

## Digital business in Europe: Beyond eEverything

The right framework conditions and skilled ICT professionals to boost digital business in Europe

Abstract

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Digital technology and its take-up by businesses are essential for growth and jobs in Europe. Recent evidence tells us that a lot remains to be done ([Eurostat survey](#) on the take-up of ICT by companies). The data confirm that European companies are making, on average, slow progress in adopting ICT for their business, with a gap between large companies and SMEs, and greater usage in the ICT and in the wholesale and retail sectors than elsewhere in the economy. Whereas broadband access and having a website are becoming standard, eCommerce and the adoption of more sophisticated ICT tools for internal processes are used less frequently in SMEs.

Where the issues have been clearly identified, the Commission is acting. Key areas are **framework conditions, specific support measures for SMEs and ICT practitioner skills**.

First, to improve the framework conditions, the Commission has made and is preparing new proposals, for example in the areas of interoperability and standards, trust and security, cloud technology, affordable broadband, and so on... (examples).

Second, the competitiveness of SMEs depends on their capacity to connect better and do business with larger enterprises, to integrate into global value chains and thus become international business partners. Smart use of information technology can help SMEs achieve this. The Commission has been supporting SMEs for many years through [specific programmes](#) ... (examples). But it is also crucial to better understand what the real obstacles for SMEs are, to overcome them.

Third, companies need access to skilled ICT practitioners. To tackle the twin issues of a projected shortfall of up to 900,000 ICT professionals in Europe by 2015, exacerbated by a decline in computing science graduates, the Commission recently launched a multi-stakeholder partnership, the [Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs](#). Its aim is to increase the overall supply of digitally skilled professionals and to better match supply and demand of digital skills.

Last but not least, we need to go collectively beyond the "eEverything" approach, beyond pure concepts, beyond specific sectoral or national policies. We need a collective push towards making European businesses go digital and towards more digital entrepreneurs in Europe.

*The views expressed are purely those of the presenter and may under no circumstances be viewed as the official position of the European Commission*