

Germany, 2003 - Greetings from the Federal Minister for Education and Research in Germany

## **Greetings from the Federal Minister for Education and Research in Germany on 07/12/02**

In today's business world using the computer has become routine in the day-to-day work environment, not only in the office but in production as well. The ability to operate standard software or to work with the Internet is an implicit prerequisite in the job market even though the training and education of many employees goes back to a time when the computer didn't play such an important role. Many have learned the computer basics required for their work in short educational training seminars then have qualified themselves further in their work. Each job change reveals the difficulty to appraise such informal IT qualifications because certificates earned through internal training seminars often document only an abbreviation of the learned abilities.

The ECDL (European Computer Driving License, borne by the DLGI in Germany) is merited to have found the answer to this need. The ECDL certifies the most important IT know-how for the job market through standardised examinations. Those who have self-taught computer skills can finally get an internationally recognized certificate to prove them. Those who want to learn the fundamentals of computer applications may also engage courses in certified training centers.

In this way the ECDL has acquired an important relevancy on the job market. The 100,000th Skill Card made out by the DLGI in Germany this year shows that many people have a great interest to verify the IT knowledge so important for today's job market. In the past few years the DLGI has fulfilled a contribution to the German job market by putting the ECDL into practice. This in turn contributed to the economy and the German production industry, which should not be underestimated. The DLGI in the 10 years since it's founding has with the ECDL developed into a significant and independent factor for IT qualification in Germany.

But qualification not only plays a role in the IT operator's skills in handling standard applications. Even more important is the maintenance and expansion of IT professionals technical competence. The federal government together with the professional associations and trade unions has prepared a new IT further education program that has been put into practice this year. This new IT further education program is open to all those interested and not only offers numerous tie-ins for new activities in Germany for the DLGI but also offers the opportunity to internationalize this system.

The DLGI has made the ECDL a success in the first decade of its existence. I wish its continued success for at least another ten years.

*Edelgard Bulmahn,  
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