

UNI Europa ICTS and ETNO Begin a 2-Year Social Dialogue Project on Digital Upskilling for All

Brussels, 26 May 2020 – The European social partners for the telecommunications sector – UNI Europa ICTS, the European trade union federation for service workers, and ETNO, the European Telecommunication Network Operators' Association – have concluded the call for tender and kicked-off the “Digital Upskilling for All!” project (DUFA!).

Digital upskilling, inclusion and diversity: disparities ahead

Spanning over a two-year period, DUFA! is a social dialogue project (co-financed by the EU) that aims to develop best practices related to digital upskilling, inclusion and diversity to serve as examples for the workforce of the European telecommunications sector. The project is steered by a group of 14 key experts from UNI Europa ICTS and ETNO and will lead the timely delivery of the best practices and promotion of results.

According to [researches](#), the ICT skills gap in Europe is set to grow to 1.26 million by the end of 2020, which mounts a high pressure on the current education and training systems across the continent. Moreover, the share of women in the ICT workforce in Europe represents only 16% of total, which corresponds to only 1 female out of 6 employees. On top of these severe issues, [only 56%](#) of European citizens have basic digital skills for the jobs of today. If we take a glimpse at the set of digital skills of the jobs of tomorrow, immediate action needs to be taken now by a broad range of influential stakeholders at EU level.

Altogether, these are pointing to the urgent need to modernise our education and training systems. As this exercise cannot be achieved individually, we express the commitment to understand and proactively play our role as European social partners for the telecommunications sector.

Next steps and deliverables

Throughout the two years, the Steering Group will research, collect and evaluate the best practices implemented by the companies involved in the project, but also by external pioneers who lead on digital upskilling. In doing so, we will organise two workshops: each will welcome a broad panel of 35 key stakeholders to convert the findings of the research to actionable initiatives empowering women and older workers to access new ICT job opportunities within the telecommunications sector.

The main outcome of the workshops will be crystallised in physical and digital meetings to be presented to the broader public at the European Conference which will be organised at the maturity of the project. The best practice initiatives will be encouraged for adoption within the telecommunications sector, as well as the wider ICT industry.

Contributing to the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

UNI Europa ICTS and ETNO have been members of the [Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition](#) since February 2018. The Coalition brings together Member States, companies, social partners, non-profit

organisations and education providers who take action to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe. The two associations regard DUFA! as an opportunity to continue the support to the Coalition by leveraging their broad network of social partners across Europe, both at the company and trade union level. UNI Europa ICTS and ETNO are actively supporting the training and upskilling of the ICT workforce in order to bridge the digital skills gap, and this project will further enhance and expand this contribution.

About Mercer

Mercer provides insights, advice and technology-driven solutions to help build brighter futures for our clients, colleagues and communities. Together, we are redefining the world of work, reshaping retirement and investment outcomes, and unlocking real health and well-being. Mercer's more than 25,000 employees are based in 44 countries, and the firm operates in over 130 countries. Mercer is a business of Marsh & McLennan Companies (NYSE: MMC), the world's leading professional services firm in the areas of risk, strategy and people, with 76,000 colleagues and annualized revenue approaching \$17 billion. Through its market-leading businesses, including Marsh, Guy Carpenter and Oliver Wyman, Marsh & McLennan helps clients navigate an increasingly dynamic and complex environment.

Mercer's Objectives

Mercer will support ETNO and UNI Europa with the following three phases – Desktop Research, Consultation and Dissemination. During the initial Desktop Research phase, we will be working with the members to identify best practices to help with the digital upskilling focusing on improving gender equality and the aging workforce. We will work with the steering group to assess and define the top best practices with regards to gender equality and aging workforce. This work will be completed throughout the months of May and June, after which we will support with the development of the questionnaire and interview process.

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

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