



Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs DG

**Tomasz HUSAK, HoC BIENKOWSKA
DG GROW**

**MEETING WITH
MR [REDACTED], MICROSOFT VICE PRESIDENT
CORPORATE AFFAIRES
(Brussels, 6 January 2015, 15:00)**

BRIEFING NOTE

***Scene setter / Context:** Microsoft offers a variety support to young people and to new businesses through programmes including free or reduced price software, access to its code or support for developers creating new apps, mentoring, training, and services related to its software products and services. They will presumably wish to introduce these programmes as the objectives of participants in the programme are similar to some of the goals of our Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. They might suggest the participation of the Commissioner Bienkowska in two events they organise in 2015.*

Table of contents

1. KEY MESSAGES	2
2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP & START-UPS	4
DEFENSIVES POINTS/Q&A	6
3. E-SKILLS	11
4. [REDACTED] CV	15
5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND START-UPS	16
6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – E-SKILLS	20

1. Key messages

- *Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit across Europe is vital for our competitiveness and our future.*
- *Entrepreneurial education shows excellent 'return on investment' and we applaud such efforts (without prejudicing the Commission's work on any other files or in any other areas, such as competition law, etc.).*
- *Information and Communication Technology skills (e-skills or digital skills) shortages affect negatively growth, employment and social cohesion in Europe. Productivity, competitiveness and the innovation capability of Europe are increasingly dependent on the use of ICT.*
- *As new technologies are developing very rapidly, related skills are increasingly sophisticated and need to be constantly updated. This is putting huge pressure and responsibility on **education and training systems**. On top of that we need to **convince more girls** to study new technologies and choose careers in these fields.*
- *Member States are increasingly considering **introducing coding** and fundamental knowledge of computer science in the curriculum of secondary schools. The UK is at the forefront of this movement.*
- *Initiated by DG GROW, efforts to address e-skills shortages, gaps and mismatches should be intensified and the EC funding instruments should be efficiently mobilised to ensure the implementation of a **coherent strategy with scalable results and a clear European dimension and added value***
- *These efforts are based on **market needs** and are **led by industry** and partnerships (industry, academia, government etc.) to better meet the demand requirements. The **Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs** launched by President Barroso in March 2013 is contributing to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships. The campaign "**e-Skills for Jobs**" which was launched in 2014 will be continued in 2015-2016.*
- *Microsoft has been supportive of the EU e-Skills strategy and participated actively to the e-Skills for Jobs campaign.*
 - *[REDACTED] (Chairman Microsoft Europe) participated at the European e-Skills 2014 Conference on 2-3 December). He will leave Microsoft in 2015.*
 - *Microsoft is very active in providing ICT training and certifications.*
 - *Microsoft has several corporate initiatives (BizSpark and YouthSpark) for the promotion of digital entrepreneurship for young people (e-leaders) and the promotion of cloud computing for SMEs.*
 - *Microsoft is welcoming the Latvian Presidency of the EU intention to organise a conference on e-Skills on 13 March 2013 in Riga.*
- *There is a need to keep the momentum and elaborate a comprehensive and ambitious agenda (2016-2020) bringing together all relevant actions to be implemented by the Commission services. It is necessary to broaden the e-skills agenda to foster synergy with related skills issues in Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) and better address the international dimension.*
- *The **Digital Single Market Package** to be adopted in May 2015 should include a strong skills dimension. The **Latvian Presidency** is organising a major **conference on e-Skills on 13 March 2015 in Riga.***

Name of main contact person: [REDACTED]
Telephone number: [REDACTED]
Directorate/Unit: A1
Name of Cabinet Member: Tomasz HUSAK

2. Entrepreneurship & start-ups

Line to take

- *Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit across Europe is vital for our competitiveness and our future.*
- *Entrepreneurial education shows excellent 'return on investment' and we applaud such efforts (without prejudicing the Commission's work on any other files or in any other areas, such as competition law, etc.).*

- We face a **challenge in entrepreneurship**:
Europeans on average do not seem to want to be as entrepreneurial as people in many other parts of the world, such as the US (51% on last figures want to work for themselves) or China (55%) – the European figure was only 37%.
- The main Commission policy lines in this area are found in our Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which addresses education, the business environment, and outreach to all potential entrepreneurs.

- Practical experience and research show that **entrepreneurial experiences at the secondary school** level, incorporated across the curriculum, show an **excellent ‘return on investment’**: students given this sort of opportunity are far more likely to start their own businesses; and if they don’t, they are rated as more desirable employees and find jobs faster than others.
- I’m pleased to learn more about your initiatives in supporting entrepreneurship education and start-ups and wish you – and, most importantly, the young people and budding entrepreneurs you work with! – success.

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(D1)→ F1

Defensives points/Q&A

How is the Commission promoting entrepreneurship education?

- Innovative and viable business ideas are more likely to arise from technical, scientific and creative studies than from business studies. So it is necessary to **make entrepreneurship education accessible to all students**. In particular a strong and systematic combination of research and entrepreneurship education can bear most fruits.
- The **European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT)** through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) is already producing good results, by giving science students exposure to entrepreneurship education and by helping researchers and entrepreneurs with an innovative idea to start a viable business.
- The European Commission has the goal to help **deepen and accelerate the introduction of entrepreneurship education in schools and universities, by working in close cooperation with national authorities and relevant stakeholders**. It organises workshops with practitioners and policy makers, publishes guidelines and case studies, funds European projects. Some activities are currently focusing on **training the educators**, as teachers have a key role in bringing entrepreneurship education into

the classroom successfully; they need therefore to acquire and develop appropriate skills.

- Some EU projects make it possible to give **advanced training on how to teach entrepreneurship to higher education professors, lecturers and assistant professors from universities and polytechnics across Europe**. Other projects are currently targeting primary and secondary school teachers.
- A **Guide on training teachers in entrepreneurship has been recently published**, and the Commission is developing self-assessment tools to support schools and universities concretely. An on-line self-assessment tool for universities that aim to develop into 'entrepreneurial' universities is already available (<https://heinnovate.eu>). A similar tool is now being created for schools and vocational education institutions. These assessment tools are being developed by DG EAC in cooperation with the OECD.

What else could be done to link education to youth entrepreneurship?

- **Greater collaboration between formal education systems, civil society and private sector organizations** can further advance entrepreneurship education while providing the support needed by young entrepreneurs in Europe

to be less intimidated by the prospect of starting their own business.

- **Greater investment from national and European authorities could provide additional support in promoting these initiatives.** A European-wide push, involving all relevant stakeholders (private, public and civil society sectors), could stimulate and enhance the entrepreneurial efforts of young Europeans.

For the implementation of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which concrete means are used?

- **The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan is not a budget proposal;** for actions which the Commission undertakes, they are included in existing financial instruments and proposals (e.g., COSME for DG GROW, other funding instruments depending on which DG leads on each action, including the new round of EU structural and investment funds, Horizon 2020 for research and innovation and Erasmus + for education and training, just to name a few of the most important).
- **However the Action Plan itself is not primarily a funding mechanism; rather, it is a call to action.** Only if decisive action is taken at all levels, European, national, regional and local, we will have a coherent policy and a significant and lasting impact. Thus, beyond the Commission, the

implementation of actions must be vigorously pushed forward by the Member States.

What is the Commission doing to reduce the administrative burdens for entrepreneurs and for SMEs?

- Bureaucracy and the regulatory environment should not discourage the aspirations of starters. This is why the Commission is working consistently with the Member States to simplify and reduce the administrative burden on businesses. At European level, we apply the “Think Small First” principle to legislation and administrative procedures affecting SMEs, by running an “SME Test” in impact assessments.
- My Directorate has become the central review and advisory counterpart for all other services in the Commission. My colleagues are on a daily basis busy with reviewing the impact assessments done for legislative acts put forward elsewhere in the Commission. At the same time they regularly train colleagues from other services on issues related to the SME test, how to draft SME impact assessments, etc. As a result we have already seen that culture change slowly but surely emerging in the Commission.
- The Commission asks Member States to apply the SME Test or an equivalent in their impact

assessment procedures as well. On that level, we have to press those MS which have been slow in embracing the Think Small First principle to catch up. The revised Small Business Act which we are working on right now should reinforce the message towards national policy makers that the Think Small First is an indispensable element of good SME policy.

- Moreover since 2007 the Commission has been monitoring the existing administrative requirements for starting a company, in order to reduce the time and cost of procedures in the Member States. We have been successful. From 2008 the average time of starting up a business in the EU has been reduced from 9 to 4 days in 2013 (and cost from €463 to €315).
- Since this year we are digging deeper into this area, by looking into the many licences and authorisations that a company may need to start concretely its activities.

3. e-skills

- Microsoft will present their initiatives relating to e-Skills and SME ecosystem including IAMCP BizSpark and YouthSpark initiatives, start-ups support via MSFT Ventures and MIC incubators in Europe;
- BizSpark is an international network of entrepreneurial startups and partners. They offer free cloud services to start-ups, including three years of free software, support, and visibility. <http://www.microsoft.com/bizspark/>
- Microsoft YouthSpark is committed to helping young people learning skills, preparing for the jobs of the future, even to start their own business.
<http://www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/en-us/youthspark/youthsparkhub/>
- Microsoft Ventures aims at supporting startups with over 200 partnerships worldwide. For promising early-stage startups or first-time entrepreneurs, they propose immersive programs aimed at squeezing the countdown to launch. They propose mentoring, technical guidance and connections to other startups.
[https://www.microsoftventures.com/locations?
r=4](https://www.microsoftventures.com/locations?r=4)

- Cloud services and infrastructure are significant to SMEs' development. This is why **the Commission has launched the European cloud scout initiative.**
<http://www.cloudwatchhub.eu/cloudscout>
- *“Cloud Scout is a simple tool to give small businesses the information to decide on how to use the cloud: taking account of their legal, organisational and technical needs.”* **Neelie Kroes, Vice President, European Commission**
- Microsoft is organizing two major events in 1Q2015:
 - 20 January 2015 in Brussels a YouthSpark event focusing on coding
 - 24 and 25 March in Brussels their annual European SME summit, which also includes the annual EU AppCup competition.
 - AppCup 2015: 3rd edition of their pan-European app competition. IAMCP members, BizSpark members, start-ups, individuals, youth or students are invited to create an application in B2B, B2C, and Microsoft CityNext. <http://appcup.eu/>

They will most likely suggest the participation of Commissioner Bienkowska given the pan-European SME audience.

Line to take:

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Commission initiatives 2014

Three calls for tenders have been published covering the following domains of activity:

- 1) Organisation of a pan-European communication and awareness campaign “e-Skills for Jobs” in 2015 and 2016
- 2) Development and implementation of a European framework for ICT professions
- 3) Promotion of e-leadership skills in Europe. Several workshops and events with industry and governmental experts will be organised to discuss progress and validate results.

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5. Background information - Entrepreneurship and start-ups

Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) create 85% of all new jobs and we need to sow the seeds to unlock fully the enormous potential for jobs and growth that they represent. SMEs and in particular new companies are the engine of innovation and growth of the economy. **Without SMEs, job growth would actually be negative. And without entrepreneurs, there would be no SMEs.**

That is why the **Commission adopted the European Entrepreneurship Action Plan at the start of 2013**. It was developed in response to widespread interest from individual entrepreneurs, citizens, representative groups (e.g. EESC, et al) and business support organisations across Europe.

The Action Plan was developed in wide consultation both with the public and with a broad cross-section of interested DGs of the Commission. The Plan comprises three main action pillars:

- I. Entrepreneurial **education** and training to support growth and business creation;
- II. Create an **environment where entrepreneurs can flourish and grow**;
- III. **Role models and reaching out to specific groups whose entrepreneurial potential is not being tapped to its fullest extent or who are not reached by traditional outreach** for business.

Entrepreneurial education is at the top of our Action Plan as it is the area where we see the greatest real and potential results. Pupils and students who work on 'mini companies' or 'junior enterprises' or similar activities are far more likely than their counterparts to start their own businesses or, if they choose not to do that, they go on to be more employable – and to find employment faster.

Key message: Investment in entrepreneurial education is the single best investment we can make in Europe's future.

Action Pillar II **includes 6 key areas where action must be taken to create opportunities and remove existing obstacles** impeding the creation and growth of new businesses, namely:

1. Access to finance
2. Supporting new businesses in crucial phases of their lifecycle and helping them grow
3. Unleashing new business opportunities in the digital age
4. Easier business transfers
5. Turning failure into success – a second chance for honest bankrupts, and
6. Regulatory burden – clearer and simpler rules

Key message: In all of these areas the principle should be that we – and **administrations at all levels, from local to regional to national to European – 'put ourselves in the shoes of the entrepreneurs and the business'**.

Action Pillar III addresses the need for a **real cultural change** in Europe – we all know that if a famous entrepreneur's name comes up in conversation or in the media, it is not very likely to be a European. We need to change that and improve perceptions so that **our young people in particular see entrepreneurship as a positive, worthwhile route** for their futures. As well as getting out the word about positive role models, we need to reach out to **groups who all too often find it difficult to access finance, business support and information or who are 'traditionally' not regarded as actual or future entrepreneurs**. This includes **women, seniors, migrants, and the unemployed, as well as youth**.

Key message: Are we reaching all the untapped entrepreneurial potential in Europe? Does everyone who might want to be an entrepreneur know how and where he or she could get the information, resources and support they might need?

Bringing about an entrepreneurial revolution is a **joint task of the Commission and the Member States on which they have to embark for the long haul**. The Action Plan requires **implementation at European, national, and regional levels** in order to have the desired deep and long term impact.

The Action plan and its key actions are being followed up by the Commission through the competitiveness and industrial policy and the Small Business Act governance mechanisms. The network of National SME Envoys and the EU SME Envoy play a particularly key role in ensuring progress on the proposed measures. Member States are invited to report on progress on the key actions of the Action plan at national level in the context of their National Reform Programmes in the framework of the European Semester. The Commission will monitor progress within the context of the European Semester.

Of the over 50 action items listed in the Action Plan, the half which are the responsibility of the Commission are well underway; for those we invite the Member States to address, we monitor them through the European Semester as described above.

Example Actions

Examples of elements of the Action Plan through which we seek to create the needed impact include:

- All Member States to have integrated Entrepreneurship Education in their national curricula, and where appropriate in their regional curricula, before the end of 2015.
- Ensure that all students are offered the possibility of having an entrepreneurial experience before they leave secondary school.
- Develop a pan-European entrepreneurial learning initiative to bring together national expertise for impact analysis, peer mentoring, and sharing methodologies.
- Support development of a market for microfinance in Europe.
- Tackle barriers to online cross-border business.
- Inviting the Member States to make their tax environments more favourable to early stage businesses.
- Reduce the time to obtain the needed licenses and authorisations to start up a business to 30 days by 2015.

- Reduce discharge times (entrepreneur fully free of any debt) to 3 years after bankruptcy.
- 'EU Entrepreneurship Day' for students finishing secondary education within the European SME Week.
- Expanded support for mentoring, advisory, and networking schemes for potential entrepreneurs, to share knowledge across generations and communities.

6. Background information – e-Skills

Introduction

- The competitiveness and the innovation capability of industry are increasingly dependent on key enabling technologies (KETs) and the efficient use of information technologies (IT) as well as on the related skills of the workforce. There is a broad consensus about the importance of these skills: shortages, gaps and mismatches will affect negatively growth, employment and social cohesion. As new technologies are developing rapidly, skills are increasingly sophisticated and need to be constantly updated. There is a need for more individuals with creativity, innovation and higher-level conceptual skills.
- Improving the availability of skills and increasing the talent pool involves actions at EU and national level primarily in education, training, research, industrial and labour policies but also in domains such as immigration and taxation. Following the Commission's Communication on "e-Skills for the 21st Century" which includes a long term agenda, several follow-up initiatives have been launched focusing on ICT practitioners. Foresight scenarios on the supply and demand (2015-2020), an analysis of the impact of global sourcing and a European e-Competence framework are available as well as many multi-stakeholder partnerships etc. A complementary initiative on skills for KETs has been launched in January 2014 based on the recommendations of the High Level Group on KETs.
- In 2013, President Barroso also launched the "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs". In March 2014 a comprehensive report on "e-Skills for Jobs in Europe: Measuring Progress and Moving Ahead" has been released with detailed country reports. It present an in-depth analysis of the progress made and concrete recommendations for the period 2015-2020. The campaign "e-Skills for Jobs" was launched on 6 May 2014 in Athens with the Hellenic Presidency of the EU. At this occasion, the Greek government launched a National Coalition for the Digital Economy.
- The goals for the future will include the promotion of ICT professionalism and the generation of a larger talent pool of e-leaders (ICT practitioners, entrepreneurs, business leaders, managers and advanced users) with a focus on the strategic use of new information and communication technologies.

European Commission Initiatives on e-Skills:

- European Commission's Communication on "e-Skills for the 21st Century", 2007, which includes a long term EU e-skills agenda for Europe. Two external evaluations of its implementation for the period 2007-2010 and for the period 2010-2013 concluded that good progress has been made and that efforts should be intensified. This has been recognised at EU level by the following developments:
 - e-Skills activities have been included in the "Digital Agenda for Europe" (2010);
 - The Communication "Towards a Job-rich Recovery" (2012) presents key actions for the promotion of ICT employment and e-skills;

- The President of the European Commission together with four Commissioners launched a “Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs” at the conference on “e-Skills and Education for Digital Jobs” on 4th March 2013 in Brussels.
- Council Conclusions on the e-skills strategy, Competitiveness Council on 23 November 2007 and European Council Conclusions (24-25 October 2013 and 20-21 March 2014) including reference to the topic.
- European Commission Communication on "A European Strategy for Key Enabling Technologies - A Bridge to Growth and Jobs", 2012.

In January 2014, the European Commission has launched an initiative aiming to address the skills requirements for KETs based on the current and anticipated needs of employers. It aims to develop a shared international multilevel vision on how to address the skills requirements for KETs.

The results will help design a coherent European strategy on skills for KETs, including a roadmap for 2014-2020. This horizontal strategy would also aim at aligning efforts so as to make best use of public resources in a targeted and results-oriented manner.

Recent events in 2014:

- e-Skills for Jobs: Mobilizing to Support Job Creation and Up-skilling of the Workforce, 6 May 2014, Athens with the Hellenic Presidency of the EU
- e-Skills for Jobs: Making a Career with Digital Technologies, 30 October 2014, Rome with the Italian Presidency of the EU
- European e-Skills 2014 Conference: e-Leadership and ICT Professionalism, 2-3 December 2014, Brussels

Forthcoming events in 2015:

- "e-Skills for Jobs 2015 campaign including two major conferences under the Latvian (13 March 2015 in Riga) and Luxembourg Presidencies of the EU.
- European Conference on "e-Leadership and skills for KETs" in June 2015 in Brussels

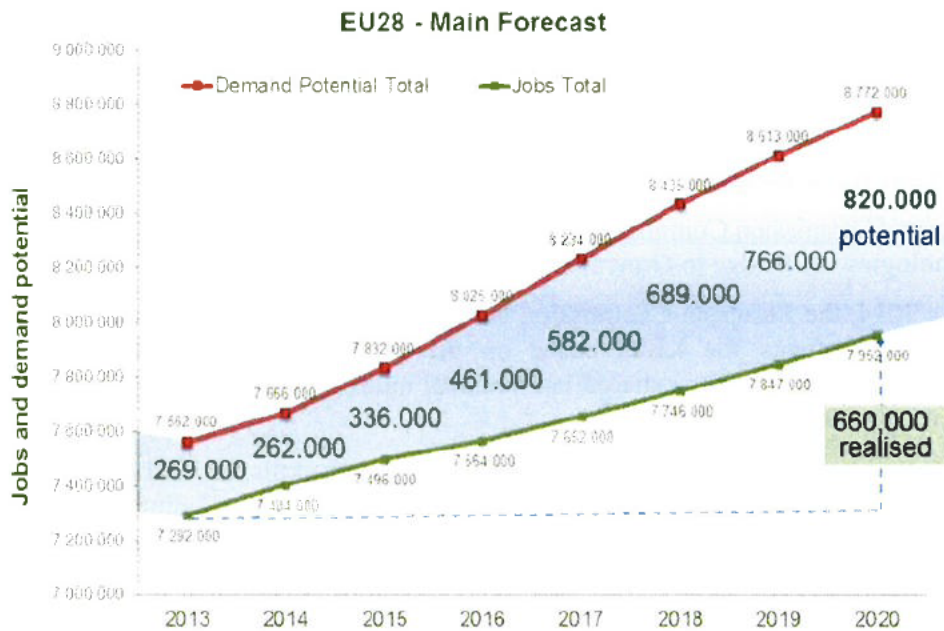
e-Skills shortages: Latest Statistics and Forecasts

Over the last decade, the number of ICT jobs in Europe has continued to grow, despite an unfavourable economic context. The highest job growth has been in highly skilled jobs where there is increasing excess demand, even at very cautious growth assumptions. The trend in ICT management jobs has been growth of almost 14% p.a. from 2011 to 2013.

Even with cautious forecasting, demand is expected to increase at 4.6% p.a., and the stagnating supply of graduates from universities and will be increasingly inadequate. Europe will be faced with bottlenecks, especially in highest skilled ICT jobs.

Empirica and IDC presented their latest data and forecasts at the European e-Skills 2014 Conference on 2 December 2014 in Brussels. They are now expecting 660,000 ICT jobs to be added to the existing pool of ICT workers by 2020. On top of that, a potential 820,000 jobs could be filled by 2020, if talent would become available to an extent beyond their extrapolation of current trends.

e-Skills Jobs and Demand Potential in Europe: Forecast 2013 – 2020 for the EU28



Source: empirica and IDC

However Europe is unlikely to see 820,000 job vacancies advertised. It is known that employers experiencing persistent supply bottlenecks do not create the jobs they would like to, and therefore do not try to hire people that are not there. This figure is better understood as an absorption potential that could easily be fulfilled if the supply was there. Faced with shortages, employers instead change their production structure or reduce output. The outcome is an increase in off-shoring, upward wage pressure, and unexploited production potential.

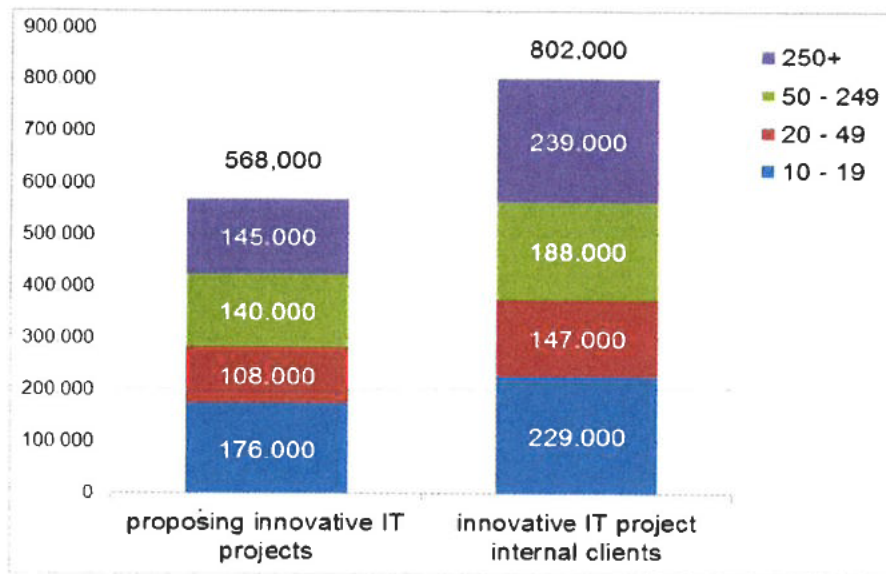
e-Leadership skills

For effective e-leadership, people need very strong IT skills and must lead qualified staff from IT and other disciplines towards identifying and designing business models and exploiting key innovation opportunities. Their success is defined as making best use of developments in IT and delivering value to their organizations. The Commission initiative was presented, which focuses first on the leadership needs of medium and large size enterprise at the top levels of decision-making.

Research from empirica and IDC is demonstrating that there is a significant shortage of e-leaders in Europe. First attempts to quantify the existing e-leadership workforce based on company's involvement in IT based innovation activities result in some 568,000 e-leaders in European enterprises.

If we take the implementation of IT-based innovation as basis for the definition of e-leadership, we can conclude that there could be around 800,000 e-leaders in Europe. Around 70% of e-leaders are found in SMEs and interestingly enough, we see 59% of e-leaders outside the IT department, coming from lines of business, and 41% being IT department inhabitants.

e-Leaders in Europe 2014



Source: empirica, Survey NL, UK, DE 2013. Data for EU, grossed up using Structural Business Statistics (Eurostat)

When coupling the e-Leadership demand and supply with the known demand and supply of ICT management, architecture and analysis skills with an average rise of 4.6% we can assume the Europe would need 215,000 additional e-leaders by 2020. An additional more than 100,000 would be required due to replacement demand. But “will the European higher and executive education system be capable of supporting 40,000+ seasoned ICT practitioners and managers to be turned into new e-leaders each year?”

Closing this skills gap requires an ecosystem perspective, connecting the demand and supply side stakeholders of e-leadership skills. Responding to the inadequacies in the skills market flagged by stakeholders across Europe, the European Commission launched the "e-skills strategy" and the "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs". After responding to requirements for increased professionalism among ICT practitioners, and developing strategies and instruments to bridge the gap between e-skills demand and supply at that level, the new focus is on the skills gap in the e-leadership domain. The first pan-European initiative on e-leadership was launched in 2013. DG Enterprise and Industry launched the complementary e-Leadership Skills for Small and Medium sized Enterprises in January 2014. This initiative is complementary to the above one on 'New Curricula for e-Leadership' and focusing on entrepreneurs, managers and advanced ICT users in SMEs, start-ups and gazelles.

