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Editorial

European Certification of Informatics Professionals

It is a great pleasure to welcome readers to this special edition of **UPGRADE**, the journal of informatics from CEPIS, since this edition is focused on the European Certification of Informatics Professionals (EUCIP), an initiative that CEPIS has taken a central role in developing and promoting since its inception. EUCIP as we know it today, was preceded by several initiatives such as the European Informatics Skills Structures (EISS) competence framework, the European Informatics Continuous Learning programme (EICL) and the European Professional Informatics Certificate Service (EPICS), all of which paved the way and allowed for the development of EUCIP. A further satisfaction regarding EUCIP is that by developing this Programme CEPIS is fulfilling an important mission that led to its establishment nearly twenty years ago, namely to represent European IT professionals. Results are reaching beyond Europe already and by presenting them in the WCC 2008 they are sure to be visible worldwide. At the same time this development is in line with a conclusion of the meeting of presidents of CEPIS Member Societies held in Vienna a few years ago where they agreed that professionalism is an extremely important direction to be pursued by CEPIS in the future.

The collaborative development of EUCIP followed on from the successes already experienced in the development of the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), in which Subject Matter Expertise, drawn together by CEPIS from its member societies, contributed to creating the world's leading end-user digital skills certification. A similar model was used in EUCIP development and used expertise from countries such as Italy, Finland, Norway, United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany and Ireland to develop the initial syllabus and test base for what would become the EUCIP Core certification.

EUCIP is an initiative which links closely to the current CEPIS activity areas of *Skills* and *Professionalism*, specifically:

- In the *Skills* domain, EUCIP provides a vendor independent certification offering to meet the needs of prospective and current IT Professionals. The Harmonise project, recently completed by CEPIS on behalf of DG Education and Culture, highlights the value that the EUCIP Pro-

fessional offering can bring to the harmonization of the IT Professional eSkills certification domain.

- In the *Professionalism* domain, EUCIP can contribute to reducing the potential shortfalls in supply of suitably qualified IT Professionals entering the labour market, which has been highlighted as a potential issue in the eSkills Foresights Scenarios for the ICT Industry, a CEPIS study completed for DG Enterprise and Industry. EUCIP Services highlighted in articles in the following issue of **UPGRADE** also point to ways in which EUCIP can be used to promote competence development in organizations.

EUCIP is currently available in eight countries across Europe and opportunities to expand the programme further are continually being assessed by the ECDL Foundation, who now has operational responsibility for the programme, through its existing global network of national operators.

As well as further diffusion of the programme in Europe and beyond, CEPIS is currently planning to offer a version of the EUCIP eCCO tool via the CEPIS website to offer a competence evaluation service, based on the EUCIP Professional profiles. This tool, which has been piloted in Italy, will offer the opportunity to highlight skills gaps, which can then be addressed through the completion of EUCIP certification.

As you will discover from reading the following edition of **UPGRADE**, EUCIP is now well positioned to continue to meet the needs of the IT Professional, the IT Professional Labour Market, along with the individual competence and career development needs of members of the CEPIS member societies.

A really heartfelt thanks goes to authors and editors of this issue that have succeeded to put together such a comprehensive review of EUCIP which CEPIS will continue to enthusiastically support.

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