

Written statement by Ms Mariya Gabriel
European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Girls in ICT 2023 Europe Event: Digital Skills for Life
27th April 2023



Dear friends,

I am delighted on this **13th annual Girls in ICT Day** to see that the International Telecommunication Union and Czechitas continue their essential work to empower women and girls to acquire STEM and ICT skills.

This is crucial, and these efforts remain as relevant as ever. In 2009, a year before the first edition of this Day, women represented only 26% of graduates in Computing and Engineering in Europe. Fourteen years later, this number has hardly changed.

Yet, the world around us continues to evolve, the ways we live, learn and work becoming increasingly digital. Today, almost all jobs require some level of digital competence. At the same time, we are witnessing a gap between the needs of our societies and labour markets and the number of people equipped to respond.

I am fully mobilised to address these issues in all facets of my portfolio. Last year alone, our **Girls Go Circular** project provided free online learning to over 14,000 14-19-year-old girls in 15 countries, helping to upgrade their digital and entrepreneurial skills. By 2027, the project aims to train some 50,000 young women across Europe across all member states.

In parallel, our flagship education and training programme, **Erasmus+**, provides over **EUR 26 billion from 2021 to 2027**, to help women of all ages to achieve their full potential in STEM and ICT studies and careers. With over EUR 4 billion available for 2023 alone, the programme is a major leverage of our action to empower women.

The **European Year of Skills** that we celebrate this year, comes with targeted actions to encourage all people across Europe to upskill and reskill so that they can make full use of

the opportunities provided by the green and digital transitions. To do so, we must ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate in lifelong learning and strengthen our efforts to break down pervasive gender stereotypes and gendered ideas about roles in our societies.

The work of likeminded partners, like the ITU and Czechitas, is necessary and precious. I thank you for your commitment and determined efforts to bring about real change for women and girls.

I wish you insightful and inspiring discussions at today's event and every success in your work!

Mariya Gabriel