

## e-Leadership for the Digital Economy: Polish universities on their way to delivering skills for transforming the economy

13/11/2014 – When welcoming the around 80 participants at the ‘e-leadership for the Digital Economy’ event organised by the European Commission and Wrocław University of Technology, Zdzisław Szalbierz, Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science and Management referred to the opportunities offered by digital technologies and described his faculty’s programmes as those teaching at the interface of ICT and business and therefore already showing a propensity to e-leadership. Anna Wałek, Director of the Center for Scientific and Technical Information, Wrocław University of Technology welcomed the guests in the newly built venue the Bibliotech Centre where had been built as a place for learning and communication and cooperation between science and academia and industry and economy. The chairperson Nils Fonstad from the MIT Center for Information Systems Research (CISR) opened the event speaking about the need for embracing opportunities offered by digital technologies and at the same time mitigating risks which is to be seen as the role of e-leaders.

André Richier from the European Commission drew a general picture of the coming years with respect to the new perspectives for the world economy. He stressed on the importance for Europe to foster greater productivity, growth, competitiveness, ICT-led innovation and digital jobs. The goal of the European Commission's initiative on e-Leadership which started in 2013 is to increase the talent pool of e-leaders for enterprises (CIOs, professionals, business leaders etc.). It has been followed in January 2014 by a complementary initiative on e-leadership targeting start-ups, gazelles, SMEs (entrepreneurs etc.). Both are closely linked to the promotion of digital entrepreneurship and the EU long-term e-skills strategy and the mobilisation of Member States and stakeholders (Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs) and awareness raising (e-Skills for Jobs 2014 campaign, <http://eskills-week.ec.europa.eu/>). Using the example of Estonia he demonstrated how a strong political will can have a serious impact on a country’s way towards using ICT and thereby becoming more innovative and competitive. Finally, he referred to the new European funding opportunities shown at the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs website and through the ERASMUS+ programme.

When speaking about the current technological trends and their implications on e-leadership skills, **Marianne Kolding**, Vice President at IDC Europe described the e-leadership skills as a mix of skills including those of re-imagining much of what we take for granted, strategic management/collaboration skills, hybrid market-ICT skills which include competences in customer-centred approach and issues, capability to develop new IT-based business opportunities and industry-specific skills, i.e. competences in specific industry business processes and of IT innovation implementation issues. The overview of required e-leadership skills by new technology trend is depicted in the overview above which she presented.

This was followed by **Werner B. Korte** Director of empirica who provided latest statistical forecasts from the work of empirica for the European Commission on the ICT workforce development showing that management, architecture and analysis jobs which include a significant portion of e-leaders, are expected to grow by 2020 compared to 2011. He also presented the results from an analysis of more than 1000 higher and executive education programmes with a propensity to e-leadership throughout Europe. In the very end only 47 potential programmes and just 21 Candidate programmes could be identified which are taught at post graduate level combining ICT + business, targeted at those with professional experience, not full time on site, aimed at senior management with very high technical standard and where entry requires significant business experience and the programme has the mission to transform business

He then pointed to the European e-leadership initiative. The goal of the European Commission's initiative on e-Leadership which started in 2013 is to increase the talent pool of e-leaders for enterprises (CIOs, professionals, business leaders etc.) ([www.eskills-guide.eu](http://www.eskills-guide.eu)). It was followed in January 2014 by a complementary initiative on e-leadership targeting start-ups, gazelles, SMEs (entrepreneurs etc.) ([www.eskills-lead.eu](http://www.eskills-lead.eu)). Both are closely linked to the promotion of digital entrepreneurship and integrated within the EU long-term e-skills strategy and the efforts made to mobilise Member States and stakeholders (Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs) and raise awareness (e-Skills for Jobs 2014 campaign, <http://eskills-week.ec.europa.eu/>).

This presentation was followed by those from strong industry players in Poland, namely Capgemini Polska and VOLVO. **Piotr Popawski**, Director Capgemini Polska emphasised the need of ICT teams to have a good understanding of the business, the ability to also speak that ‘language’ and the requirement to be communicative to act as innovate, agile and often distributed SCRUM teams. The speech of **Malgorzata Ryniak**, from VOLVO IT Director emphasised the need of team and relationship building as important skills for acting as an e-leader. VOLVO has developed several tools like a leadership index or the TechWatch as enterprise-wide function to foster innovation. She made the point that e-

leaders need to be able to challenge change management on the business side as part of each IT solution implementation.

This presentation was followed by **Lex Hendriks** of EXIN who asked for the establishment of a continuous dialogue between industry demanding e-leadership type individuals and research groups at universities and business schools in the area of ICT management fighting for visibility and recognition and trying to supply e-leadership competences to the market. This dialogue is needed to get out of the 'jungle' of the so far mostly invisible higher and executive education programmes for teaching e-leadership skills. This would help develop more appropriate, visible and transparent e-leadership higher and executive education programmes and help close the gap between demand and supply. The European Commission e-leadership initiative has addressed this gap; dialogue is continuing and the curricula profile approach which he presented is intended to be implemented on an ongoing and continuous base.

So far almost 20 universities and business schools have used and applied this approach including two universities from Poland: Wroclaw University of Technology and Wroclaw University of Economics. Both presented the results of their self-assessment of existing programmes and the mapping of these onto the e-leadership curriculum profiles. The presentation of **Dr inż. Adam Dzikowski**, Faculty of Computer Science and Management MSc in Business Information Systems illustrated the power of this approach. He emphasised as a strength that its use as a reference tool with clearly specified learning outcomes and skills and competences developed using the European e-Competence



Framework, makes you aware of and knowledgeable about what to ask for when developing new and adapting existing courses and programmes towards e-leadership but also for the improvement in general. He saw a further strength of the assessment for using it to develop optional courses to be taught on a yearly basis to better close existing knowledge gaps among students. Finally, **Prof. dr hab. inż. Mieczysław L. Owoc**, Head of Business Informatics Major, Department of Artificial Intelligence Systems, Wrocław University of

Economics presented the results of his mapping of one of his programmes also coming to positive conclusions on the usefulness of the e-leadership curriculum profile approach developed and advocated by the European Commission e-leadership initiative to improve the quality of e-leadership, covering organisation leadership in ICT innovation to deliver business value.

In the concluding panel discussion discussants from SMEs like **Grzegorz Trubiłowicz**, CEO, Cooklet and **Piotr Wieczorek**, CEO, Fly on the cloud made the point that far too often academics graduating from universities do not provide the knowledge industry needs (especially for SMEs). They lack the ability to learn how to learn leading to the conclusion of the need to teach people to continuously learn including through experimentation thereby allowing failure but also the need to learn collaboration which requires the ability of trust. Further points made in the discussion included the following ones: need for leading by example, working towards a common vision, failure needs to be allowed, but people have to learn from mistakes.

**Magdalena Tarasiewicz**, Volvo Polska emphasised that at VOLVO there is a credit of trust for everybody right from the start and that putting them in a situation where they are responsible and thereby making people take responsibility enhances trust and eases them to become good leaders and eventually e-leaders. The combination of ICT savvyness and business savvyness would also be eased by moving managers across different departments.

The participants agreed to the need of conveying the message that there is a bright future in this area and an interesting career to choose especially for women who in the past have shown some reluctance to aim for a career in the ICT area. However, through e-leadership and the required combination of different skills very interesting opportunities also emerge for this target group.

Development of an appropriate 'education ecosystem' was seen as a key direction for closing the skills gap since interaction with like-minded individuals was seen as essential to keep up with the pace of change.

With the European e-leadership initiative the European Commission is now providing valuable means to reduce the e-leadership skills gap. Its guidelines and Curriculum Profile approach is enabling a range of educational ecosystem actions to:

- Improve processes of generating educational offers with demand and supply stakeholders
- Encourage programmes based on new course design and content and
- Strengthen communication flows in e-leadership skills development and deployment.

There was unanimous agreement that e-leadership will be a key competence in the future economy and that the European Commission e-leadership initiative has been very timely and started at the right moment (more information:

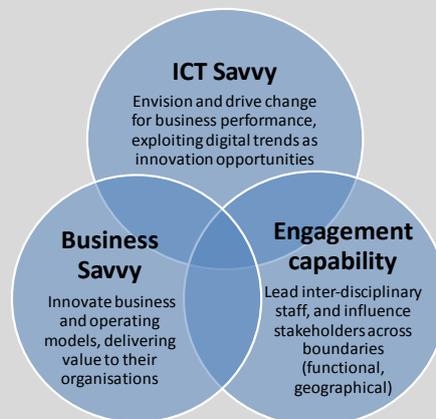
[www.eskills-guide.eu](http://www.eskills-guide.eu)). This European initiative aims to develop and recommend specific curriculum profiles for e-leaders (based on the European e-Competence Framework) and outline the knowledge and skills necessary for business leaders to turn into e-leaders.

### e-Leadership Skills Definition

e-Leadership is of crucial importance for companies and industry to excel in their business operation. For effective e-leadership, the skills required are seen as those which enable people with very strong ICT skills to lead qualified staff from ICT and other disciplines towards identifying and designing business models and exploiting key innovation opportunities. Their success is defined as making best use of developments in ICT and delivering value to their organisations. Demand is growing throughout European industry to improve the quality of e-leadership, covering organisation leadership in ICT innovation to deliver business value. Research has confirmed a significant shortage of e-leadership skills across Europe - a call for action.

e-Leadership skills refers to the skills which an individual in the modern economy requires to initiate and achieve innovation utilising ICT:

- Business Savvy: Innovate business and operating models, delivering value to their organisations
- ICT Savvy: Envision and drive change for business performance, exploiting digital trends as innovation opportunities
- Engagement capability: Lead inter-disciplinary staff, and influence stakeholders across boundaries (functional, geographical).



The European Commission e-Leadership initiative started in 2013 has focused on the leadership needs of top decision-makers and professional leaders at larger enterprises. These leaders oversee portfolios of both well-defined and emergent innovation opportunities. Successful design and implementation requires developing and engaging highly qualified staff to achieve the target value. With this further initiative on 'e-leadership Skills for SMEs' - started in 2014 - The Commission is now targeting SMEs and start-ups.

### Feedback from the event

- "It was very useful to see how companies see their future workers and what brand of faculty will be required in 2-5 years time and on what to focus right now. It was also interesting to see that even large companies have problems to face up."
- "I liked the presentations showing the role and ways to supply e-leadership skills through university education programmes and in business environment"
- "Very useful to see that spreading awareness of the necessity of e-leadership education is the way to go. I liked the speakers providing insight into the related problems and showing development directions"
- "Appreciated Malgorzata Ryniak, VOLVO expressing the actual need of business for e-leaders"
- "Good focus on current issues and the situation in Poland"
- "interesting business insights"
- "Good opportunity to discuss the bridge between science / academia and industry"
- "The know-how communicated and good practices will surely influence my research. It was very useful for me to listen about solutions (already existing ones!) that could be in future implemented or adapted for city management"

- “It was good to find organisations that seem to be experts in the field of IT technologies implementing and integrating”
- “Everything was very useful!”

#### Links to European initiatives and reports on e-leadership and e-skills:

- European e-Skills 2014 Conference: e-Leadership and ICT Professionalism: <http://eskills2014conference.eu>
- European Guidelines and Quality Labels for new Curricula Fostering e-Leadership Skills: <http://eskills-guide.eu/home/>
- e-Leadership Skills for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: <http://eskills-lead.eu/home/>
- e-Skills: The International Dimension and the Impact of Globalisation: <http://www.eskills-international.com/index.html>
- European e-leadership skills conference 2013: <http://www.insead.edu/events/e-leadership-conference/>
- [E-Skills for the 21st Century website](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/e-skills/index_en.htm) - DG Enterprise and Industry: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/e-skills/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/e-skills/index_en.htm)
- Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs website: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs-0>
- European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) website: <http://www.ecompetences.eu/>
- CEN Workshop on ICT Skills: <http://www.cen.eu/CEN/sectors/sectors/iss/activity/Pages/wsict-skills.aspx>
- e-Skills for Competitiveness and Innovation: Vision, Roadmap and Foresight Scenarios: <http://eskills-vision.eu/home/>
- Towards a European Quality label for ICT industry training and certification: <http://eskills-quality.eu/home/>
- E-Skills: the international dimension and the impact of globalisation: <http://www.eskills-international.com/>
- European guidelines and quality labels for Curricula for e-leadership skills: <http://eskills-guide.eu/home/>
- Monitoring and benchmarking e-skills policies and partnerships in Europe: <http://eskills-monitor2013.eu/home/>
- Fostering the ICT Profession in Europe: <http://cepis.org/index.jsp?p=827&n=940>
- Professional e-Competence in Europe: <http://cepis.org/index.jsp?p=940&n=2406>
- Monitoring e-skills demand and supply in Europe: <http://www.eskills-monitor.eu/>
- Evaluation of the Implementation of the Communication on e-Skills for the 21st Century: <http://eskills21.eu/>

#### Photographs

< Photograph no. 1 >



< Photograph no. 2 >



< Photograph no. 3 >



< Photograph no.4 >



< Photograph no 5 >



< Photograph no.65 >



< Photograph no.7 >

