

EIT Community statement welcoming the Digital Education Action Plan of the European Commission

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and representatives of its Innovation Communities welcome the adoption of the Digital Education Action Plan by the European Commission and look forward to supporting the European Commission in its implementation. The EIT Community are ready to offer their wealth of experience in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in education to contribute to successfully achieving this ambitious initiative.

As reported in the *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan*, there is widespread recognition that the education system is continuously evolving and, in order to meet its needs, innovation is vital. There is a clear need to: (i) boost entrepreneurial competences and an entrepreneurial mind-set; and (ii) support digital entrepreneurship, which embraces new ventures and the disruption of existing business sectors through new and emerging digital technologies. Since its establishment, the EIT Community and its Innovation Communities have played a key role in this field and therefore have much to offer in support of this initiative.

As underlined by the EIT Mid-term Evaluation Report, the EIT is the only EU body that leads the way in the EU Innovation landscape by integrating business, research and education into a knowledge triangle to achieve ground-breaking results. Numerous start-ups have been supported, businesses created, professionals and executives have received training and students have graduated from EIT-label Masters and Doctoral programmes in which digital entrepreneurship and leadership competences are a key part of the curricula.

The EIT Community has also taken several steps towards the reduction of gender inequality through the promotion of digital, leadership and entrepreneurial skills of women. In fact, since 2016, the EIT has engaged in numerous activities reaching more than 700 female participants in 8 countries with co-funding from industry partners as well as from NGOs, and the public and private sectors. The EIT Community is therefore engaged in addressing gender mainstreaming in their activities, promoting the use of digital technologies in education, and reducing socio-economic inequalities in order to build “a more united and stronger Europe”.

The EIT, as Europe’s largest Innovation ecosystem, offers a unique model with which to support the development of key skills in Europe. Education and the development of ‘human capital’ with the

competences and skills needed to create a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy is central to Europe and is at the heart of our renewed Strategic Innovation Agenda for 2021 -2027.

In the next years, the EIT and the Innovation Communities foresee an increasingly expanding number of graduates with entrepreneurial competences in the fields of climate, energy and digital technology as well as in the sectors of raw materials, health and food; and a scale-up of our women entrepreneurship initiative thanks to the network and partnerships created thus far. Furthermore, several Innovation Communities will run a “Teach the teachers” programme, training 6,000 teachers by 2020 through online and face-to-face courses, in order to raise the awareness among both educators and pupils about how to use technologies, and how to avoid the risks that may occur.

The EIT Community reiterates its willingness to contribute its own expertise and experience to boost key competences and digital skills, to promote values and awareness of the functioning of the European Union, and to build a stronger Europe.

The EIT and the Innovation Communities would welcome the opportunity to contribute directly and indirectly to the relevant activities included in the Digital Education Action Plan.

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Martin Kern

Interim Director
European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT)

Kirsten Dunlop

Chief Executive Officer
EIT Climate-KIC

Willem Jonker

Chief Executive Officer
EIT Digital

Diego Pavía

Chief Executive Officer
EIT InnoEnergy

Margaret Bath

Chief Executive Officer
EIT Food

Jan-Philipp Beck

Chief Executive Officer
EIT Health

Karen Hanghøj

Chief Executive Officer
EIT RawMaterial