



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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"Coding: connect and scale up!"

**Future Classroom Lab
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Good afternoon ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is going digital. The labour market too. Whether you want to be a doctor or designer. A trader or a teacher. A CEO — or a Commission President.

In every sector: they are all relying on the right digital tools and digital people.

90% of jobs need people with digital skills. Coding is the new literacy –helping to unlock opportunities everywhere.

I do not need to remind this audience: Coding is a tool that entertains, educates, empowers. It encourages new ways of thinking and solving problems: challenging, creative, fun.

If you have those skills, you're hot property.

If you don't, you're missing out. It's as simple as that.

Everyone needs those skills, and everybody should have access to them.

Today, nearly half the population are not digitally skilled.

The number of ICT graduates stays fixed and frozen even as demand for them rockets.

Pretty soon, nearly one million ICT jobs could go unfilled.

It's not just letting down our people— it's letting down our economy. When companies are looking for new places to locate, they are going to look for that human capital. If they don't find it in Europe, they'll just go elsewhere. Not just Googles and Facebooks – but any kind of company, from tourism to transport.

Young people today are at home with technology. It's where they go to learn, interact, be entertained. They've never known a world without the Internet, apps, smartphones.

Many of them are really talented. But there's not enough of them. Not enough Europeans are getting the right skills.

Maybe they are aware but don't think it's the kind of thing "for them". Maybe they think it's just for geeks. Maybe they think it's just for boys.

Schools can take the lead. Yet - in the OECD, 1 in 4 teachers feel they don't have enough IT training; in the EU, many schools don't even have broadband.

I want to see open, digital education in all our schools. But this alone won't solve the problem. And we can't afford to wait for all those systems to change.

Our action must reach as wide as possible. From connected classrooms to coding clubs after school, or in the holidays. From internships to reskilling to lifelong learning. These are all great ways to embed these skills – and we need them all.

I know none of this is easy. Training teachers and trainers. Getting the right material together. Then making it engaging and fun. None of that is easy — but it is essential.

But today for the first time we have together all those who can make a difference. Coders, geeks, educators, the ICT industry. You have all come because you are committed to promoting coding. Thank you for that.

Coding is the future. You get that. I get it too.

Last year, EU Code Week engaged almost ten thousand Europeans; this year's will be an even bigger success. The grand coalition for digital jobs has gathered dozens of pledges, for millions of new internships, training places, and jobs.

Coding initiatives continue to mushroom across Europe. Today you've heard about many of them, like in Ireland, Belgium and Finland. Those are great examples like the UK and Estonia.

Around the world, they get it too. Next year, in South Korea, every single schoolchild will be using digital textbooks. Every school will be able to choose what they want over a government cloud system.

Australian kids will soon have a digital curriculum. Children will learn about technology, design and computation. Mandatory – from pre-school onwards!

In the US, initiatives like code.org or the Hour of Code are a great success. Google just invested \$50 million in "Made with Code", targeted at young women.

I know we have the talent here in Europe too.

One recent idea is for a platform specifically on coding. This is a great idea — and should include as many stakeholders as possible. Cooperation is not easy. But it starts from the willingness to work together. And I thank all those who are contributing either financially or in kind. Those of you who are thinking of committing - I hope you will. Some of you made commitments at Davos – again I thank you for your ongoing drive to deliver and turn ambition into action.

So how do we make the most use of the talent we have out there? That's what I'm here to ask you today.

You are all involved and engaged in these different areas. You are doing fantastic work. And there is a lot we can learn and share from each other. Joining together and working together. How to connect, cross fertilise, create a sustainable ecosystem for coding.

Some of you may have the skills to produce adapted training programmes. Some have the experience. Some have the resources. Will the output be a website, a film, national coding champions or even role models? That is up to you. I just challenge you to think out of the box, to be practical and open minded with each other.

Most of all I hope you will come up with something clear and concrete. What should the next operational steps be? How can we connect and scale up coding across Europe? How can we make coding fun and appealing to young people? How can we make coding sustainable?

And what should the Commission do next? To all those questions: tell me, I'm listening.

I am ready to talk about the results of today's conclusions. I will also promote the next code week in October. I am leaving you with my best guys and girls with you this afternoon to help you find a way through.

Let's work together to get Europe coding – as soon as possible. I wish you the best of luck in achieving that.