

## 8-9 October 2008

# PIN-SME Declaration on e-Skills

PIN-SME, the European association of ICT small and medium sized enterprises, believes that the deployment of e-Skills among European citizens and businesses is a key factor for productivity growth, competitiveness and employment in Europe and the overall success of the Lisbon strategy.

On behalf of the European ICT SMEs represented by its members, PIN-SME is pleased to put forward this Declaration and calls upon policy-makers, European citizens and relevant stakeholders to consider the following recommendations:

- **ICT small enterprises are a key factor for the deployment of e-Skills** among Europe's citizens and businesses. ICT SMEs are widespread in Europe's territory and regions; they are present in all local communities where they have access to different societal levels. For these reasons, PIN-SME believes Europe's e-Skills strategy should recognise the key role played by ICT SMEs in delivering training and transferring knowledge to citizens and businesses.
- While formal education on informatics and technical subjects constitutes the basis for digital literacy, nowadays a growing contribution to e-Skills arises from industry training and private certifications. We believe both these formal and informal aspects are fundamental contributions to e-Skills. However, we insist that **private trainings and certifications should be considered complementary to formal education** and should never become a substitute for the latter.
- **Collaboration between universities and industry should be enhanced.** Universities and schools should proactively seek partnership with businesses, especially local enterprises, in order to promptly adapt their education schemes to respond to the needs of employers. As well, we call upon SMEs to engage in collaboration with local schools and universities so as to benefit from their competencies in order to boost innovation and modernisation.
- With the aim of offering a better service to ICT SMEs, **PIN-SME supports vendor-independent e-Skills certifications**, but without preference for any of them. Instead, we believe ICT SMEs favour open and free competition among private schemes, thus benefiting from improved quality of services and reduced prices.
- While a wide offer of private training and certifications is available on the market, PIN-SME considers that none of the existing tools is sufficiently adapted to respond to the needs of micro enterprises. More than 90% of European enterprises are micro sized (i.e. less than 10 employees according to the EU definition) and the need to enhance e-Skills among these companies is even higher than in larger

PIN-SME - Rue Jacques de Lalaing, 4 – B-1040 Brussels -Tel. +32-2 282 05 30 - Fax +32-2 282 05 35-  
[www.pin-sme.eu](http://www.pin-sme.eu)

In partnership with:



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE



ones. However, the approach of the existing private e-Skills tools is focused too much on large and medium enterprises. ICT skills used in micro enterprises have specific characteristics, like flexibility and adaptability to fast changing environments, preference for horizontal rather than highly specialized competences, notions of management and administration, and so on. **PIN-SME undertakes to contribute actively to the development e-Skills training tools and certification schemes oriented to the needs of the SME community.**

- Governments and public authorities should play an active role in the deployment of e-Skills. They should support the companies that decide to invest in e-Skills training. Hence, we urge governments to consider **fiscal incentives and other forms of financial support to stimulate the update of e-Skills in SMEs.**

### About PIN-SME

PIN-SME, the Pan-European ICT and eBusiness Network for SMEs, is the first European association of the ICT sector exclusively focused on representing the interests of SMEs. PIN-SME Founding Members are seven national sectorial SME federations from different EU countries and one ICT SME network from Germany. PIN-SME represents more than **50.000 enterprises**, which employ around 200.000 people across Europe.

### PIN-SME members

BASSCOM - Bulgarian Association of Software Companies (BULGARIA), CNA -Comunicazione e Terziario Avanzato, Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della Piccola e Media impresa (ITALY), ESTIC - Asociación Empresarial del Sector TIC, BestPractice-IT - G+F Verlags und Beratungsgesellschaft mbH (GERMANY), GPNI - Groupement Professionnel National de l'Informatique (FRANCE), it-forum midtjylland (DENMARK), UBIT Unternehmensberatung & IT (AUSTRIA), UKita, United Kingdom IT Association (UNITED KINGDOM)

PIN-SME - Rue Jacques de Lalaing, 4 – B-1040 Brussels -Tel. +32–2 282 05 30 - Fax +32–2 282 05 35-  
[www.pin-sme.eu](http://www.pin-sme.eu)

In partnership with:



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

