News

CEPIS Study forecasts need for additional 1.5m IT Practitioners by 2005

CEPIS Report improves understanding of the European IT Professional Labour Market and the robustness of future IT Skills demand forecasts/Revival of late 1990s' growth rates would require 1.5m new IT Practitioners for the EU by 2005. Information Technology companies, European Member State governments, and key officials at the European Commission all now have a sounder basis on which to consider the position of IT Practitioner Skills within the European Union, thanks to an objective new scientific analysis of this labour market commissioned by the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS).

The report makes use, for the first time, of comparable official national statistics from EU Member States' "Labour Force Surveys" of employment in IT-related occupations, and shows how a series of characteristics of the Computing Professional workforce have developed over recent years. It therefore throws new light, based on reliable facts and figures, on this area of strategic importance for the European Union. In particular the CEPIS report reveals that the important statistics are those relating to the *occupations*, rather than the *industry sectors* involved. The forecasts show, at the European level, that for an annual growth rate of 10% in employment of the key technical IT staff following the current downturn, there could be an additional demand for a total of over 1.5 million additional Computing Professionals and Computer Associate Professionals over the years to 2005. While well below the IDC estimates for the future skills shortfall, this is still a very considerable volume, and is unlikely to be achieved from the combined "output" of all the IT degree courses within Europe.[1]

At the specific request of the European Commission Enterprise Directorate-General the report was presented at the recent workshop on *ICT and e-Business skills*, thus underlining the significance of the work to policy-making at the European level. The workshop was set up to support the activities of the inter-governmental "ICT Skills Monitoring Group" to develop Industry support strategies in this key strategic area. It was held in Brussels on 30–31 May 2002, and the Monitoring Group will build on this event to complete its work for presentation at an "e-skills Summit" to be held in Copenhagen in October, during the Danish Presidency.

"From the point of view of assessing and responding to possible shortages of the key technical skills it is very important to recognise that more than half the IT Practitioners in Europe do not work within the IT (supply) sector, and often do not have in-depth IT education but have gained their skills on the job", reports CEPIS president Professor Dr. Wolffried Stucky. "Thus, from our point of view, there is a strong need for pan-European arrangements to enable those without IT degrees to progress effectively to competence in this work. Therefore CEPIS has developed the European Certificate for Informatics Professionals ("EUCIP") which is expected to be financially supported by the EU Commission (through the Tentelecom programme)." For more information on EUCIP, visit the CEPIS Web site www.cepis.org.

The new report is available from the CEPIS secretariat or can be downloaded from the Web site. While it shows the overall development of the Computing Professional and Computer Associate Professional

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[1]IDC is the International Data Corp., a US consultancy firm from whose analysis most previous estimates and forecasts of IT Skills discussed at the European level have arisen.

workforces in all 15 Member States, the national position of the IT Professional labour market is examined in more detail for Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (which, together, account for approximately half of all IT Practitioner employment within the Union). The report also looked at the role of migration between Member States in this skills area, drawing on recent work by the OECD and EU Commission.

Preliminary findings relating to the IT Practitioner workforce in the four countries examined in detail are:

– Comparatively *higher fraction of women* in this work in Ireland, followed by Sweden.
– Significantly *greater fraction of Self-employed* (consultants and contractors) in the United Kingdom as compared with Germany.
– Higher fractions of Computing Professionals employed in the *supply* ("Information Systems") *industry* than in the user organisations in Ireland and Sweden than in the UK and Germany.
– Broadly similar *educational achievement profiles* in the Computing Professional workforce in the four countries.
– Apparently *greater volume of training* within this workforce in the UK and Sweden than in Germany.

CEPIS is now exploring with the EU Commission the possibility of follow-through work, to extend the analysis to the other 11 Member States, to strengthen the robustness of the comparative conclusions, and to compare – inter alia – the flows from Tertiary Education courses in IT.

The analysis was carried out by EurIng Dr. Matthew Dixon, who is a Fellow of CEPIS's UK Member, the British Computer Society. Dr. Dixon, now EMTA Senior Research Fellow in the School of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics at Birkbeck, University of London, was associated with the significant comprehensive analysis of the IT Practitioner Labour Market carried out for the UK Government's "ITCE Skills Strategy Group" and reported as "Skills 99".[2]

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Note: The Council of European Professional Informatics Societies:

– unites 33 Informatics Professional Societies of 29 European countries;
– encourages ICT literacy and best practice in the Information Society;
– promotes acceptance of professional standards for ICT Professionals.

Through these, CEPIS enhances ICT professionalism and the role that ICT plays in modern society. The Members of CEPIS commit themselves to work to achieve:

– high levels of professionalism among European informatics professionals;
– user skills in the European workforce in the use of information systems;
– awareness among all Europeans.

The members of CEPIS are: Austria, Österreichische Computer Gesellschaft; Belgium, Fédération des Associations Informatiques de Belgique/Federatie van Belgische Verenigingen voor Informatica; Croatia, Croatian Computer Society; Cyprus, Cyprus Computer Society; Czech Republic, Czech Society

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[2]EMTA is the (UK) Engineering and Marine Training Authority.

for Cybernetics & Informatics; Denmark, Dansk Dataforening; Estonia, Estonian Information Technology Society; Finland, Finnish Information Processing Association; France, Association Française des Sciences et Technologies de l'Information; Germany, Gesellschaft für Informatik eV, Informationstechnische Gesellschaft im Verband der Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik eV; Greece, Greek Computer Society; Hungary, John v Neumann Computer Society; Iceland, The Icelandic Society for Information Processing; Ireland, Irish Computer Society; Italy, Associazione Italiana per l'Informatica ed il Calcolo Automatico, Associazione Informatici Professionisti, Associazione nazionale Laureati in Scienze dell'informazione e Informatica; Latvia, Latvijas Informâcijas tehnologiju un telekomunikâciju asociâcija; Lithuania, Lietuvos kompiuterininku sajunga; The Netherlands, Nederlands Genootschap voor Informatica, Vereniging van Register Informatici; Norway, Den Norske Dataforening; Poland, Polskie Towarzystwo Informatyczne (Polish Information Processing Society); Portugal, Associacao Portuguesa de Informatica; Roumania, Asociatia Pentru Tehnologia Informatiei si Comunicatii; Slovakia, Slovak Society for Computer Science; Slovenia, Slovensko Drustvo Informatika; Spain, Asociacion de Tecnicos de Informatica, Federacion Espaniola de Sociedades de Informatica; Sweden, Dataforeningen i Sverige; Switzerland, Societe Suisse des Informaticiens; Turkey, Informatics Association of Turkey; UK, The British Computer Society.