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INVITATION FOR THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

Skills for SMEs

Fostering the Adoption of Cyber-security, Big Data and IoT

15 October 2019

Registration: <https://www.digitalsme.eu/sight-final-conference>

Sofitel, Place Jourdan 1, Brussels

We are pleased to invite you to the European Conference on **Skills for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs): Fostering the Adoption of Cybersecurity, Big Data and Internet of Things (IoT)**, taking place on **October 15th 2019**, at the [Sofitel Europe](#) hotel in Brussels (near Place Jourdan). It will bring together over 200 experts from industry, trade unions, education and training organizations, governments and SMEs associations from across Europe.

The **European Commission and EASME** initiated this important [initiative](#) to support SMEs and skills development in these fields with the aim to strengthening SMEs' workforce adaptability and capability. **Capgemini Invent, the European DIGITAL SME Alliance and Technopolis** are proud to present the vision, a roadmap and toolbox which have been developed by expert stakeholders from across Europe.

The event will focus on major themes addressing the importance of skills development and upskilling of SMEs to support their digital transformation. It will discuss the particular need to make SMEs more cyber resilient, successful mechanisms to engage SMEs in upskilling and how to ensure more and better education and training offers tailored to their specific needs. It will also discuss what is needed in the coming years to increase the adoption of these technologies by SMEs with recognized experts from across the European Union.



AGENDA

08:30 - 09:30 *Registration and Welcome Coffee*

09:30 - 09:40 Welcome address by the Chairperson [Niels van der Linden](#), Principal consultant at Capgemini Invent

European policy to accelerate skills development in SMEs

09:45 – 10:00 Skills for industry [Slawomir Tokarski](#), Director Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, DG GROW, European Commission

Cities and regions are driving the growth of SMEs

10:00 – 10:20 The city as platform for SMEs to grow and flourish [Sanna-Mari Jääntti](#), Director Strategic Projects, City of Helsinki

10:20 – 10:40 Make use of digitization opportunities for SMEs in Europe and Baden-Württemberg Dr. [Petra Püchner](#), European Commissioner of Baden-Württemberg and head of the Steinbeis Europe Center

10:40 – 11:00 The importance of skills for SMEs & the European economy [Bo Sejer Frandsen](#), CEO it-forum, Vice-President of European DIGITAL SME Alliance, Board Member AIOTI

11:00 – 11:15 *Coffee break*

11:15 – 11:30 A comprehensive strategy to support skills development in SMEs [Niels van der Linden](#), Principal consultant at Capgemini Invent

A vision and strategy to increasing skills development and the cyber resilience of SMEs

This session will address the urgency of increasing the level of cybersecurity assurance for the European economy. The panel will address the urgency, the need for skills development and show how frontrunners deal with the challenge.

11:30 – 12:45 Panel discussion

[Gerd Mueller](#), Vice-Chairman European Cyber Security Organization (ECSO)

[Marco Bianchini](#), Policy analyst, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

[Nineta Polemi](#), Policy officer Cyber Security, Technologies and Capacity Building, DG CONNECT, European Commission

[Anett Mádi-Nátor](#), Senior Cyber Defense Expert and lead Women4Cyber

[George Sharkov](#), Adviser to the Minister of Defense in Bulgaria, Director ESI CEE, Member of the High Level Expert Group on AI

Moderator: [Niels van der Linden](#), Principal consultant at Capgemini Invent

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch

Successful mechanisms to engage SMEs in upskilling

An essential element of the strategy and roadmap is to strengthen the SME ecosystem and scale successful projects that demonstrated mechanisms to engage SMEs in skills development. This panel will explore mechanisms and best practices of SME upskilling. What can we learn from good practices and how could these be scaled up? How do we optimize the ecosystems that help SMEs flourish?

14:00 – 15:15 Panel discussion

Moderator: [Sebastiano Toffaletti](#), Secretary-General European DIGITAL SME Alliance

[Dave Feenan](#), Innovation Programmes Manager at Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet

[Sanna-Mari Jääntti](#), Director Strategic Projects, City of Helsinki

[Morena Diazi](#), Director-General of the Emilia-Romagna Regional Government for Knowledge, Labour and Enterprise Economy

[Paul Gisby](#), Senior Manager at Accountancy Europe

15:15 – 15:30 Coffee break

Tailoring education and training to SMEs' needs

This session focuses on the urgency to tailor education and training with SMEs needs and to overcome existing barriers preventing SMEs from developing the necessary skills to adopt new technologies. This requires strengthening the collaboration between education and industry, taking down financial barriers, and exploring new forms of education.

15:30 – 16:30 Panel discussion

Moderator: [Annemieke van Barneveld-Biesma](#), Principal Consultant, Technopolis

[Timo Kos](#), Director Education and Student Affairs, Technical University Delft, and Director of Innovation, LDE Centre for Education and Learning

[Tanya Suarez](#), LLB (HONS) and PhD candidate in ICT - IoT Tribe, Founder - BluSpecs, CEO - AIOTI, Board Member

[Ernestina Menasalvas](#), Professor University of Madrid, Lead of Big Data Value Association Task Force 9: Skills and Education

[Giulio Soro](#), EMEA Head of Machine Learning/ AI Solutions Lab, Amazon Web Services

Way forward

This session will conclude the conference and summarizes the key actions to be taken by the European Commission and by industry itself, and to demonstrate the collective stakeholder support to bring that agenda forward.

- 16:30 – 17:00 Concluding Remarks and the way forward
- [André Richier](#), Principal policy officer, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission
- [Nineta Polemi](#), Policy officer Cyber Security, Technologies and Capacity Building, DG CONNECT, European Commission
- [Niels van der Linden](#), Principal consultant at Capgemini Invent
- 17:00 – 18:00 DRINKS and NETWORKING