



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Vilnius, 7 November 2013

Kroes applauds launch of Lithuanian National Digital Coalition

Vice-President Neelie Kroes welcomed the commitment of the Lithuania's government educational, library and digital and ICT sectors to boost digital skills and jobs in Lithuania. Today, 11 partner organisations and associations signed a Memorandum of Understanding officially launching the Lithuanian National Digital Coalition in Vilnius at [ICT 2013](#), Europe's largest digital innovation event. The Lithuanian Coalition aims to reduce the shortage of IT professionals, to encourage training programmes via a life-long learning approach, and to augment awareness about the importance of digital literacy and ICT skills.

The MoU was signed by Rimantas Sinkevičius, Lithuania's [Minister for Transport and Communications](#) and representatives of the [Lithuanian Municipal Public Libraries Association](#), the [ICT Association Infobalt](#), [Vilnius University](#), Association "[Langas į ateitį](#)", [Lithuanian Computer Society and ECDL](#), [National Association of Distance Education](#), [Lithuanian Computer Science Teachers Association](#), [Kaunas University of Technology](#), the [Ministry of Education and Science](#), and [Ministry of Social Security and Labour](#), (see annex for details).

Neelie Kroes said "*I am certain that the Lithuanian Coalition will become an inspiring model for other member states. There is huge commitment from the partners and strong political support in Lithuania and at EU level. The Coalition has a huge task, and I encourage them to look into using the structural funds, particularly the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative to bring digital skills to Europe's lost generation.*"

Europe's digital economy is growing and we rely on digital tools and processes in our daily lives, but this vast potential is hampered by a massive digital skills mismatch. In Lithuania, as in many other EU countries, the number of ICT graduates is falling while businesses and organisations are crying out for ICT specialists. In 2015 there could be as many as 900 000 unfilled vacancies across the EU unless the trend is reversed.

The Commission launched the [Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs](#) to tackle this problem in March 2013. Lithuania is the second EU country to formally launch a national coalition, after Poland which launched its own Coalition in July 2013 (see [SPEECH/13/598](#)). Similar national or local coalitions are also being developed in about 10 member states. So far 41 public authorities, education providers, employment services public and private, IT companies and other organisations have pledged support to the EU-wide grand coalition.

The digital skill crisis was also discussed by EU leaders at the European Council on 25-26 October 2013. In particular, the [Council](#) called for the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs to be strengthened so it can help address skills mismatches by supporting targeted labour

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mobility schemes and the use of the newly developed classification of [European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations](#)

Background

The Commission is leading a multi-stakeholder partnership to tackle the lack of ICT skills and the several hundred of thousands of unfilled ICT-related vacancies. Since its launch in March 2013, the Grand Coalition has grown to 41 [pledges](#) 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](#), 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](#), 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.

The Lithuanian Digital National Coalition was launched at [ICT 2013 – Create Connect Grow](#), Europe's largest digital innovation event organised by the European Commission in partnership with the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013.

For more information

[About the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs](#)

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[ICT 2013 – Create Connect Grow](#)

[Neelie Kroes](#) Follow Neelie on [Twitter](#)

[ICT2013 Create Connect Grow](#) video

[Digital is natural](#) video

The National Coalition is set up by the following organizations:

- *The Association "Langas į ateitį"*, an organization established by socially responsible business, since 2002 developing ICT skills in Lithuania and promoting a safe use of the Internet as well as public and private electronic services in order to improve Lithuanian people's quality of life and to raise competitiveness in Europe and in the world.
- *The Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania* is in charge of the development of information society and coordinates the programme *Digital Agenda for Lithuania* and the implementation of the EU Digital Agenda Strategies in Lithuania.
- *The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania*, whose one of the most important tasks is to promote employment of the population, including young people.
- *The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania* seeks to adapt education to the needs of the information society of Lithuania and to develop possibilities for a lifelong learning in cyberspace.
- *The Association INFOBALT*, representing the national ICT sector and seeking to develop better business environment for it as well as the best conditions and new opportunities for the growth of industry, both generates the added value for the members of the association and provides benefits to the Lithuanian people and the public sector.
- *Vilnius University*, the largest higher education institution in Lithuania and one of the oldest higher education institutions in Northern Europe, which carries high-quality research-based studies covering almost all areas of science.
- *Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)*, one of the largest technical universities in the Baltic States and one of the country's most prominent universities occupying a leading position in a number of research and study areas.
- *The National Association of Distance Education (NDMA)* was established with a purpose to unite legal and natural persons for developing remote learning and e-learning in Lithuania and to participate in shaping the e-learning strategy in the country.
- *The Lithuanian Computer Society and ECDL Lithuania*, whose main objectives and activities are to promote computer science and ICT development in Lithuania, to take care of training of computer professionals and users, their in-service training, the development and certification of electronic skills of members of society as well as computer training in general education schools.
- *The Lithuanian Municipal Public Library Association*, uniting most of the Lithuanian public libraries, which, beside their daily activities consult the public about the ICT skills necessary for work and encourage them to acquire these skills.
- *The Lithuanian Computer Science Teachers Association (LInMA)*, whose main objective is to develop a creative methodological work of Lithuanian computer science and information technology teachers and lecturers, their expertise development, to summarize and disseminate the experience of its members by mastering new technologies and teaching methods and to actively participate in establishing the knowledge society.