

## Contribution of the European Learning Industry Group to the European Commission Consultation on the Future “EU2020” Strategy

### **ELIG secretariat**

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ELIG welcomes that "strengthening education" is at the heart of the EU2020 strategy and fully supports the finding expressed in the strategy that education is one of the strongest ways to fight inequality, unemployment and poverty as well as to increase European innovativeness and economic capacity.

ELIG highlights in this context that a modernized, empowering, open and efficient European educational environment is essential to reach this goal. Therefore, the EU2020 strategy should not only focus on the need for education but also on the need for innovation in education.

ELIG also points out that the term education as used in the EU2020 strategy should not only refer to institutional education (as e.g. provided by schools and higher education institutions) but also to the life long support of acquiring and improving personal competences, knowledge and skills.

The European education environment is under a significant development - caused by:

- 1) The growing importance of the converging Internet and Mobile Telecommunication Networks as global nervous system of the Knowledge society
- 2) The globalization and increasing competition of educational institutions and services providers in the educational market place - including new market entrants such as disruptive Internet service providers
- 3) The increasing digitization of educational content that provides radically new means of global accessing, usage, re-combination and learner co-creation by at the same time raising new challenges on quality, accuracy and trustworthiness
- 4) The shift of educational focus from an orientation on knowledge to an orientation on competences including those related to complex problem solving and innovation
- 5) New emerging forms of social communication and collaboration that transcend the previously separated spheres of learning, working and personal life

ELIG has debated the challenges for the educational environment with member organizations and a wider public community and has created a manifesto that is enclosed to this letter. The ELIG manifesto provides a detailed agenda to address the need for innovation of education by uncovering the "Next Practices in Learning and Education".

Whereas the entire manifesto should be regarded as an ELIG input to the EU2020 strategy - the following relations between the manifesto and the EU2020 strategy shall already be highlighted here:

- 1) The EU2020 strategy rightly points to the potentials of the digital economy and to the needs for a European Knowledge Area. The ELIG manifesto highlights in this context that these two notions should be supplemented by the notion of a Learning Society in which new forms of social collaboration, developing competences, skills and knowledge generation are provided.
- 2) The EU2020 strategy also calls for "creating value by basing growth on knowledge". Knowledge based growth is fundamentally linked to innovation. The ELIG manifesto describes in this context that technologies supporting learning on the job, collaboration and informal learning in all its manifestations are essential to support innovation processes which are increasingly open, with participants from different organizations, disciplines and countries.
- 3) The EU2020 strategy further points to empowering people in inclusive societies. The ELIG manifesto highlights in this context the still largely untapped potentials of firstly engaging the Net Generation (the young European generation that is growing up as "digital natives") in

new ways and secondly of better leveraging the professional development potentials of a connected workforce. All this calls for an educational environment that transcends the boundaries of the classical educational institutions and makes better use of advanced information and communication technologies. Furthermore, empowering people also means to provide media competences including understanding of trusted sources.

- 4) The EU2020 strategy also points to creating a competitive, connected and greener economy. The ELIG manifesto highlights in this context the deep linkage between the behavioural change that this vision implies and the related challenges for learning and education
- 5) The EU2020 strategy further refers to the needs for investments in sustainable high-speed networks. The ELIG manifesto extends the need for investments in open platform technologies for learning and education that can make seamless use of these networks.

Under the objective of "making it happen" the EU2020 strategy recognizes the increased interdependence that these challenges pose. The ELIG manifesto here in particular calls to critically address the current fragmentation of the European educational market and institutional environment. In this context new financial and organizational models are needed (e.g. leveraging European-scale public-private-partnerships, EIB and EU funding).

The ELIG contribution to the EU2020 strategy and the related ELIG manifesto is supported by the member organizations of ELIG - which are listed on the final page of the manifesto.

## **A Manifesto of the European Learning Industry Group:**

### **Next Practices in Learning and Education Making Europe the leading Learning Society**

The Spring European Council in early 2010 will face a challenging period of transformation. Unemployment rates have risen back to double digit figures following the most severe economic crisis since decades<sup>1</sup>. Public financials are severely affected by recovery and stabilization actions. Europe will need to build even stronger on its capacities in innovative and knowledge based growth businesses to regain full economic momentum. Also Europe is aiming at further transforming towards a greener, connected and inclusive economy and society.

Learning, education and the development of skills are key enablers in this transformation process. ELIG is highlighting to European Policy Makers that this also calls for fundamentally innovating learning and education approaches itself - taking full advantage of a society that is increasingly connected by next generation ICT technologies.

#### **The development of Europe as a leading Knowledge Economy must go hand in hand with the development of Europe as a Learning Society**

- Life long development of personal skills, knowledge and competences are the primary means for European citizens to counter risks of unemployment, poverty and exclusion.
- Constantly improving organization-level innovation capacities and sharpening of market differentiating competences are the basis for European corporations as well as SMEs to grow and keep up with global competition.
- To enable this, a connected European Knowledge Area is growing and provides the breeding ground for both individual and organizational level knowledge development.
- However, the European Knowledge Area should not be rooted in learning, skill development and education approaches of the past. Instead a next generation of learning and educational practices is needed to take full advantage of the possibilities of a society that is increasingly connected by the Internet and mobile communication.

#### **Leverage the educational possibilities of an emerging Net Generation**

- Being electronically networked has become a permanent and ubiquitous fact of life. European mobile telecommunication is at over 100% penetration rate. European Internet use is depending on age group at up to 73% (for the 16..24 years old) with elder groups lagging behind in Internet adoption and still significant dependencies on education levels and digital literacy.
- A young highly networked generation is leading on digital literacy and in having integrated the Internet and mobile communication in their life. It will be essential to better understand and leverage the net generation in the transformation of learning and education.
- This poses new challenges on teachers and educational institutions. And specific skill development programmes will be needed to address them.
- It also poses new challenges on integrating next generation learning and collaboration technologies and approaches into educational institutions and teaching processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Working Document European Commission: Consultation on the Future "EU 2020 Strategy", COM(2009)647 final

## Leverage the professional development potentials of a connected workforce

- Continuous professional education and skill improvement has become a must in the Knowledge Society - be it managed by an employing organization or on an individual self-directed basis. However, the leveraging of information and communication technologies in this context is still low with European penetration rates<sup>2</sup> e.g. for taking online courses ranging from 1% to a maximum of 14% (Finland) of Internet users - with an EU27 average of 6%. Mobile learning is also still far from being leveraged on a wider scale.
- The striking difference between these limited adoption rates and the fast growing other use areas of the Internet indicates that improving online learning is an important challenge - in particular towards facilitating new ways of self-directed learning and informal learning as an embedded activity of online collaboration, social networking, search and content retrieval.
- Here learning needs to better leverage how a connected workforce is already using the Internet and become closer embedded into daily work.
- In this context, also a broader and more differentiated perspective on learning needs of European workforce groups need to be taken – e.g. addressing topics such as up- or re-skilling and building of future-oriented competences in specific markets that are deeply affected by the crisis and by changing market conditions.

## Recognize Competences as a new common currency for the European labour market

- Competences are an important container concept<sup>3</sup>. They cover components such as knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics. Therefore they can provide a more richer and holistic knowledge representation of a person than any of these components alone.
- When addressing the increasingly complex needs of the European labour market as well as those of other society-level goals (e.g. on improving personal energy consumption or environmental awareness), analysis of competences serve to better understand the dependencies e.g. between skills, knowledge and abilities.
- Policy programmes should become competence oriented and align sub-activities on the different components of a competence.

## Turn smart online information into smartly used information via education and learning

- Smart information holds a significant potential in a connected world (e.g. life information from energy consumption metering, environmental or personal health sensors). The connection of these smart information sources into the online world is certainly one of the biggest growth areas of a Future Internet in the upcoming years.
- However, making sense and using this information is not only a question of automated mechanism and data analytics - it is first of all a question of informed and empowered users of such information.
- This addresses change in human behaviour - e.g. informed acting on energy and environmental information. However this behavioural change is primarily an educational

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<sup>2</sup> see Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report, European Commission, 2009

<sup>3</sup> as defined in the IEEE standard 1484.20.1, Data Model for Reusable Competency Definitions" in 2007

and learning challenge. Technology to provide smart information will not solve the problem on its own.

- This poses the challenge of aligning education and learning with the development of Future Internet technologies - and not treating it as an afterthought.

### **Promote openness in digital learning technologies, Internet and mobile platforms**

- As educational and learning technologies will become embedded into day to day use of the Internet, online work and mobile communication - the more it will be important to address potential lock-in effects and interoperability needs proactively.
- Developments towards Internet-scale service platforms (e.g. cloud computing, content marketplaces, media streaming) also can provide further means to accelerate the spreading of a next generation of learning technologies.
- Internet-scale platforms for educational and learning purposes should be open standards based and should allow federation and open integration with complementary services.
- Digital educational resources must be accessible in open standards based formats.

### **Stimulate the go-to-market capabilities of SMEs as learning provider, increasing consumption of learning**

- By stimulating the creation of dynamic service chains of learning, SME's should be enabled to better combine their services with other providers to create more valuable learning offerings that can be easily consumed.
- A time of economic change has increased uncertainty, risk and price pressure. New business models and market mechanisms should be developed and piloted that enable matching pricing and customer value. This should improve the
- Public procurement practices should open up for new entrants and stimulate the development of new content.

### **Foster a debate on educational content production and online learning resources**

- The general use of the Internet to “seek information with the purpose of learning“ is significantly higher than the use of e.g. “online learning courses“ and already ranges between 12% and 50% (Luxembourg) - with an EU27 average of 26%. There is a significant unused potential to better support these learning needs as well as also to leverage them for educational goals.
- This needs a debate on what makes online information suitable for learning and how the quality of content that is used in learning can be improved.
- Also, it raises questions on new models of collaborative learning content production and continuous evolution of learning content in close inter-linkage with other - e.g. social networking or professional collaboration - types of online activities.
- This debate needs to be complemented by awareness of the importance of changing business models and the need for newly derived schemes for the management of educational content licences, ownership and (re-)use rights.
- Rights shall fully support the openness of the learning process and the interoperability of learning related services by at the same time providing differentiated levels of protection of ownership rights. This needs to be addressed as a joint effort with core Internet and mobile service providers.

## **Public Institutions are called to join forces with the European Learning Industry on the way towards a Learning Society**

- ELIG supports the recently communicated directions on a Future “EU 2020“ strategy and the important role that is given to learning, skill development and education. The European Learning Industry - as represented by the ELIG membership - is offering to be a strong partner in this European transformation process.
- Education and learning in Europe is a highly fragmented market and public institutional environment. Stronger openly coordinated approaches are needed to allow fostering true innovation that can better leverage this structure. The European institutions have a key catalyzing role in this context.
- In this context there are needs for new financial and organizational models (e.g. leveraging public private-partnerships, EIB and EU funding) to put these strategic priorities into action.
- The European Learning Industry will also partner with core Internet and mobile communication service providers in this efforts.

## About ELIG

The European Learning Industry Group (ELIG) is an open industry group with members representing the ecosystem for 21st century learning solutions. ELIG seeks to promote innovation in learning, knowledge creation and dissemination through Europe.

## Members

83 Degrees South (IRL)	ICU Global Ltd (UK)
Alison (IRL)	Ignition (UK)
Auralog (FR)	IMD (CH)
BBC (UK)	Intel (IRL)
bit media (AUS)	Jenzabar
Blackboard	Learning Guide Solutions (NL)
bridge2think (CH)	LINE Communication (UK)
Cambridge University Press (UK)	McGraw-Hill Education (UK)
CEGOS (FR)	Oncampus (D)
Cisco Systems International BV (NL)	PAU Education (ES)
digital publishing (D)	Praxeol (FR)
ELSEVIER (NL)	SANAKO (FIN)
Emerald Group Publishing (UK)	Sanoma Education (NL)
Equinet Limited (UK) FRONTER (N)	Scoyo
Giunti Labs Srl (IT)	Synergetics (B)
Hamdan Bin Mohammed e-University (UAE)	U&I Learning (B)
Hatier (FR)	UniNettuno (IT)
Hewlett Packard (UK)	Universal Knowledge Solutions (AE)
IBM (FR)	Wolters Kluwer Education (NL)

## Contact Us:

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