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Joint UNI Europa – ETNO declaration on future skills needs

Skills requirements in the ICT industry are rapidly changing due to constant technological innovation and market developments.

For this reason, the European social partners in the telecom sector - the European trade unions federation UNI Europa and the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) - jointly launched the European project "Filling the ICT skills gap in the Telecommunications Sector of the future – identifying and spreading best practice".

The project's objective was to identify the main drivers of change and the impact on skills needs in the telecommunications sector, as well as to identify and share best practices regarding effective solutions to fill the ICT skills gap. A particular focus was given to best practice for training and reskilling (particularly those over 40), recruitment of competent talent and the attraction of more women into ICT employment. Based on the findings of the project research, the European telecom social partners identified five key recommendations to efficiently address the ICT skills needs of the future. UNI Europa and ETNO are convinced that the European telecommunications industry as a whole could benefit by following these recommendations.

1) Multi-stakeholder engagement

Collaboration between industry, government, social partners and schools / colleges / universities that share different but complementary goals is a proven strategy. UNI Europa and ETNO therefore strongly recommend that multi-stakeholder engagement and co-operation is continued and expanded at European and national levels to maximise the use of shared resources and knowledge bringing benefit to all parties involved.

2) Social Dialogue

Given the social partners' track record on good skills practices and managing skills gaps, their potential influence and their experience in partnering skills development initiatives, we recommend continuing and expanding the engagement of social partners in skills development initiatives and initiating such projects based upon agreed business and individual skills needs.

3) Young talent engagement and women in leadership positions

Potential candidates should be contacted at an early stage and the many varied and interesting roles in the industry should be promoted so as to attract the best young talent in the telecoms industry. Moreover, and considering the fact that an improved gender balance has positive business impact, ETNO and UNI Europa recommend that specific initiatives be created to attract more women in ICT jobs in general and in leadership positions in particular¹.

4) Intercompany cooperation

Considering the mutual benefits of organisations working together and sharing knowledge and skills, the European telecom social partners recommend that consideration be given to the establishment of a formal cross company association or committee dedicated to the development of telecommunication professional skills development across Europe.

¹ See also the ETNO-UNI Europa Joint Declaration on gender equality of 22nd September 2014.

5) Common skills and job profile language

Aiming to overcome the use of disparate terminology and working towards a common understanding of the type of education or skills development required, UNI Europa and ETNO recommend the creation of a specific skills management structure and a shared definition of relevant telecommunication role profiles, similar to the European ICT Professional Profiles² based upon the e-Competence Framework, as a possible solution.

The European telecom social partners call upon all industry stakeholders to consider these recommendations that have been developed on the basis of thorough analysis of the state of play of the sector. There are various good examples of initiatives reflecting these recommendations that should inspire all industry stakeholders to engage in similar activities.³ ETNO and UNI Europa are convinced that sharing best practice examples and enhancing co-operation, communication and commitment of all stakeholders is mutually beneficial and the best way to address the skills challenge in the sector.

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The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-28, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

The information contained in the FITS project publications and deliverables does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

For more information see <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>



² See: www.ecompetences.eu / ICT Profiles

³ For best practice examples, see the study report “Filling the ICT skills gap in the Telecommunications sector of the future (FITS)” drafted by Breyer Publico in the framework of the joint UNI Europa – ETNO project on skills.