



**ECDL
Foundation**

Mr. José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
Brussels 1049, Belgium

27th September 2010

Open letter to President Barroso

Dear President Barroso,

I am writing to congratulate you on the communication 'A Digital Agenda for Europe', and to thank you for maintaining the commitment you expressed during our meeting at your office last February to putting investment in digital skills high on the public policy agendas of all Member States.

With digital literacy as a priority of the European Social Fund, an inclusive and competitive Europe, where citizens are empowered with the skills to use technology regardless of socio-economic factors, is within our grasp. ICT skills are the foundation stone for innovation, and are critical in boosting employment, driving demand for e-commerce, strengthening education systems, and stimulating economic growth in Europe.

I congratulate you for recognising the role of ICT skills in rebuilding a social Europe and in establishing our position as a global economic heavyweight; nonetheless the challenges ahead in the implementation of this agenda are intense. Having advocated for the importance of digital skills and the need for investment in a 'skills infrastructure' ECDL Foundation acknowledges the Commission's recognition of digital literacy in this agenda. As a means of showing our dedication, we undertake to contribute strongly to the implementation of the Digital Agenda. On behalf of ECDL Foundation, and our network of national and regional organisations throughout Europe and beyond, I commit to the following goals to assist the implementation of the Digital Agenda, aided by strong support from the European Social Fund, and will report back to you personally on progress made.

The commitment of ECDL Foundation to delivering the Digital Agenda for Europe is to:

- Engage with 5,000,000 citizens to ensure they have the opportunity to acquire digital skills and competence
- Decrease by 3% the current number of 150 million people who do not have the skills to use the Internet, and promote the use of e-government services and the benefits of e-commerce to these future e-citizens
- Promote digital skills development programmes in all levels of education throughout Europe to enhancing and modernise education systems while providing today's youth with the skills necessary for mobility in tomorrow's labour market
- Take special measures to ensure that marginalised groups such as the unemployed, older people, people with disabilities, and those in remote locations are empowered to participate in the Information Society.
- Work with Member States in the development of long-term digital literacy policies, using certification as a measureable outcome and return on investment in digital skills programmes, and ensuring that ICT skills are incorporated in national education policies.

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We look forward to the forthcoming 'An agenda for New Skills and Jobs' which will include digital literacy as its priority. The role of digital skills in increasing the employability of Europe's citizens is now more critical than ever, and implementation will be no less challenging than that of the Digital Agenda. ECDL Foundation will be a key stakeholder in realising this important initiative.

We also welcome the recent 'Youth on the Move' flagship initiative, which recognises the role of ICT to strengthening the attractiveness of education and higher education. We will anticipate continuing to apply our extensive experience in working with governments and educational institutions to ensure that emphasis is given to digital literacy to ensure that crucial enabling digital skills, both for working and for living, are fostered among young people. This is a fundamental step towards the required employability and mobility of Europe's youth.

In addition, we pledge to continue our support of valuable initiatives such as European e-Skills Week, which raise awareness among young people of the vast and diverse opportunities that ICT-related education and careers can offer. The planned development of a competence framework for ICT practitioners will serve as a valuable tool, if supported by independently validated certification, to recognise the competences of ICT professionals and promote a true pan-European vision of ICT professionalism. We will also work closely with the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS) in the promotion of ICT professionalism in Europe.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my strong commitment to our targets in support of the Commission's Digital Agenda. I look forward to reporting on our progress at our next meeting where we hope that we shall be able to present our mutual success in achieving these ambitious goals.

Yours sincerely,



Damien O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

CC: Vice President Neelie Kroes,
Vice President Antonio Tajani,
Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou,
Commissioner László Andor.

About ECDL Foundation

ECDL Foundation is the certifying authority of the leading international computer skills certification programme – ECDL / ICDL. ECDL Foundation's mission is to enable proficient use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that empowers individuals, organisations and society, through the development, promotion, and delivery of quality certification programmes throughout the world.