



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 4 March 2013

European Commission launches Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs

Commission President José Manuel Barroso today called on Europe's digital businesses, governments, training and education sectors to join a Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs to address up to 900 000 job vacancies expected to exist in Europe in Information and Communication technologies (ICT) by 2015. Despite the current levels of unemployment, the number of digital jobs is growing by more than 100 000 per year. Yet the number of fresh ICT graduates and skilled ICT workers is not keeping up.

Vice-Presidents Neelie Kroes (Digital Agenda) and Antonio Tajani (Industry and Entrepreneurship) and Commission members László Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and Androulla Vassiliou (Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth) also attended the launch of the Grand Coalition held today in Brussels, which is part of the Commission's drive to make Europe more competitive.

President Barroso said: *"The Grand Coalition we launch today is an essential part of getting Europe's economy back on track and finding jobs for some of Europe's 26 million unemployed. I applaud those companies who have signed up today. If, together, we can turn the tide and fill the growing number of ICT vacancies, we will see a much wider impact across the whole economy. We want to empower Europeans to fill the jobs that will drive the next ICT revolution."*

Europe cannot afford to leave employment opportunities like this unexploited. Today's announcement builds on the groundwork laid by Vice President Kroes in collecting initial pledges on new jobs, internships, training places, start-up funding, free online university courses and more from technology companies, governments, educators, social partners, employment service providers and civil society organisations at the World Economic Forum in Davos ([see IP/13/52](#)).

Initial commitments from stakeholders have been endorsed with over 15 companies and organisations signing up to the Grand Coalition. Among the first pledges to come to life is a new online learning platform for young people called the [Academy Cube](#) and a new training module for energy smart grid installers.

The Commission has sought pledges in the following key areas:

- Training and matching for digital jobs – to help ensure the skills people are getting are the skills business needs;
- Mobility – helping those with skills get to the place where they're needed, to avoid shortages and surpluses in different towns and cities;
- Certification – making it easier to prove to an employer what skills one has, regardless of the country;
- Awareness raising – so that people know the digital sector offers rewarding and enjoyable careers to both women and men;
- Innovative learning and teaching – so our education and training systems expand and improve to give more people the skills for success.

President Barroso also called on organisations to follow the example of the early pledgers. The Commission has a role to play, but actions like industry-led training, assisting labour mobility, certifying skills, improving school and university curricula, raising awareness, and creating an entrepreneur friendly environment for start-ups need the active engagement of all stakeholders.

The Commission is also launching Startup Europe, a single platform for tools and programmes supporting people wanting to set up and grow web start-ups in Europe.

Background

The Employment Package adopted by the Commission in April 2012 pointed out that there is a significant shortfall in ICT professionals despite high unemployment elsewhere ([IP/12/380](#), [MEMO/12/252](#)).

The ICT workforce in Europe in 2011 amounted to 6.7 million, which is 3.1% of the overall workforce. From 2000 to 2010 the ICT workforce grew at an average annual rate of 4.3%. According to brand new, as yet unpublished figures (Empirica, March 2013), the number of digital jobs that will be created in Europe by 2015 could be as high as 864 000. However, a drop in the number of ICT graduates leaving universities, and the retirement of ICT workers over the coming years, risks endangering ICT job growth potential. Education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics needs to be strengthened and the career image of these fields improved, in particular for women.

Furthermore, ensuring that EU workers have the necessary higher-end skills will help attract investment and prevent loss of key ICT employment to other regions of the world, as is highlighted in the Commission Staff Working Document "[Exploiting the employment potential of ICTs](#)", released as part of the Employment Package.

In order to better forecast skills needs, the European Commission launched in December 2012 the [EU Skills Panorama](#), a website presenting quantitative and qualitative information on short- and medium-term skills needs, skills supply and skills mismatches ([IP/12/1329](#)). The Panorama, drawing on data and forecasts compiled at EU and Member State level, highlights the fastest growing occupations as well as the top 'bottleneck' occupations with high numbers of unfilled vacancies. Currently, there are around 2 million job vacancies across the EU, despite high levels of unemployment. The website contains detailed information sector by sector, profession by profession and country by country.

Rethinking and Opening up Education

The Commission launched its [Rethinking Education](#) strategy in November 2012. It calls for more investment to improve vocational education and training systems, especially in the area of ICT. The strategy also offers insights into how investments in education can be targeted to maximise their impact in times of financial austerity.

In addition, [Opening up Education](#), a joint initiative by Androulla Vassiliou and Neelie Kroes which aims to make education more accessible through technology and open educational resources, is set to be adopted this summer.

Useful links

[Video statement](#) from Commission Spokesperson on Grand Coalition

[Digital Jobs](#)

[Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs](#)

[Grand Coalition Framing Document](#)

[Get involved](#) with the Grand Coalition

Follow the Grand Coalition on Twitter @eSkillsGrowthEU (hashtags: [#GC_EU](#), [#eSkills](#) and [#ICTjobs](#))

Digital Agenda [website](#)

[Employment package](#)

[Education and training](#)

[Entrepreneurship 2020](#) Action Plan

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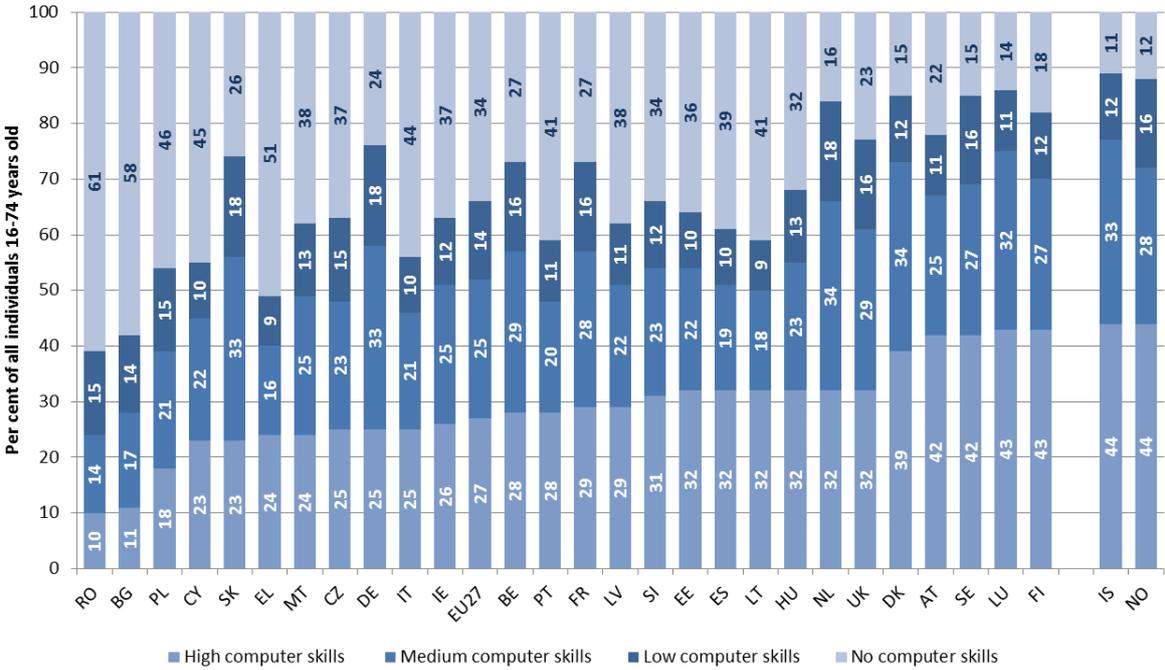
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Annex: Percentage of individuals with low, medium and high computer skills, 2011

Figure 6.7. Percentage of individuals with low, medium and high computer skills, 2011



Source: Eurostat, Information Society Statistics. Note: Individuals aged 16 to 74 years. For details about different types of computer activities, see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/4-26032012-AP/EN/4-26032012-AP-EN.PDF