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Author: [Marietta Grammenou](#) [1], published in [DAE blog](#) [2] on 02/10/2013

Pledging stakeholders to the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs came together today at a one-day workshop in Brussels to discuss the progress of their initiatives and how to maximise the impact of the Grand Coalition. Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission in charge of the Digital Agenda, welcomed the efforts so far and invited all stakeholders now to move on to a higher gear. Share this

Since its launch in March the Grand Coalition has grown to 40 [pledges](#) [3] representing an array of stakeholders from industry, education, the non-profit sector and local initiatives. Recent new pledges largely focus on youth employment, such as [YouRock](#) [4], a new online professional network for young people across Europe, which will enable them to use their existing online content creation activities as evidence of their latent business skills and other aptitudes, hence increasing their competitive edge and visibility in the labour market. Another one is [Getbusy.gr](#) [5], a joint effort by Greek industry, educational and training institutions, start-ups and HR agencies, aiming to train 12,500 young people by 2014 in Greece, increase their entrepreneurial skills as well as their learning about new technologies. As a result it will help to fight rampant youth unemployment in the country.

To assess the progress and the impact of the pledges [IDC](#) [6] and [Tech4i2](#) [7], carried out a survey among the current pledging organizations. The results demonstrated that thousands of people have been benefitted by the pledges so far either via jobs placements, ICT trainings (including teachers training), internships, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), or awareness-raising campaigns targeting students. Vice-President Neelie Kroes was impressed by the quality and results of the pledges but stressed the need to reach out to many more stakeholders.

Stakeholders agreed with the need of scaling up, but also highlighted the need for funding, especially the availability of the European structural funds for ICT training. VP Kroes encouraged them to express that need to their national authorities when the national priorities for spending the funds are determined, particularly regarding the € 6 billion set aside for the [Youth Employment Initiative](#) [8]. One vehicle to coordinate these efforts is the [Local Coalitions](#) [9] currently being developed in more than 10 member states. In this respect, ways of cooperation between the stakeholders at local level were explored in order to facilitate industry-led training and develop regional projects to ensure effective filling of ICT vacancies, in particular from SMEs.

The Commission also plans to launch a thematic network to support stakeholder-led initiatives of the Grand Coalition.

The next step will be the [ICT2013 conference](#) [10] in Vilnius, where a number of activities around the Grand Coalition is scheduled. Among those is in particular the launch of the Lithuanian Local Coalition bringing together 11 national partners, including ICT associations, universities and ministries. Stay tuned!

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