IT STAR is pleased to release the following

Statement

based on the presentations and debate of the 9th IT STAR Workshop on ICT Strategies & Applications, 16 October 2015 in Warsaw, Poland

The digital scenario is driven by new forms of economic and social evolution based on wide diffusion of global communication networks, machine-to-machine environment, Big Data, Cloud platforms, knowledge sharing, open innovation and virtualization of exchange. The Internet of Things is changing our lives radically: we are exposed to countless trends and concepts, and everything – from smart items to smart cities – is turning smart. The digital transformation will be successfully managed if we no longer have to distinguish between real and virtual!

There is wide understanding that ICT is a driving force of development, and governments have developed strategies and policies vis-à-vis the Digital Agenda for Europe. An analysis of the Information Society uptake in the IT STAR region, however, suggests that there are shortcomings related to their implementation and regular updating. Governments are called upon to keep their strategies up-to-date since failing to do that would lead to action-plans and solutions based on old approaches.

The level of digital competences in a country is an important indicator to its government:

- End user e-Skills are essential for individuals to integrate in society. In this regard, the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) as a *de facto* standard for end-user certification is successfully implemented in many countries. To fully participate in the growing digital society, however, it becomes increasingly important to have a better understanding of the basic principles of informatics, computational thinking, algorithms and coding at an early age.
- At the level of Practitioner and e-Leadership skills, the European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) is widely recognized as a tool for identification of competences for the purposes of planning and personal/ institutional development. Based on the e-CF, the e-CF*plus* system details in depth the operational terms to assess professional digital skills.

The IT STAR region continues to loose talented young ICT specialists to other world regions. It would be important for national governments and the European Commission to address the "brain-drain" issue so as to take action in ameliorating its effects.

Comprehensive statistical data on the European ICT Industry is essential for understanding the status and trends in the digital economy. The European Commission could also assume a more visible role in promoting ICT brands, products and services that are "Made in Europe".

The presentations and further details about the 9th IT STAR WS on ICT Strategies & Applications are available from the conference website - www.starbus.org/ws9.