PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate release

ECDL Foundation announces its support of the European e-Skills Association (EeSA)

Brussels, 3rd March 2010: The European e-Skills Association (EeSA), an initiative of the European e-skills community, was launched at the opening event of the European e-Skills Week to highlight the urgency to further develop and promote e-skills and digital literacy within Europe. ECDL Foundation and EeSA share the belief that e-skills and digital literacy will be the foundation for Europe's success as an innovative and inclusive society.
EeSA recognises that e-skills will be the differentiating factor for the creation of new ideas, products and services, and will be the catalyst for Europe's prosperity in a global digital economy. To meet the challenges of increased European competitiveness, employment, and social inclusion, EeSA affirms the widely held view that an increased focus on human capacity building is of vital importance.

This focus on human capacity building is of particular relevance in the field of ICT education. Access to high speed internet access for all primary and secondary is crucial, but to increase employability in the future, there is a immediate requirement to provide access to content, embed ICT training and learning materials across curricula, provide qualifications and incentives for teachers to embrace ICT in an innovative way, and to relay this knowledge to learners in a really interactive fashion.

According to Damien O'Sullivan, CEO of ECDL Foundation:

"As Europe exits the recession, new skills for new jobs will be required and evidence of digital competence will be necessary. It has been estimated that 90% of jobs in the future will require ICT skills, therefore governments, the European Union and the stakeholders of e-skills community need to take action now to ensure that citizens are prepared. There needs to be a greater commitment to skills development at the policy level, supported by dedicated funding, and to achieve results, this has to be implemented on a large scale".

To maximise the positive effects of digital literacy, targeted measures should be implemented for the inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion. The best way to do this is through co-investment, and the specifically targeted use of EU and national funds to provide practical schemes that are in keeping with the needs of the workplace.

Representing a broad community of stakeholders, EeSA will address the need to foster digital competencies, raise awareness of ICT studies and career opportunities and help equip people with new skills for new jobs, for inclusion, growth and innovation in Europe.

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About ECDL Foundation

ECDL Foundation is the certifying authority of the world's leading end-user computer skills certification programme. It is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated raising the level of computer skills in society and providing access for all to the Information Society. Known as ICDL outside of Europe, with almost 10 million candidates participating in a range of programmes, ECDL Foundation has set the global benchmark in end-user skills certification. For more information, visit: www.ecdl.org

About EeSA

The European e-Skills Association (EeSA) was founded in June 2007 as e-Skills Industry Leadership Board (e-Skills ILB). It cooperates with public authorities across Europe, small and medium sized companies, social partners and other stakeholders, building upon the European Commission initiatives on e-Skills and lifelong learning. With its expanded membership, the EeSA is set to lead the contribution of ICT-embedded industries to the development and implementation of a long term e-skills and digital literacy agenda in Europe. **EeSA members** include: Council of European Professional Informatics Societies/CEPIS; Cisco Systems; Computing Technology Industry Association/ CompTIA; European Grants and Subsidies Consulting/Econet; European Information Technology Observatory/EITO; ECDL Foundation; European Schoolnet; European Software Association; European Network of CIOs/euroCIO; Examination Institute for Information Science/EXIN; Hewlett Packard/HP; Intel; Microsoft; Oracle; and Prometic. For more information please see: www.eskillsassociation.eu.

About European e-Skills Week

e-Skills Week is a pan-European awareness-raising campaign promotes e-skills to the general public, students, young professionals and SMEs, and stresses the vast range of opportunities that ICT-related jobs present to encourage greater uptake of ICT studies and careers. The campaign spans 20 European countries and will reach over 300,000 people. For more information, visit: http://eskills-week.ec.europa.eu