Published on *Digital Agenda for Europe* (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda)

3 priorities for Belgian Digital Champion: e-education, e-commerce, e-skills

Published by Editor Connect on 06/12/2012

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Saskia van Uffelen has been recently appointed Digital Champion in Belgium. She is planning to get more Belgians to live online and to change the "geek" image the ICT sector has in her country. Another important work for her will be to make an inventory of all the existing Belgian initiatives in the field and to promote them.

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Digitizing a society can also lead to economic prosperity. In acquiring appropriate digital skills, more people will become aware of the importance of the online economy

“I feel very honoured by the appointment because the role of Digital Champion enables me to continue to make the digital society better and more efficient”, Saskia Van Uffelen says. She was

elected “ICT Woman of the Year” by the ICT journal Datanews in 2010.

Saskia identified 3 priorities for her activity:

- **digitalisation of education**: “Under the denominator Live Online! I would first of all like to further encourage digital skills in education because that is the only way to develop the necessary ICT skills of youngsters in order to make them sufficiently competitive on the modern labour market”, she said.

- stimulate the economy via **e-commerce**: Saskia explained that “digitizing a society can also lead to economic prosperity. In acquiring appropriate digital skills, more people will become aware of the importance of the online economy”

- getting more Belgians to acquire the **ICT skills**: “Owing to the fact that underprivileged families are often confronted with a number of barriers such as high costs, the absence of digital skills or a lack of confidence in their own learning ability, the digital divide between them and people having the right digital skills is growing. We must absolutely integrate this vulnerable group into the information society.”

Saskia thinks that it is absolutely important to make an inventory of all the existent initiatives. "We have a lot of movement in Belgium in ICT. With LiveOnline! we try to make a complete inventory. Then, I will try to regroup them and to make them more visible, rather than create new ones", explained the newly-appointed Digital Champion.

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