

Davos Declaration on the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs

Draft – for discussion purposes only

Today's economy is global and digital. Our success – and Europe's prosperity – directly depends on the quality of our workforce, and particularly on our ability to attract, employ and retain a sufficient number of people with ICT skills: engineers, software programmers, data analysts and other profiles. It is well-known that ICT is one of the key drivers of economic growth and an important source of job creation.

Currently, there are hundreds of thousands of ICT vacancies in Europe that cannot be filled. Our education systems produce 110.000 computer science graduates every year whilst an increasing number of ICT professionals is retiring. This is clearly not sufficient to match the growing demand for ICT professionals by all sectors of the economy. And when youth unemployment affects so many young people, Europe cannot afford to have jobs that cannot be filled. This is one of the reasons which has prompted the European Union to launch the Youth Guarantee in 2013.

Boosting the number of ICT specialists is in everybody's interest: industry benefits from the availability of qualified labour, employees benefit from secure and well-paid jobs, and a better standard of living, and we can offer those looking for a job, particularly our younger generation, a prospect for a better life. Our economy as a whole will grow faster as companies invest more if they find employees with the digital skills they need. However, increasing the number of ICT specialists cannot be done by any one party acting alone, whether government, education providers, the private or non-profit-sector. There is no magic solution. We can only be effective if we work together. It is time to rise to the challenge.

We therefore fully agree with European Heads of State and Government who, at their meeting on 24 October 2013, called for urgent steps to remedy the lack of ICT specialists in Europe. We stand behind and are keen to reinforce the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, a multi-stakeholder partnership launched by the European Commission in March 2013. This Grand Coalition encourages stakeholders to pledge concrete actions to ensure that more Europeans, and particularly young unemployed, can acquire the ICT skills needed to participate fully in the digital economy. We, the European Commission, will call on the political leaders to give this initiative full support and follow-up the European Council conclusions.

We, leaders of major European and global companies, have therefore agreed to work with our peers and stakeholders in order to undertake one or more of the following:

1) provide more and better training opportunities:

- a) increase ICT training offers such as industry-led training, apprenticeships or traineeships beyond our own needs of recruitment. Our aim would be to create an additional 100.000 traineeships by 2015;
- b) make available, where possible without charge, our training content to education and training providers for inclusion in overall ICT training programmes.

2) cooperate with other stakeholders to modernise education and training systems:

- a) join forces with Member States and their education providers to render vocational (apprenticeships) and academic (tertiary degree) ICT training more responsive to employer's needs, and to modernising curriculae to make these trainings more attractive to potential students, especially women. Our common objective should be that no student leaves school or higher education without a basic set of ICT skills;
- b) identify a list of priority job profiles, i.e. job profiles for which a particularly large gap exists or which are particularly important for business development, and jointly express this urgency towards governments and education providers in order to rapidly reinforce training efforts for these job profiles.

3) raise awareness of ICT and promote internationally accepted credentials:

- a) devote a part of our marketing budgets to contribute to campaigns to improve the image of ICT as an exciting field of work and to promote the career potential of an ICT degree. Starting at a young age will be of the essence.
- b) We commit to supporting the EU and Member States' efforts to promote coding (programming classes) in schools building on the success of Europe's first coding week, last November.
- c) make full use of a common classification of digital skills, the European eCompetence Framework, in our recruitment policies.

We invite other companies, large and small, representative organisations and social partners to join this common endeavour.