

*José Manuel Barroso*  
*President of the European Commission*

Brussels,  
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Dear Taoiseach,

***Europe investing in human capital: let's get every European digital***

*We have all just met to take further steps to provide a comprehensive response to the economic and financial crisis. Our efforts to consolidate public finances must be complemented by growth enhancing policies. As the Commission's Annual Growth Survey for 2012 clearly spelt out, we need to do more to fully embrace the growth potential of the digital economy. Information and communications technology (ICT) is one such area that will shape the economy of the future; it already provides half of our productivity growth.*

*Investing in our people's ICT skills is highly productive. Currently, a quarter of the EU's population have never used the internet. Yet, in the near future, 90% of jobs will require some level of digital literacy; we risk a "digital divide". Internet usage is lower among groups already at heightened risk of socio-economic exclusion.*

*The purpose of this letter is to invite all Member States to take further dedicated action to help get every European Digital. There is a clear business case: potential savings from the switchover of government services could amount to billions of Euros a year. While, by providing the highly-trained ICT specialists we will need in future, men and women, we could plug a "skills gap" of hundreds of thousands of jobs, and keep Europe an attractive place to invest.*

*I would therefore like each Member State to consider appointing a national "Digital Champion" to spearhead such an initiative, as for example has been done in the UK. I am sure other member states also have projects running in this field but I see the Digital Champion as a flexible model, able to adapt to national circumstances and build on the existing good work going on in many member states.*

*Ideally, such a Digital Champion would be:*

- able to network with, understand and energise the industry, education and voluntary sectors;*
- dynamic and high-profile, and therefore able to focus media attention on the initiative;*
- and*
- appointed by central government, based on expertise and merit, ideally reporting to leaders.*

*I would be grateful if you could let me know if you want to support this idea or wish to share other ideas and suggestions to achieve these goals. I will work with Commission Vice-President Neelie Kroes to monitor progress and share best practice among the network of "Champions".*

*Yours faithfully,*



*José Manuel BARROSO*

*Mr Enda KENNY*  
*Taoiseach*  
*IRELAND*