



**FINAL**

**“THE VIENNA DECLARATION”  
FROM DIALOGUE TO IMPLEMENTATION:  
FUNDING e-SKILLS IN 2005 AND BEYOND**

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

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# “THE VIENNA DECLARATION”

## FROM DIALOGUE TO IMPLEMENTATION: FUNDING e-SKILLS IN 2005 AND BEYOND

Policymakers, industry, social partners and the ICT training sector all acknowledge that the success of the EU in leveraging Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to promote productivity and competitiveness as part of the “Lisbon Strategy”<sup>1</sup> of structural reform depends critically on the availability of an adequately trained, professional ICT literate workforce.

Extended dialogue on the subject has led to agreement on important principles. The 2002 Declaration of the “European e-Skills Summit”<sup>2</sup> called on stakeholders “**to seek a means to recognise those qualifications which have been achieved outside the formal education system**”. The 2002 “Copenhagen Declaration”<sup>3</sup> by European Education Ministers called for investigation into how “**recognition...of qualifications...could be promoted by developing ...common principles for certification**” and by “**involving the social partners**”.

The general consensus regarding the importance of the e-Skills issue was again reflected in the July 2003 draft EU Constitution<sup>4</sup>, which called on the European Union (EU) to implement a policy that would support EU Member State initiatives in the field of education and vocational training, in particular by “**stimulating cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms**” so as to “**facilitate adaptation to industrial change**”.

Despite this political engagement, more work is urgently required to stay focussed on an adequate supply of workers with professional e-Skills capabilities. This will need closer cooperation between industry, academic, and the public sector.

Accordingly, the ICT training channels, as represented by companies present at the “CompTIA EMEA Strategies 2004” conference in Vienna, supports the recommendations of the recent “European e-skills Conference 2004”, as laid out in the “Thessalonica Declaration”<sup>5</sup>, which call on stakeholders, inter alia, to develop a new **European ICT Career Portal** and to improve cooperation and undertake research into “legal, financial and institutional frameworks for e-Skills multi-stakeholder partnerships.”

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<sup>1</sup> see: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon\\_strategy/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html)

<sup>2</sup> see: [http://www.e-skills-summit.org/docs/eSkills\\_Summit%20Declaration\\_FINAL.doc](http://www.e-skills-summit.org/docs/eSkills_Summit%20Declaration_FINAL.doc)

<sup>3</sup> see: [http://www.eu2002.dk/news/news\\_read.asp?iInformationID=24995](http://www.eu2002.dk/news/news_read.asp?iInformationID=24995)

<sup>4</sup> see: <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00850en03.pdf>, page 148

<sup>5</sup> see: <http://www.eskills2004.org/files/Final%20European%20e-Skills%202004%20Declaration.pdf>

## Public Awareness and Recognition of Industry e-Skills Certifications

Public awareness and recognition of industry-based and other non-formal e-Skills training and certification should form, beside other key enablers, a cornerstone of any realistic efforts to improve in substance the competitiveness of the ICT industry in Europe. Such enhanced public recognition must also be reflected in the upcoming new “e-Europe Action Plan 2010” covering the period from 2006.

Some EU Member States have already been able to derive a competitive advantage through mapping schemes and other methods by integrating industry and other non-formal certifications into existing public education structures. These successful examples should serve as a general model for any meaningful “**European e-Skills Meta-Framework**”, to be delivered quickly enough to allow businesses and employees to benefit from an overarching European approach.

Nonetheless, stakeholders must consider more closely how e-Skills types can be matched against general criteria. To this end a highly pragmatic approach is needed to take on board tested industry experiences and to avoid reinventing the wheel and thus generating additional costs and delays.

## Funding for e-Skills Training and Certifications

Enhanced public awareness and recognition of industry-based and other non-formal e-Skills training and certification, as requested by the eSCC over the past several years<sup>6</sup>, implies the availability of appropriate public funds and other financial means in support of e-Skills capacity building. In particular, industry calls on the public sector to take urgent measures to reduce the financial burden placed on individual companies by the need to train ICT-ready employees in an increasingly ICT-embedded society.

Both public funding for e-Skills training and fiscal incentives, as already applied in some EU Member States<sup>7</sup>, has to be considered across the EU25 as an important component of public sector measures at EU Member State level to support the widespread availability to professional e-Skills.

Governments must give proper consideration to how appropriate public funds can be made available to help businesses and employees overcome financial constraints which prevent them from providing or accessing effective training and certification. The **European Structural Funds**, the EU’s budgetary mechanism for enhancing economic equality in Europe, should play a larger role in supporting e-Skills development. Current allocations for ICT skills and training projects should be doubled in the next programming period running from 2007 - 2012.

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<sup>6</sup> The “e-Skills Certification Consortium” (eSCC) is a multi-stakeholder consortium which advocates the public endorsement of industry and other non-formal e-Skills training and certifications within formal education systems, see <http://www.comptia.org/sections/publicpolicy/europe/escc.aspx> for more details. For past Declarations see FN 9-11

<sup>7</sup> See the examples of EU Member States tax regulations for ICT training and the political recommendations for improvement (“Synthesis Report of the EU ICT Skills Monitoring Group”, European Commission, June 2002): <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/ict/policy/ict-skills/wshop/synthesis-report-v1.pdf> (report) and <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/ict/policy/ict-skills/wshop/synthesis-report-annex-v1.pdf> (annex)

## Recommendations

The European ICT industry calls on policymakers across the EU to enhance ways in which the public sector can support industry's tested experiences and commitment in the field of e-Skills training and provision. Actions should include:

- Working with **eSCC** and other key stakeholders to develop a **European e-Skills Meta-framework** which responds to the real needs of the ICT-embedded industry.
- Define a timetable for the implementation of the September 2004 Thessalonica “e-Skills Conference Declaration” in order to appropriately incentivise and benchmark progress, notably concerning the development of the envisaged **EU ICT Career Portal**.
- Organise a **European e-Skills event in 2005** under the United Kingdom Presidency devoted to the implementation of a European Meta-Framework for ICT skills, and benchmark progress in European e-Skills development in a global context.
- Consider **grants and other financial support for multi-stakeholder partnerships** which seek to develop an operational framework, ICT Career Portal, and a timetable for the recognition of industry-based e-Skills certifications by EU Member State formal education and vocational training systems.
- Promote e-Skills capacity building under new financial perspectives covering the **EU Structural Funds period 2007 -2012**.
- Ensure that e-Skills development stays fully integrated into new EU policy guidelines to be issued in 2005, in particular the European Commission Communications to the Member States on “**Competitiveness of the EU ICT Industry**”.
- Maintain a global perspective on e-Skills issues through increased dialogue with global stakeholders and, in this view, organise a dedicated “Thematic Workshop” on industry-based and other non-formal e-Skills certifications at the “**World Summit on the Information Society**” in Tunis in 2005<sup>8</sup>.

As stated in previous Declarations from the ICT training industry, including from Barcelona in 2001<sup>9</sup>, Athens in 2002<sup>10</sup> and Hamburg in 2003<sup>11</sup>, the provision of ICT training and education remains a crucial public policy task requesting the mobilisation and the recognition of all relevant actors in sustainable partnerships, notably the European ICT training industry.

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<sup>8</sup> for WSIS 2005 in Tunis, see: [www.itu.int/wsis/](http://www.itu.int/wsis/) and [www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/thematic.html](http://www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/thematic.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.comptia.org/sections/publicpolicy/documents/PPBD.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.comptia.org/sections/publicpolicy/documents/PPAD.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.comptia.org/sections/publicpolicy/documents/Hamburg\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.comptia.org/sections/publicpolicy/documents/Hamburg_Declaration.pdf)