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INSPIRING WOMEN INTO TECHNOLOGY:
THE EUD MEGACOMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

In order to promote the targets of the European Center for Women and Technology (ECWT) and increase the number of girls and women in the knowledge based economy until the year 2020, the ECWT has developed the European Directory (EUD) of Women and ICT (http://www.ictwomendirectory.eu), an online directory, an ecospace, a meeting point for ICT women in Europe. The EUD, created with the support of the European Commission DG Information Society and Media, was launched in Brussels in October 2009 by Commissioner Viviane Reding.[1] (Kamberidou 2010) Specifically, on the 8th of October 2009, Commissioner Reding welcomed 32 new signatories of the *Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT* and introduced this new tool –the online Directory for Women in ICT: http://www.ictwomendirectory.eu.

Keywords: new ecospace, megacommunity, collaboration

platform, European level data base, Web Community for Women in ICT.

1. Introduction: what is the EUD?

The EUD is a new ecospace, an online directory, a tool for getting more girls and women into the technology sector. It is the first regional directory for Women and ICT issues, a meeting point for ICT women in Europe and a megacommunity for innovative collaboration in the Women and ICT and related sectors. This European level database is an enabling tool to develop collaboration platforms and empowers you to use web technology/web community/web business. The European Directory of Women and ICT (EUD) is a new ecospace for all stakeholders (public, private, academia, NGOs, networks, clusters, projects and individual users) interested in measurably and significantly increasing the number of girls and women in the knowledge based economy in general and specifically in ICTs.[1] (Kamberidou 2010) The EUD is based on an innovative network portal and collaboration-ware with the basic aim to promote girls' and women's orientation, presence and participation in ICT and related sectors. Today, getting more girls and women into technology is not only a gender equality issue but an economic necessity! On a global level there is a shortage of 1.2 million jobs in the ICT sector today due to the absence of skilled labour. In Europe this figure is 300.000. So getting more girls and women into the technology sector is not only a gender equality issue but a crucial economic necessity!! The ECWT's basic target is to significantly and measurably increase the number of girls and women in the knowledge based economy until the year 2020.[2] (www.womenandtechnology.eu)

The EUD target is to put an end to fragmentation in the field of women and technology, to prevent replications and create a common European knowledge-base and a platform for interaction between the registered stakeholders. The Directory serves as a set of searchable databases of existing European policy documents and legislation in support of women and technology issues, of all key stakeholders, their activities, interventions, best-practices and good examples of women and ICT.

The EUD also serves as a benchmarking and monitoring tool for the *Code of Best Practices* for Women and ICT. In line with the challenges of the 21st century the web-based new collaboration-ware empowers you to use web technology/web community/web business. [3] (www.ictwomendirectory.eu)

2. The EUD potential lies in its growth!

In order to involve young women and give them ICT professional pathways, the corporate sector will make a contribution as a facilitator, thus providing one of the pillars for women to get career opportunities. In turn, the EUD will act as a catalyst for the business sector. The multi-stakeholder and multi-sector interactions are situated in this new space. The ECWT desires to make a real difference through the EUD Collaboration Ware to which you can get access as a registered member. Specifically, by using the European Directory (EUD) you can:

- Increase your visibility and present and market your activities towards the targeted mega-community on regional, national, European and global levels.
- Promote your personal mobility when entering or re-entering the labour-market.
- Expand and develop your e-skills to stay competitive.
- Find the right contacts and support to speed up the commercialization of your research.
- Find support for your entrepreneurship in technology areas or support for integrating technology into your entrepreneurship.
- Find support for your technology innovation and speed up transfer and commercialization of your knowledge.

- Search for partners for European and global projects around key issues on women and technology as well as leveraging your previous projects and research.
- Have access to tools to manage your projects in a quality certified and fully transparent way.
- Find partners and tools to carry out European and global level benchmarking and monitoring of impacts.
- Through access to the EUD's collaboration-ware—together with other stakeholders– you can develop new services and manage complex (business) processes customized to your needs!

In other words, you can find local, regional, national, European and global public, private stakeholders, academia, NGOs and individuals desiring:

- to be visible
- to share experiences
- to disseminate
- to collaborate
- to generate new innovations, products, services, businesses and jobs based on multi-stakeholder excellence
- to leverage resources, research and progress

Clearly, the EUD Web Community for Women in ICT is a knowledge environment for collaboration and

interactions— across regions, across sectors, across scales, across times, across and within stakeholders—that empowers and creates career-pathways for young women and women returners. We are extremely grateful to have received the support of the European Commission in this endeavour. The EUD has been developed with the support of the EC DG Information Society and Media and endorsed by the e-Skills industry Leadership Board as the key meeting place for women in ICT in Europe.

Why a European Directory?

As Nancy Pascall, the Gender and ICT Advisor, European Commission DG INFSO, points out in the EUD newsletter, *"the ultimate aim of these initiatives is to encourage young women to choose to study and work in the sector and to ensure their participation in the use, design and production of information and communication technologies and services."*

Nancy Pascall also points out that • first and foremost a directory is required in order to put an end to fragmentation and repetition of activities;• to facilitate access to and the sharing of information regarding initiatives relating to the participation of women in the ICT sector; • to support the exchange of experiences and best practices through setting up a European level database which will form the basis for identifying key indicators and carrying out of a European level benchmarking and monitoring and finally • to initiate web-based collaboration between the stakeholders. The EUD is an organic environment community and its potential lies in its growth! We would like to invite you to join the ECWT- EUD megacommunity.

What are the benefits of ECWT membership?

Members of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) can:
- Attend and participate in events organised by ECWT and its Members;
- Initiate projects with the ECWT and other Regional Centre Members,
- Participate in projects launched by the ECWT and other Regional Centre Members,
- Access and use the ECWT's innovative network portal and collaboration platform,
- Leverage their organisation's resources, research and progress,
- Get involved in global collaborations with the other Regional Centres under start-up around the world. For example, with the existing regional centers in Latin America, Australia, and in Dubai. Specifically, the regional centers in (1) Latin

America is coordinated by UNESCO Chair of Women Science and Technology in Buenos Aires, (2) the Asia Pacific Centre for Women and Technology coordinated by CRIC – Centre for Regional innovation and Competitiveness at Ballerat University in Australia and (3) the regional centre for Women and Technology in the Arab World in Dubai. (4) Preparations for regional centers are ongoing in Africa and in India as well.

The European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT)
Why was it established?

The ECWT was established by multi-stakeholder representatives who share the common vision of firstly, increasing the participation of women in the knowledge-based economy not only in Europe but globally and secondly promoting retention. In other words, increasing women's participation and eliminating the glass-ceiling and the leaky-pipeline, retaining women in their careers in science and technology, in R&D and in Leadership—from decision-making to execution phases. Specifically, dealing with and eliminating the life-work imbalance, gender-constrained educational choices and attitudes, anachronistic perspectives, among other things, that have contributed to the declining interest of girls and women in science and technology and their under-representation in ICT related fields. Thirdly, to facilitate the transformation from the real world to the virtual world among the more than 50% potential ICT users. That is to say, motivating and supporting girls and women to take the giant step to actively participate in people and technology interactions in every field of their daily life and work.

The ECWT—officially established in July 2008 in Drammen, Norway—is a non-profit organization, registered under Norwegian law. It's a sustainable European multi-stakeholder partnership representing high-level expertise in women and technology development— from the business, the government, the academia and the non-profit sectors.

The ECWT is one of the first of TEN Regional Centers working towards ensuring women and men are fully engaged in the information society and the knowledge based economy. The ECWT Secretariat is located at the Regional Innovation Centre Papirbredden in Drammen, Norway. The work of ECWT is lead by an Executive Group responsible for the operational activities and a High-level Advisory Committee that functions as a knowledge pool for support. Both the Executive Group and the High-Level Advisory Committee are built on multi-stakeholder representations and have documented experience in working

with women and technology and/or innovation issues. Eva Fabry, the Director of ECWT is also responsible for leading the board of Global Women and Technology (GWT).

The High-level Advisory Committee held its officially constitutory meeting at the biggest world ICT Fair CeBIT in Hannover the 3rd of March this year. This committee represents real multistakeholder excellence in Europe.

Access is easy for everyone!

The ECWT operational framework is designed around opportunities created by e-mobility. For instance, 75% of the services of the ECWT are web and mobile-based, facilitated by the European Directory (EUD). Registration is free and members can easily access ECWT's innovative network portal and collaboration platform.

Background

At a three-day meeting in Drammen, Norway (17-19 July 2008), representatives of the International Taskforce on Women and Information and Communication Technology (ITF)) and its European group, ITF-Europe, approved and signed the Statues of the ECWT. (For the minutes of the meetings see

www.womenandtechnology.eu) The plans for setting-up such a Centre in Europe were launched four months earlier in Brussels, March 4-7, 2008, through a series of EU activities, such as:

- the High-level meeting of the e-skills Industry Leadership Board, March 4th, led by the Vice- President of the European Commission, Mr. Günther Verheugen.
- during the EU Conference "Move out of the Shadow: Seize the OpportunITy!", hosted on March 6, 2008 by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media. At this conference the importance of designing a common policy framework for gender awareness at EU level was urged through DG INFO's study on Women and ICTs.
- the sponsoring by the Commission's DG INFOS of the 1st Multi-Stakeholder Partnership meeting hosted by the ITF in Brussels on March 7, 2008.
- One month later in Brussels, in April 2008, 17 key European stakeholders met and created *ITF-Europe*, (the International Taskforce for Women and ICTs in Europe). ITF-Europe was established as a temporary group until 2010, in order to assist in the start-

up and the continuing work of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT).

- The decision to establish the ECWT was taken one month later, on the 9th of May 2008 by ITF-Europe (the International Taskforce for Women and ICTs (ITF).

Finally, two months later, on the 18th of July, in Drammen, Norway the members of ITF-Europe approved and signed the statutes. Representatives of the ITF leadership and ITF-Europe as well as regional champions who were also in the phase of starting-up Regional Centers in Africa, Australia and Latin-America were also present. Altogether 27 participants from 16 countries took part in the meeting in Drammen (Spain, Bulgaria, the UK, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Africa and the USA)The Commission and more specifically the Directorate General Information Society and Media, **since 2005, has launched and supported a number of initiatives at**

European, international and national level with the goal of

1. increasing the presence of women in the ICT sector,
2. ensuring the availability of the necessary human resources,
3. encouraging diversity in the design and production of technology and

4. opening the "magical" world of technology to the population that does not benefit from its advantages.

ECWT Focus Areas: Education, Workforce, Entrepreneurship and Leadership

To ECWT has identified four thematic-focus areas for its customized global framework: Education/Academia, Workforce, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. The ECWT carries out its activities based on the customized global framework in guiding the work of the ten regional centres globally, in these four thematic focus areas, led by representatives of stakeholders with high level of expertise in the related areas. To reach the ECWT goals, the key activities are carried out through five implementation instruments: Policy and actions, Research and impact metrics, Resources and services development, Dissemination and communication, and Context and culture.

The ECWT— the first of Ten Regional Centres set up as part of the Global Framework of the International Task Force (ITF) for Women and ICTs— is recognized by UN GAID as a Community of Expertise. The ECWT functions as a Regional Point of Contact (N-POC) in Europe for multi stakeholder representatives with key interest in promoting women and technology. The first N-POC was set up in the 30th of September 2009 in Norway,

the host country of the ECWT Secretariat. The ECWT advocates the start-up of similar National Point of Contacts (N-POCs), based on multi-stakeholder partnerships, at national levels, not only in the 27 EU Member States but throughout the entire Europe up to the Ural mountains. Key stakeholders in twenty-one countries have already expressed interest in setting up a N-POC of the ECWT: Belgium, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Georgia, Israel, Norway Serbia and Switzerland. The Belgian, the Portuguese and the French N-PoCs have already played a key role in organizing key events of "the e-Skills Week" in March of 2010 sponsored by DG Enterprise and Industry and coordinated by DIGITALEUROPE, European Schoolnet and ECWT as a subcontractor to EUN.

The number of ECWT Members has increased from 16 at the start-up in 2008 to 58 until today.

The 1st Annual General Meeting of the ECWT took place in Brussels on 9th October 2009 and the 2nd was held on the organized 6th of March 2010 also in Brussels.

In Greece, the National and Kapodistiran University of Athens is presently discussing with HEPIS–

the Hellenic Professional Informatics Society— the conditions for operating the Greek N-PoC.

3. Conclusion: accomplished in 2009

1. ☐Increase of member organizations from 16 to 52 per 31st of December 2009;

2. Getting members for the ECWT High-level Advisory Committee who really represent excellence in Europe;

3. Launching the call for Expression of Interest to start-up National Point of Contacts (N-POCs) of the ECWT and organizing a start-up meeting for the N-POCs in Brussels the 9th of October 2009. In March 2010 key stakeholders from 23 countries expressed their interest to set up an N-POC.

4. ☐Making some strategic alliances: with key corporates through the e-Skills ILB and getting the Board of Directors of the e-skills Industry Leadership Board to approve on the 24th of June 2009 the Women in Technology issue as one of the key priorities for the ILB for the years 2009-2011;

5. Building collaborations with some key networks and NGOs working towards realizing

common goals: European Schoolnet, CEPIS, ECDL, DIGITALEUROPE, Women in Leadership in the Information Society;

6. Securing the European Directory tender for developing a product that the ECWT can take ownership of and use as a key source for securing the business model of the organization;

7. ☐Consequently lobbying and working on start-up of common actions/activities with some strategic partners, and getting the ECWT on board in the e-Skills Week 2010 led by DIGITALEUROPE and European Schoolnet;

8. Joining forces with members to start-up new projects- the CONNECT project led by Fondazione Politecnico di Milano and several projects in the pipeline for 2010;

9. Strengthening collaboration with DG INFSO through the signing of the Code of Best Practices of Women in ICT and DG Enterprise and Industry as well as opening a dialogue with DG Research and DG Education;

10. Making our voice heard and lobbying for core ECWT Member interests through presenting our standpoint in connection with the consultations of the European Commission about Post-i2010: priorities for new strategy for European information society (2010-2015) and the Public Consultation of the Future of the EU 2020 strategy.

11. Holding the 1st AGM the 9th October 2009, deciding on some major issues to ensure the professional operation of a broad multi-stakeholder organization and giving an elected Executive the formal mandate to lead the ECWT;

12. As leaders of the Global Women and Technology Network continuing dialogue with global stakeholders and having a constructive meeting with potential financers the 25-26th of March 2009 in Paris, an event sponsored by UNESCO and being invited to participate in the Open Consultation on Financial Mechanisms for Meeting the Challenges of ICT for Development, 8-9th of October 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland.

13. Discussions with HEPIS- the Hellenic Professionals Informatics Society and members of CEPIS— for operating the Greek N-PoC

How to join this enterprise?

Registration is free for all stakeholders, except for corporations. For detailed information about ECWT and its activities or if you would like to download the Statutes, the Membership Agreement, the Minutes of the Meetings in Drammen, the Registration/Membership form, etc., please visit our website at: www.womenandtechnology.eu or contact Eva Fabry, Director of the ECWT (Norway) and Chair of Global Women & Technology (GWT) at eva.fabry@womenandtechnology.eu.

4. Acknowledgements

5. References

1. Kamberidou, Irene (2010). ECWT-EUD. "Women in ICT-Shadowing 2010" conference 7-9 March 2010, Nicosia, Cyprus.

2. www.womenandtechnology.eu (ECWT)

3. www.ictwomendirectory.eu (EUD)

ECWT- EUD

Dr. Irene Kamberidou is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Athens. She received her PhD from Panteios University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, her MA from Boston College and her BA from Emmanuel College, Boston Massachusetts. Dr. Kamberidou is a founding member of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT), served as a member of the ITF-Europe Working Group (International Taskforce on Women and ICTs-Europe) and the Gender Expert Action Group (GEAG) of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Information Society and Media in Brussels. As a member of the Gender Expert Action Group (GEAG), Dr. Kamberidou participated in "the Consultation Workshops on Gender and Technology" in 2004, 2005, 2006, in the "Women in Science seminar" in 2006, and in the gender mainstreaming Conference on 'Re-searching Women in Science and Technology', in Vienna, Austria, 15-16 May, 2006, jointly organized by the Austrian Presidency and the European Commission. She also participated in the European

Commission "Shadowing" Conference and best practices workshops in Brussels, March 2008 (ITGirls,www.ec.eruopa.eu/itgirls), at the meetings for the establishment of the European Center for Women and Technology (ECWT) in Brussels and in Drammen, Norway respectively in 2008; at the international UNICAFE Dissemination Conference, "Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Women Academics in Engineering, Technology and Life Sciences across Europe", November 12-13, 2008, Constantinople at Istanbul Technical University (http://www.womenacademics2008.org) and in the European Commision's *IT Girls Shadowing Conference, 'Signing of the Code for Best Practices for Women and ICT',"* March 3 2009, in Brussels. Dr Kamberidou represented the ECWT at the «Global Forum 2009: Shaping the Future-ICTS & the Future of Internet-Opportunities for Stimulating & Reshaping the Economy, Oct. 19-20, 2009 in Bucharest Romania and she represented the ECWT at the "Women in ICT-Shadowing 2010" conference 7-9 March 2010 in Nicosia, Cyprus where she presented the ECWT and EUD-the European Directory of Women and ICT (www.ictwomendirectory.eu)