

## Media Release

### International ICT Societies Call for More Technology Education in Schools to Avert ICT Skill Crisis

**Tuesday, 16 June 2015** - An historic meeting of international ICT leaders has called for governments across Europe to urgently introduce Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) subjects into their school curriculums in order to better equip students for today's digitally disrupted world.

With the European Commission (EC) last year warning that the EU could face a shortage of up to 900,000 ICT professionals by 2020, due to a lack of people being educated and trained in information technology, ICT associations are concerned about the potential consequences for innovation, productivity and economic growth.

Last week's meeting in Vienna, staged to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Computer Society (OCG), was attended by Presidents and CEOs of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and the ICT professional associations from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The associations, which between them represent over half a million ICT professionals from around the world, seek to encourage research and the development of ICT standards, and to promote the ethical and professional application of technology for the benefit of society.

The association presidents participated in a several panel discussions where they considered the impact of recent technology developments on future jobs and the importance of education to ensure that today's students have the knowledge and skills to participate fully in the global digital economy.

IFIP President, Leon Strous, said the meetings discussed how digital disruptions like mobile technology, Big Data, Cloud Computing, social media, robotics and the Internet of Things, are having a dramatic effect on how we communicate and conduct business.

"Digital technologies have become ubiquitous and today underpin every industry sector and discipline. Increasingly today's workers, and certainly the workers of the future, will need to have a basic level of ICT skills in order to function effectively in this technology-driven world," he said.

Mr Strous said the ICT societies are concerned that many governments don't fully appreciate the importance of teaching computational thinking, problem solving and information and communication technology in schools.

"The consensus amongst the associations is that we need to introduce ICT into schools much earlier to equip children for the future, and this will also be critical to attract more people into technology degrees to help meet predicted demands for professionals and avoid an ICT skills crisis."

The associations are calling for government policy-makers to give this issue their serious consideration and have resolved to collaborate on the development of curriculum programs and teacher materials for use in schools and educational institutions.

They also plan to stage a series of events and other initiatives to raise awareness of the many benefits and opportunities for ICT careers in order to attract more students into the industry.

## **ENDS**

### **About IFIP**

IFIP is the global professional federation of societies and associations for people working in Information and Communications Technologies and Sciences. Established under the auspices of UNESCO in 1960 and recognised by the United Nations, IFIP represents ICT professional associations from more than 50 countries and regions with a total membership of over half a million. It also brings together more than 3,500 scientists from industry and academia, organising them into over 100 Working Groups and 13 Technical Committees to conduct research, develop standards and promote information sharing. Based in Austria, IFIP organises and supports over 100 conferences each year, fostering the distribution of research and knowledge to academics and industry practitioners alike.

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