New Skills for New Jobs in Europe

European Alliance on Skills for Employability

Supporting the EU Growth & Jobs Strategy by working in partnership to help bring information and communication technology skills, competencies and training to Europeans underserved by technology.

Members:

“Under the umbrella of the European e-Skills Association”
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European Alliance on Skills for Employability

As global organisations operating across the European Union, Microsoft, State Street, Cisco, CompTIA share a strong commitment to support the EU’s Growth and Jobs agenda by building partnerships to facilitate the provision of skills training for employability. The European Alliance on Skills for Employability was launched in January 2006 to help bring access to IT, technical and other employability related skills to people from disadvantaged groups, thus contributing to build the foundations of employability and inclusion in Europe.

The Alliance will invest resources to:

- **Help provide** Europeans with **technology access, training and certification in IT and other skills** required by current or future employers.
- Focus on young, under- and unemployed and older at-risk workers with lower employability prospects, people with disabilities, women (re)entering the job market and minorities.
- **Build upon** and expand our **core competencies** and our existing education, training and community programmes in Europe.
- **Foster synergies between existing programmes** with the aim to deliver better employability opportunities and a more positive impact to training beneficiaries.
- Set up or extend existing **multi-stakeholder partnerships** to enhance cooperation of all three sectors (private companies, government and non-profit partners as associations, intermediaries and social partners) in the field of e-Skills.

The Alliance trackrecord

In the past few years, the Alliance partners have developed a track record in helping to reach around 8.6 million lower skilled people across Europe with access to employability skills training and curricula. Now the challenge we have set ourselves is to lead broader partnerships that create pathways from skills training to better and easier access to jobs. To do this we are forging new and innovative partnerships with local public sector employment agencies and skills councils, and local Chambers of Commerce and SME associations. Six such partnerships have already started in Germany, the UK, Luxembourg, France, Poland and Hungary. We will broaden our reach by promoting volunteering activities and increasing access to employment for people with disabilities.

“Raising employment is the most effective way to generate growth and promote social inclusion. The challenges posed by an aging population make the modernisation of social protection systems and the promotion of a lifecycle approach to work all the more important.

To enhance access to employment for people of all ages and to raise productivity, the EU needs higher and more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning. Highly skilled people are the strongest currency of the 21st century.

Partnership between businesses and stakeholders for the common goal of raising employability skills is key to success.

I welcome the creation of the European Alliance on Skills for Employability as a vehicle to drive employability, competitiveness and growth for the people of Europe.”

Günter Verheugen, Vice President of the European Commission, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry
The Employability Pathway

Making an impact on employability in Europe

Further to the work of the European e-Skills Forum\(^1\) and the report of the ICT Task Force\(^2\) (November 2006), the European Commission’s Communication\(^3\) on “e-Skills for the 21st Century: Fostering Competitiveness, Growth and Jobs” (September 2007) the Competitiveness Council Conclusions on “A Long-Term Strategy for e-Skills” (November 2007), and the EC Communication on “News Skills for New Jobs” (September 2007) the Competitiveness Council Conclusions on “A Long-Term Strategy for e-Skills in Europe”. E-Skills are becoming central in formulating policy designed to ensure that Europe can boost the productivity and the employability of its workforce and respond to global competitive challenges.

Responding to these trends, the Alliance partners programmes work at all levels of the employability pathway – from the very low skilled to more highly skilled ICT users and ICT practitioners, because employability is about giving people access to the skills they need to gain and retain a job or transfer to a new job.

Alliance partners also recognized that people need different types of employability skills support depending on their level of formal education and previous work experience. In focusing the Alliance’s joint efforts on people with lower employability prospects, the Alliance aims to multiply the numbers of people reached with practical skills training, competency certification and job placement support across a range of sectors, and assist people to move up the employability pathway into more skilled and better paid jobs.

Towards the more highly skilled, the Alliance aims to help increase the skills and competencies of today’s and tomorrow’s workforce by providing access to the latest technology tools and training which will increase their competitiveness.

“Benchmarking e-Skills Policies on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Europe” (Study launched by the European Commission’s DG Enterprise and Industry).

\(^1\) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/policy/ict-skills.htm
\(^2\) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/taskforce.htm
\(^3\) COM (2007) 496 final
Germany

IT Fitness initiative

Following the official endorsement in November 2006 by Bill Gates, March 2007 saw the launch of the IT Fitness initiative in Berlin which aims to reach 4 million people nationally by 2010. Pupils, trainees and apprentices from all ages and groups are given access to self-testing and self-learning tools and receive a valuable IT fitness description for their job applications. The IT Fitness initiative has developed into an open network of partners; Microsoft, State Street, Cisco, The German Association of the IT Industry (BITKOM), Deutsche Bahn AG, Signal Iduna, the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) and the German Federal Employment Agency. Through the efforts of this co-joint partnership 2 million people have completed to date an online “IT fitness” test.

IT Fitness aims to:

- Strengthen public awareness of the need for IT skills to boost jobs and growth of the local economy.
- Improve political and industry dedication towards investing in specific digital inclusion activities for disadvantaged target groups.
- Provide self-testing and self-learning tools through a single portal posted online at www.it-fitness.de
- Facilitate access to the website for those who do not own a computer or do not have internet connectivity.
- And improve employability of individuals by delivering IT skills training and certification through existing programmes of IT Fitness partners such as the Microsoft IT Academy and Cisco Networking Academy, that are not available in the traditional education system.

Two initial projects were unveiled at the IT Fitness launch

- Together with the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts, Microsoft has developed an online platform, on which 480,000 apprentices (one-third of all apprentices in Germany) can improve their IT skills.
- Together with the Saxonian Technology Center Zwickau, Cisco and Microsoft will help disadvantaged young people to acquire essential IT knowledge.

“Information technology is an important means of social integration. It creates opportunities to engage in skilled work for many different groups within the community, including the jobless, people with disabilities, and migrants. The economy and society in Germany and in Europe will benefit from it. IT Fitness makes the goals and vision of the European Alliance on CSR come alive, as concrete and measurable achievement.”


“Apprentices go online provides good online trainings which I can individually complete… I think that today, qualifications are the key to success - additional IT knowledge allows me to positively rise above my job competitors.”

Soeren Meissner, apprentice.
United Kingdom

Employability Alliance in partnership with Fairbridge and learndirect scotland

In partnership with Microsoft, Cisco Systems and local and national employers, learndirect Scotland is working in Scotland to enhance the productivity, competitiveness and growth of the Scottish economy by increasing the scale and scope of ICT-based learning and skills acquisition across Scotland. Through this unique project, the partnership is committed to uplifting the skills of 100,000 Scots and increasing their employability by harnessing the potential of Scotland’s learning infrastructure.

Working with a number of “pathfinder” community-based learning centres that have direct access to marginalised learners, the initiative will provide them with a range of Microsoft and Cisco curricula offerings, including Digital Literacies, Office Specialist, A+ hardware maintenance and fundamentals of voice & data cabling. This pathfinder programme will demonstrate the potential of the branded learning centre network to support and promote industry led employability to key target groups.

Fairbridge

Has over 25 years of experience in re-engaging with young people in cities across the UK that other organisations have found too challenging to work with. These young people face many barriers to development spanning a wide range of social issues including homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending behaviour and literacy difficulties.

Each year Fairbridge offers over 3,000 young people, a complete package of support and skills development through a wide range of informal learning activities. In recent years Fairbridge has turned its attention to the broadening gulf in available opportunities created by the lack of awareness with regards to IT, known as ‘digital divide’. Recognising the importance of ICT literacy in helping young people to enter employment, Fairbridge with support from State Street and Microsoft has begun to pilot a range of courses that give young people the confidence, motivation and skills to bridge this divide.

In 2009, over 13,000 people received basic digital literacy training while more than 4,000 received advanced IT training and industry specific certifications (Microsoft, Cisco and Comptia)

“This initiative fits in remarkably well with the council’s efforts to show Edinburgh as a forward looking European city where constant re-skilling remains a key.”

Councillor Tom Buchanan, executive member for economic development on City of Edinburgh Council.
Luxembourg

Employability Alliance helps refugees rebuild their lives with ICT training

Microsoft and State Street have started the Employability Alliance in 2007 in Luxembourg in partnership with the NGO Caritas.

Caritas has been devoted to the cause of assisting people of all ages and origins who find themselves in difficult or threatening situations, or who are victims of social exclusion and poverty. The staff and volunteers of Caritas have forged strong links with those forced to emigrate, refugees and foreigners of all sorts.

As a result of the work of Caritas, basic ICT skills are provided to undeserved communities including:

- Young people excluded from education
- People of other ethnic origin
- Homeless
- Long-term unemployed
- Parents or older people
- Disabled

In 2008, 3490 people benefitted from the program. The project is now to be expanded due to its success and will continue to build upon and scale up the support to the above target groups.

France

Bringing Women over the age of 45 back into the work place

An official partnership between Microsoft, State Street, the local Randstad office and ECDL was put in place on March 3rd 2008 in support of the NGO ‘Force Femmes’. This joint initiative aims to address the high rate of unemployment faced by women over the age of 45, who experience a very real discrimination due to their age and sex, in their efforts to (re)integrate back into the workplace. It boosts their literacy, numeracy and general workplace skills (emotional binding, orientation, define a new career strategy…), improves their autonomy, works to change the mindset of those women and reduces their resistance to change.

Through the outreach of ‘Force Femmes’ the partners come together to facilitate an end-to-end approach to raising the employability prospects of women. Full support to reaching the goal of employment consists of: Basic to advanced training in technology and e-learning, thanks to the support of Microsoft and State Street, building up to the completion of ECDL training certifications, right up to the connection with potential employers, through Randstad.

Over 1,500 woman benefited from “Force Femmes” support. The job return rate increased from 18% to 25% between 2008 and 2009. A pilot project has been launched in a few local branches on “Non-Discriminative Recruitment” and job interview techniques.

“I consider Microsoft & State Street to be good citizens in Luxembourg through their support of Caritas and helping to bridge the digital divide”

Francois Biltgen, Minister of Labor, High Education and Research
Poland

Foundation for Support for Mathematicians and IT Specialists with Reduced Mobility

The Polish edition of the European Alliance was officially announced in July 2009 during the conference “PROPraca Employability Alliance - Educational and vocational reinsertion initiatives at the level of Local and Regional Governments – an opportunity to survive the economic downturn”. The Conference took place in the Headquarters of the Lewiatan - Polish Confederation of Private Employers in Warsaw, and the Special Guest of the event was Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. He greeted the Foundation for Support for Mathematicians and IT Specialists with Reduced Mobility, Microsoft, State Street and Comptia’s Creating Futures Foundation who have decided to join forces to align and develop project activities to enhance e-Skills and employability.

Special emphasis is placed on combating the phenomenon of information and social exclusion, as well as supporting most vulnerable groups: disabled persons, the elderly outside the labour market, inhabitants of rural areas with poorly developed IT infrastructure, young unemployed, unemployed women or women re-entering the labour market.

The Alliance will also target the needs of small and medium businesses and IT practitioners to help increase the competitive advantage of the Polish economy.

The programme aims at creating 30 Regional Learning Centers and reaching 1-2 million people per year, among which up to 1 million people to take advantage of training courses and post-graduate curricula.

Lately, a conference in the Polish parliament with 100 local and regional government representatives was organized in order to discuss how to utilize local internet access points for education and increase of the employability of the Polish population.

A free of charge hosting offer will be deployed in 1,400 e-centers in early 2010.

“In times of economic crisis like this, employers, employees and politics need to work together closely to find ways out. Initiatives such as the European Alliance on Skills for Employability are very precious, especially when they provide – as in this case - what economy needs. Even though, for the last twenty five years Poland has gone through an important phase of growth and development, still significant number of Polish citizens does not have even basic e-Skills. I am therefore convinced that this initiative will help Poland to soon catch up with other European countries in the level of IT knowledge.”

Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, July 2009.
Hungary
Climbing the Knowledge Pyramid

The Hungarian EUGA Leadership Board (HELB) is a not-for-profit multi-stakeholder partnership created and operated by the Hungarian IT industry, with the main objective of supporting the highly efficient use of IT-related development funds to create a competitive, innovative and inclusive Hungary within the European Union. HELB Members include multinationals (Microsoft, Cisco, Magyar Telekom, Intel, and HP), and innovative Hungarian SMEs.

The launch press conference of the TITAN Programme took place in the Delegation Hall of the Hungarian Parliament, hosted by the ICT Subcommittee of the Parliament. TITAN announcements were jointly made by Prime Minister Gyurcsány, and Development & Economy Minister Bajna, and the keynote announcement was given by Steve Ballmer. TITAN Memorandum of Understanding was ceremonially signed between the HELB, the Hungarian Government, all five parliamentary political parties, the Parliamentary ICT Subcommittee, and the Hungarian Enterprise Development Foundation.

The TITAN programme recognises and provides an integrated approach to the different e-skills levels existing in society. The novelty in the pivotal elements of the program philosophy is that the training should be able to push all participants one level higher in the knowledge pyramid, while all participants are to be taught skills in line with their level. People underserved by technology should be equipped with digital literacy; professionals are to take part in top-of-the range training, up-to-date and relevant to the market demand.

TITAN Framework Programme and its subprogrammes (PROTEUS, DIG-IT, DIG-IT-ALL) is now on a dynamic course with the involvement of internal workgroups and external specialists, discussions on the highest levels of decision-making have started. The objective of the discussions is to have TITAN accepted and backed as a priority programme, financed from EU funds in line with the New Hungary Development Plan.
Supporting skills training for SMEs

The European Union Grants Advisor

The EU Grants Advisor (EUGA) is an initiative developed by Microsoft, in partnership with HP and Intel, as well as other local public and private partners, through which Small and Medium-sized Businesses (SMBs) and Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are able to increase their awareness and understanding of EU funds, as well as utilise a facilitated application process should they wish to apply for funds for which they are eligible.

In its first year of operation, EUGA has been established in 25 EU countries. Over 11,000 grants have been identified in the technology training and growth related categories. To date over 113,000 SMBs have been or are being supported through this programme and over 140,000 people have enrolled in ICT skills training programmes which cover basic and advanced skills, skills enhancement for the disabled, teleworking and distance learning in addition to internships’ opportunities.

1 - EUGA supporting employment by matching employers needs in Sweden

The ICT sector has an enormous need for qualified employees while there is still a surplus of unemployed people with IT competencies. As a result, the Swedish Employment Agency, IAMCP SE (MS partner organization) and EUGA Sweden decided to organize a matchmaking event for Microsoft partners. Previous experience from a similar event had proven how effective such an initiative can be, just by bringing together companies and job-seekers and by translating the communication between these actors - often job advertisements are written in a way that the job seekers do not understand that their candidacy is relevant.

The event thus consisted of two parts: First a pre-meeting, where representatives from Microsoft and IAMCP explained to the persons seeking employment what competencies the companies were looking for. Then the actual Matchmaking event, where companies and the persons seeking employment had a chance to meet and interact.

“We think that it has been a fantastic day. Now CV’s are coming to us. We have meet three candidates who we will meet again next week for a more extensive interview.”

Kamilla Söderberg, Operative Manager at IDE Network consultants (Nätverkskonsulterna).
2 - EUGA supporting employment in Portugal

In cooperation with the Portuguese Government, Microsoft has established a traineeship programme with Portuguese ICT companies. The programme is addressed to young unemployed between 16 and 30 years old, with superior qualifications that are lacking any professional experience of more than a year. A non-refundable grant was ensured for the participant companies to guide the trainees through the job experience and mentoring. 500 professional on-the-job trainings were covered by the programme.

3 - EUGA in action in Hungary: Helping SMEs to acquire ICT equipment and training

The Hungarian EUGA consortium including HP, Intel, T-Online (Deutsche Telekom Group) and UniCredit Bank primarily supports small and medium enterprises to get access to EU funding via the provision of free grants applications and consulting services. There are 3 focus fields in the EUGA Programme with equal emphasis on each: ICT infrastructure development, R&D and Innovation and Training projects. Cooperation with the Hungarian Government is important to develop successful projects in these areas.

The EUGA initiative was launched in 2005. Since then to it has helped over 250 SMEs to get EU funding for buying complex ICT systems and help to thus raise efficiency of corporate processes. Training is a compulsory element of all projects and in the last three years about 3500 people were trained. ICT skills in the SME segment were improved by direct training grants, via complex ICT development projects (e.g. Enterprise Resource Planning System implementation) and through the education of the Partner Ecosystems of the Consortium members.

The Skills for Employability European Awards

The most creative use of ICT training adapted by NGOs

In May 2010, the Employability Alliance launched the Skills for Employability Awards at the World Congress on IT in Amsterdam. The Alliance will celebrate the best and most creative uses of ICT training and skills development adapted by NGOs to raise employment prospects and improve digital and social inclusion in the following three categories: Accessibility and Employability; Integrated employability model & use of collaboration technology; Youth and Employability. Awards finalists were invited to the European Employment Week in Brussels to receive their prizes.
EeSA (European e-Skills Association)

Founded on 7th June 2007 in the presence of Vice-President Günter Verheugen of the European Commission, with the vision of “Fostering the 21st century e-Skills and digital literacy of Europe’s workforce and citizens for a competitive, innovative and inclusive Europe”, the EeSA is set to lead the ICT sector’s contribution to the development and implementation of a long term e-skills and digital literacy agenda in Europe.

The European e-Skills Association is mainly structured as an umbrella organisation with a multitude of stand-alone initiatives, as for example the Alliance on Skills for Employability. The European e-Skills Association works in partnership with public authorities across Europe, other industry sectors, SMEs and all relevant stakeholders, building upon the European Commission recommendations and other reference initiatives on e-Skills. The members of the European e-Skills Association include British Computer Society, CEPIS, Cisco Systems, CompTIA, ECML Foundation, ECONET, EITO, European Software Association, EXIN, Global Knowledge Network, HP, INLEA Foundation, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle, Prometric and Siemens Enterprise Communications.

For more information see www.eskillsassociation.eu

Members

Cisco

Cisco Systems, is the worldwide leader in networking for the internet. The Cisco Networking Academy programme is one of its main CSR initiatives by which, in partnership with thousands of Education Institutions worldwide, Cisco contributes to the training of tomorrow’s Networking workforce. One of the main objectives is to help communities globally to ensure their technological development.

Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft Corporation is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and organisations realise their full potential. The company’s corporate citizenship initiatives focus on creating opportunities in local communities and fostering economic growth through access to technology and skills. The Unlimited Potential programme supports community- based IT skills training for the underserved, including the unemployed, elderly, people with disabilities and refugees across the globe. The Partners in Learning programme supports primary and secondary schools to increase access to technology and skills by providing software, IT lessons, and to help to develop and expand teacher training opportunities. The IT Academies programme supports accredited academic institutions to provide students with a premium IT education through academic education, certification exams and training for a wide range of careers within the IT field/sector.

State Street

State Street is the world’s leading provider of financial services to institutional investors. Our broad and integrated range of services spans the entire investment spectrum, including research, investment management, trading services and investment servicing. With offices in 26 countries and across an investment network of more than 100 markets, State Street delivers the tools and services that global institutional investors need to be successful. The State Street Foundation, the charitable grant making arm of State Street, provides grant support to programmes that bring long-term solutions to important community issues such as education, hunger relief, financial literacy and homelessness, among others. A major component of the Foundation’s educational focus is employability, which is extremely important to State Street, since technology is the backbone of our business. The Foundation has invested in excess of EURO 3.1M since in 2006 in the EU region.

CompTIA

CompTIA, the Computing Technology Industry Association, is a worldwide, not-for-profit ICT industry association, having offices in all main ICT regions worldwide. CompTIA is active in a number of multistakeholder partnerships, with a view towards providing students with the skills they need, focusing on the continuous technology training and development of current and future tech employees. CompTIA, through it’s Educational Foundation’s “Creating Futures” programme, is supporting the Alliance’s work with an ICT training programme for disadvantaged persons, starting with the envisaged Alliance chapter in Poland, and has made available its worldwide online programme for building access to ICT training for under-served people throughout the EU.”
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José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission (5th from left), with the founding members of the European Alliance on Skills for Employability, in January 2006

“Under the umbrella of the European e-Skills Association”
“Under the umbrella of the European e-Skills Association”

Members:

Alliance Secretariat