



European  
Commission

**PACT FOR  
SKILLS**



# Networking event for **Pact for Skills** members

European Commission

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*Employment,  
Social Affairs  
and Inclusion*

## The Pact for Skills Support Services organised a Pact for Skills networking event for Pact members to discuss current challenges and opportunities related to upskilling and reskilling initiatives in Europe.

This event also offered Pact members an opportunity to exchange best practices and to get inspired by the activities of Pact members including Large Scale Skills Partnerships (LSPs) in different industrial ecosystems. The event was livestreamed and had 179 attendees.

### Key messages of the event

A major take-away from this event is that investment in training and up- and reskilling is one of the main ways to address labour shortages in Europe, and that joining forces is key to achieve this goal.

Opening the event with a video message, **Nicolas Schmit**, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, insisted on the urgent need to provide more training opportunities for all Europeans, including employees, the self-employed and jobseekers. Commissioner Schmit highlighted the important contributions of Pact for Skills members and the 18 existing LSPs, which have supported the training of over 2 million people across Europe, and have committed to providing over 10 million training opportunities to workers in the European Union (EU). The [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) sets a reference of 60% of adults participating in training every year by 2030. The momentum of the European Year of Skills represents a unique opportunity to redouble efforts at all levels to achieve this, and make lifelong learning a daily reality.



*'The future of Europe relies on skilled workers.'*

*Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights*

**Jakub Boratynski**, Director of Networks and Governance at DG GROW, European Commission, also acknowledged Pact members' efforts, and underlined the challenge posed by labour and skills shortages for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular, which sometimes prevent them from expanding and developing further. He highlighted the fact that active participation of all stakeholders is a key condition to ensure that Europe is equipped with the right skills to tackle the green and digital transitions, which will affect an estimated 35 to 40% of jobs. In this context, Mr Boratynski acknowledged the importance given to skills in the [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#), and underlined the relevance of initiatives such as the [Net-Zero Industry Academies](#).

### Pact for Skills achievements

**Marianna Georgallis**, Associate Director at Ecorys, presented the results of the [2022 Pact for Skills Annual Members Survey](#). The survey targeted all members of the Pact for Skills and aimed to gather information on progress on commitments from January to December 2022. 461 responses were received. The results demonstrated good progress of Pact members towards achieving their commitments. Over 19 million people were reached by Pact promotion and dissemination activities, and 21 500 stakeholders were involved in collaborations with Pact members in 2022. Together, Pact members updated and developed 15 500 training programmes and invested €160 000 000 in up- and reskilling activities. The vast majority of respondents held a positive opinion of the Pact for Skills, reporting that it provided them with relevant information, and opportunities to share knowledge and network with other organisations working on up- and reskilling.

Partnerships and cooperation, as well as EU and national level funding opportunities were considered the three top success factors for skills development. Lastly, participation in Large-Scale Skills Partnerships also brought clear benefits for 85% of respondents.

Marianna Georgallis then provided an overview of the Pact for Skills Support Services tools and resources available to the Pact for Skills community. This includes biennial networking events and regular [knowledge events](#) on specific topics of interest, a Pact for Skills newsletter and a dedicated [LinkedIn group](#). Pact members can also access a wide range of [online resources](#) and a list of relevant [funding opportunities](#) which are regularly updated on the [Pact for Skills website](#). LSPs and regional skills partnerships also benefit from tailored support from dedicated Support Teams. Support for setting up [a regional skills partnership](#) is also available.

## Maximise upskilling and reskilling opportunities for SMEs

Moderated by **Daniel Nilsson**, from Pact member [MuchSkills](#), this panel discussion focused on SMEs and aimed at exploring good practices to ensure their workers' skills remain relevant in light of new technological developments. In a context where part of the workforce is at risk of being replaced by robots or machines, **Lucilla Crosta**, CEO of Pact member [Smarthink](#), underlined the importance of soft and transversal skills for employees to remain competitive on the job market.



*'Upskilling and reskilling are a pressing issue.'*

*Lucilla Crosta,  
CEO of Smarthink*

She highlighted the need to ensure employee engagement in training, and the benefits of connecting upskilling and reskilling trainings to their practical application at the workplace. She also reported on challenges faced by SMEs when it comes to accessing funding when competing with bigger consortia. Granting SMEs opportunities to access specific smaller-size funding and smaller-size projects could help them overcome this challenge.

**Susanna Coghlan**, Europe, Middle-East and Africa Business Development Manager of Pact member [Quidgest](#), highlighted how participation in the Pact for Skills can help SMEs access resources, allows them to share capabilities, and provides them with channels to join forces with other stakeholders. She stressed that such collaboration is crucial in overcoming challenges of finding qualified people with the right skill set and developing trainings tailored to individuals, and recognising and certifying on-the-job knowledge transfer and learning. Ms Coghlan also highlighted the use of individual learner accounts as a good practice to give employees more control over learning and more autonomy in setting their career paths. As part of the discussion with participants, she further mentioned that in-company transfers of knowledge (including video recording between senior and junior employees can be an effective solution to pass-on specific know-how or expertise.

## Defining, implementing and monitoring commitments under the Pact

Three parallel group discussions were organised so Pact members could exchange experiences on defining, implementing and monitoring commitments. Key takeaways from these sessions are presented below.

### Defining commitments

**Kate Clarke**, Senior advisor responsible for coordinating international cooperation at the Vestland County Council (Norway), highlighted the challenges faced by Vestland in addressing skills needs in the region. Taking into account regional specificities and needs, the County Council aims to collaborate, share knowledge, and implement best practices to collectively overcome the current hurdles, and the Pact for Skills supports them in doing so.

The County Council's Pact commitments are related to the monitoring of skills supply and demand, the anticipation of future skills needs, and to the promotion of a culture of lifelong learning for all. To turn its Pact commitments into concrete actions, the County Council aims to bring together companies that have effectively mapped their skill needs in order to identify the number of companies with skills gaps at the regional level. Other concrete actions include the empowerment of educators, the development of methodologies to ensure all adults meet essential educational standards, and the strengthening of cross-sectoral upskilling in VET through the Erasmus+ mobility programme.



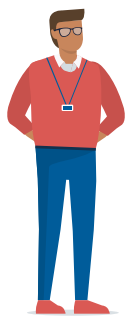
*'These are complex challenges and we cannot overcome them alone. That is why we are committing to the Pact for Skills, to share knowledge and best practices and to network with others facing similar challenges.'*

*Kate Clarke, Senior Advisor and responsible for coordinating international cooperation at the Vestland County Council*

**Todorka Dimitrova**, Director of the Varna Economic Development Agency (VEDA) (Bulgaria), explained that the driver behind VEDA's decision to join the Pact was the pressing need for new skills and training for both students and adults in the Varna region. VEDA's commitment to the Pact includes partnering with other EU-based organisations to provide training, career opportunities, and employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; advocating for strengthening gender equality and equal opportunities for all; and promoting upskilling services and opportunities for older workers. These commitments will be translated into concrete actions through the development of five projects, including specific training programmes tailored to their target audience. Participants' discussions focused on the benefits of taking part in European networks and of connecting with other European regions. The Pact offers organisations such a platform to network and connect, allowing organisations to generate innovative ideas, define commitments, and establish collaborations.

### Implementing commitments

**Peter Scheijgrond**, Director at Bluespring, explained how Bluespring implements its Pact for Skills commitment of promoting a culture of lifelong learning for all by updating and developing education and training activities for a sustainable blue economy. He highlighted the importance of drawing learning content from actual work practice, reaching the right target audience (e.g. universities, students and young professionals in the blue economy), engaging them as observers and ambassadors of training programmes, offering the programmes at the right price and integrating the teachings and skills acquired directly into projects.



*'I encourage everyone to include education into their projects; disseminate what you know and learn in your projects through online courses accessible to anyone, anywhere, anytime'*

**Peter Scheijgrond**, Director at Bluespring

**Markus Raivio**, Co-Founder & CEO of Kukunori, focused on the INvet4Job, a European network which gathers organisations seeking to create more equal, sustainable and inclusive employment. Markus Raivio insisted on the fact that creating such networks and building trust is vital to fostering participation and inclusion of marginalised people,

tackling all forms of discrimination and providing training opportunities. The Pact offers concrete opportunities to foster the development of cross-border networks: for example, Kukunori connected with a Greek Pact member NGO, and the two organisations worked together on a project called ['Social Sports 4 All'](#).

*'Networking is all about people and trust. It does not depend on the industry but on whether you can commit to the value you are presenting.'*

**Markus Raivio**,  
Co-Founder & CEO of Kukunori



### Monitoring commitments

**Kathrin Jaenecke**, Senior Policy Officer Skills & Innovation at EURATEX, presented the new developments and visual identity of the Textile Clothing Leather and Footwear (TCLF) Skills Alliance and introduced the audience to their monitoring tools. The TCLF set up a Steering Committee to support the monitoring of its commitments. The use of a specific structure representing the various stakeholders of the Alliance within the Steering Committee encouraged their involvement in the monitoring exercise and helped ensuring its relevance not only for the Alliance coordinators, but also for its member organisations. The development of regional partnerships and the designation of individual ambassadors also contributed to effective skills monitoring in the Alliance.

**Ana María Camps**, Head of Training and Research at the Spanish Confederation of Hotels and Tourist Accommodation, presented the Tourism LSP and its commitments. The LSP uses precise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress against its commitments, such as up- and reskilling 10% of the tourism workforce every year from 2023 to 2030. Among the good practices implemented by the Tourism LSP, Ana María Camps mentioned an online repository of resources, EU-wide monthly coordination meetings, and the activities undertaken by the PANTOUR partner project on skills intelligence and mentoring to national and regional skills partnerships. Participants discussed the different ways organisations can set KPIs and actions, either individually or as a member of an LSP. The need for collaboration at all levels, including national and local, was highlighted in order to gain information about skills gaps and have coherent commitments.

## Practical information and networking sessions

In the afternoon sessions, event participants were given the possibility to attend information sessions on four different topics of interest to Pact members. The **Pact for Skills Support Services** provided them with information on: communication tools available to Pact members, the Pact for Skills funding tool and how to use it, how to make amendments to Pact commitments, and how to join an LSP.

The last part of the event was dedicated to **networking sessions**, during which participants could schedule one-to-one meetings with each other and discuss the potential for cooperation. Overall, 30 one-to-one meetings took place among participants of the event.

