

## **ICT industry group urges European governments to work with industry to speed up efforts to prepare the EU workforce and citizens for the knowledge-based economy**

**Thessalonica, 21 September 2004** - As the "European e-Skills 2004 Conference" draws to a close, the leading Industry Partners (Certiport, Cisco Systems, CompTIA, ECDL Foundation, IBM, Microsoft and Nokia) supporting this major event have rallied behind the efforts of the European Commission to promote the development of ICT and e-business skills.

**Jacek Murawski, (EMEA Director for Public Funding and Networking Academy Program at Cisco Systems)**, spokesperson for the Industry Partners said:

"The industry partners welcome the efforts of the Commission to stimulate the development of e-skills in Europe and support the analysis and the recommendations of the European e-Skills Forum report ("e-Skills in Europe: Towards 2010 and Beyond"). The availability of e-skills – from ICT practitioner level and e-business skills down to basic digital literacy - is a subject of paramount importance to all businesses and crucial for European competitiveness in a global economy.

We applaud especially the Commission's initiative in organising the European e-Skills 2004 Conference. The presence here of so many government, education, training, trade union and industry experts is a sign of the determination that exists among leading stakeholders to help equip the EU workforce, citizens, and their businesses, with the skills they need to participate in a knowledge-based economy.

We hope that as a result of this event, public sector education and training specialists will work closely with industry and other non-formal IT training and certification providers to develop a new framework for ICT skills across Europe capable of addressing the challenges of the knowledge-based economy. We hope that such a framework, created in co-operation with the Member States and European organisations, will establish Europe-wide standards for e-skills and earn the trust of both education policymakers and the end users themselves.

Only if industry, social partners and the public sector can work together will Europe's workforce and citizens be equipped for life in a knowledge society."

### **Notes**

- The "e-Skills Conference Industry Partners" is a group of leading ICT companies committed to the development of e-skills that helped the European Commission organise the European e-Skills Conference 2004. The group includes Certiport, Cisco, CompTIA, ECDL Foundation, IBM, Microsoft and Nokia). Five of the companies (Certiport, CompTIA, Cisco, ECDL Foundation and Microsoft) are members of the e-Skills Certifications Consortium (eSCC) a major industry initiative to promote the development of e-skills training and certification in Europe.
- The "European e-Skills Conference 2004" is a high-level conference of European Education policymakers, organised by the European Commission in co-operation with leading stakeholders to promote the wider availability of ICT skills among EU workforce and citizens. The event takes place in Thessalonica on 20-21 September 2004.

- The Conference follows a successful [workshop on e-Skills Industry Certifications](#) organised by the European Commission with the support of the e-Skills Certifications Consortium (eSCC) and Cedefop on 24-25 March 2004 in Brussels.
- The “European e-Skills 2004 Conference” is building on the work of the Synthesis Report of the [European e-Skills Forum](#) “e-Skills in Europe: Towards 2010 and Beyond”, following the [European e-Skills Summit](#) in Copenhagen (17-18 October 2002) and EU Council of Ministers Conclusions on e-skills which were adopted in December 2002. The proceedings and the conference Declaration will lead to discussions at the Council and the European Parliament on e-skills later in 2004.

**For more information:**

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