



Seizing the Opportunity of e-Jobs, e-Skills, e-Competences

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Abstract

In response to the ongoing and tragic levels of unemployment in Europe, we're showcasing where we see the European labor market/s headed and what governments, individuals, training institutions and social partners like trade unions, can do to be prepare for that future.

One in five workers now require advanced ICT skills and 90% of workers require basic ICT skills. In fact, we now predict that while jobs held by highly-qualified people with ICT skills will rise by 16 million by 2020, low-skilled jobs will fall by 12 million; hence, it is not hard to see the connection between ICT and success.

ICT is pervasive throughout all sectors of the economy, and is itself now one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the European economy. Therefore, ICT skills lower one's risk of unemployment.

Specifically in the ICT sector (the four to five million ICT specialists and closely associated jobs) there is a massive jobs surplus emerging. There will be up to 700,000 vacancies by 2015 unless more is done. That means ICT is going to continue to be a rich source of millions of jobs, mostly requiring graduate degrees.

Since 2005, a team of 17 European organizations from 11 countries (Austria, France Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and United Kingdom) has been working on a series of projects focusing on "Multimedia / eContent / Internet-related Services, Ambient Assisted Living, On-Line marketing," jobs using an innovative approach. The objectives of these initiatives are:

- Assess the industry's needs in terms of competences
- Confront the industry's needs with the VET offer available
- Optimize supply and demand of skills and labor through a common European assessment methodology based on the emerging European frameworks:
- EQF (European Qualifications Framework)
- eCF (e-Competence Framework) and
- ECVET (The European Credit System for VET)

All these activities, together with a network of key players in the area of internet-related jobs have joined forces to create a central point of reference for all activities related to research, training, qualifications, standards, norms, certificates and employment in the field of e-Jobs in Europe developing a platform that connects jobs seekers with companies and institutions, the e-Jobs Observatory. (<http://www.e-jobs-observatory.eu/>)

The e-Jobs Observatory is a stakeholders' network fostering collaboration and information sharing about e-Jobs, e-Skills and e-Competences. By closely working with ICT SMEs, it identifies and specifies the skills, knowledge and competences required for the new job profiles of the digital economy and it formulates them according to a transparent and consistent methodology at European level.

In parallel, it engages in a dialogue with SMEs, training organizations and administrations to develop officially recognized training courses meeting ICT labor market requirements. Its ultimate goal is to decrease unemployment by reducing the e-skills gap.