information Technology Observatory/EITO; European Computing Driving Licence Foundation/ECDL; European Schoolnet/EUN; European Software Association; European Network of CIOs/euroCIO; Examination Institute for Information Science/EXIN; Global Knowledge Network; Hewlett Packard/HP;

International Learning Foundation/INLEA; Intel; Microsoft; Oracle; Prometric; and Siemens Enterprise Communications (see: [www.e-skills-ilb.org/](http://www.e-skills-ilb.org/)).

\* **EuroCIO** is a CIO membership organisation which brings together the CIOs of Europe's major companies. The aim of the EuroCIO Network is to provide CIOs with the means of sharing their experience and to allow them to raise awareness of key IT issues. It also provides a mouthpiece for users vis-à-vis suppliers and regulatory authorities, thus enabling them to voice the collective position of European CIOs. To this end, EuroCIO has established partnerships with seven national CIO bodies: CIO Forum Belgian Business (Belgium), CIGREF (France), CIOcolloquium (Germany), VISZ (Hungary), CIO Platform (The Netherlands), CIO Forum (Sweden) and Corporate IT Forum (UK) (see: [www.eurocio.org](http://www.eurocio.org)).

\* **European Schoolnet** is a 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](http://www.europeanschoolnet.org)).

\* **European Software Association:** Created in October 2005, the European Software Association is the voice of the European Independent Software Vendor (ISV) community. ISV members of the association work with EU policy makers and other European stakeholders to foster an environment that supports innovation and competitiveness within the European software industry, and that supports the needs of other European business communities. Members include: Agresso Software, Albany Software, Ansys, 1C, Dassault Systemes, Future Route, Hogia, Lexware GMBH & Co KG, Mamut ASA, Microsoft EMEA, Northgate Information Solutions, Oracle, SAP, SkyRecon, Trimble, Unicorn, Unit4Agresso. (see: [www.europeansoftware.org](http://www.europeansoftware.org)).

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*For more information please contact Ms Elena ANDREI at the e-Skills ILB secretariat, tel: +32-2/234.78.23, mobile: +32-474/38.76.90, e-mail: [info@e-skills-ilb.org](mailto:info@e-skills-ilb.org), or Mr Peter WILDING, Cabinet DN, tel.: +32-2/234.58.72, mobile: +32-472/53.50.54, [pw@cabinetDN.com](mailto:pw@cabinetDN.com).*

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