



European
Commission

**PACT FOR
SKILLS**



Networking event for **Pact for Skills** members

Skills for the Future, Network for Today

European Commission

23 October 2024

*Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion*

The European Commission organised a Pact for Skills networking event for members of the Pact.

The event provided a platform for Pact members to connect with each other virtually, share their experiences with Pact for Skills activities and learn from and inspire each other. Pact members discussed current opportunities and challenges related to upskilling and reskilling measures and heard about inspiring practices from the Pact's various partnerships and ecosystems. The event was livestreamed and had 246 attendees.

Key messages of the event

A major take-away from the event is the continued relevance of the Pact for Skills and its member's active commitment to upskilling and reskilling activities. Presentations from representatives of the European Commission and members of the Pact showcased the ambitious nature of the Pact and its milestone achievements since its inception. In the wake of new and evolving challenges, it is clear that building on the momentum of these achievements and those of flagship European initiatives such as the Year of Skills remains crucial. This will allow continued progress in line with the ambitions of the new Commission and ensure that changes within the European labour force brought on by the green and digital transitions and an ageing population can be effectively addressed. In this context, Pact members are encouraged to grow the Pact community and continue their efforts to upskill and reskill the workforce with innovative training methods.

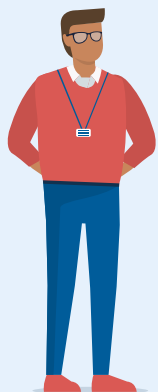
Mario Nava, Director General of DG EMPL, welcomed attendees to the event. He highlighted the timely nature of the networking event, with the Pact for Skills' four-year anniversary approaching on the 10th of November. Mr Nava reminded Pact members of the importance of upskilling and reskilling to prepare the European workforce for the green and digital transitions and adapt to new labour market challenges, such as an ageing population and increasing labour shortages. Mr Nava praised the significant contributions made by Pact members in addressing these challenges. Notably, the Pact has led to the creation of 20 Large-scale Skill Partnerships (LSPs), the involvement of over 2500 members, and the commitment to help more than 25 million working age individuals in Europe to upskill and reskill by 2030¹.

The engagement and enthusiasm of the Pact's members played a vital role in the momentum surrounding the Pact and its vital contribution to flagship initiatives such as the European Year of Skills. Mr Nava concluded his opening speech by insisting on the continued importance of skills for the EU's future, evident in the high ambitions of the European Commission through the upcoming creation of the Union of Skills. This Union aims to address skills challenges through a unified European approach, focusing on European-level skills recognition and the promotion of life-long learning throughout individuals' careers.



'Important groundwork has been accomplished through the Pact for Skills and responsibility for this work is a shared endeavour. It is necessary to keep up the engagement and enthusiasm.'

Mario Nava, Director General, DG EMPL



'To set the course for the future and to mobilise support. We need participation in the Pact to be as wide as possible, to promote a clear picture of our work.'

Jakub Boratynski, Director at DG GROW

Closing the plenary session, **Jakub Boratynski**, Director at DG GROW, also emphasised the continued importance of the Pact and its member's work, especially in the context of the EU's need for a competitive and skilled labour force. The Pact's relevance in the years to come as a key player in increasing the EU's prosperity is evident, particularly through its appreciation in the recent report on [The future of European competitiveness](#), by Mario Draghi. Mr **Boratynski** invited Pact members to reflect on challenges they need to overcome to ensure the Pact continues to be as impactful as it has been since its creation. Mr **Boratynski** highlighted the Pact's achievements so far, including upskilling over three million workers, and stressed the importance of actively participating in Pact activities to maintain the political momentum of the European Year of Skills.

¹ [Pact for Skills Large Scale Partnerships commit to upskilling and reskilling over 25 million people by 2030](#)

Maximising the Pact for Skills potential

Participants then had the opportunity to learn about the benefits and importance of engaging in the Pact community and its activities, such as the annual survey and the commitment monitoring exercise, from the Pact for Skills Support Services and Pact members.

Pact members, including leaders of Large-scale and Regional Skills Partnerships, highlighted the added value that participating in the Pact for Skills community brings to their organisation's activities.

Showcasing investments and commitments to upskilling through the Pact for Skills

During this session, the Pact for Skills Support Services provided insights on the various ways members can maximise the added value of the Pact in their upskilling and reskilling activities. The session highlighted the importance of being an engaged and involved member of the Pact.

Keelin Dunn, Research Manager at Ecorys and member of the Pact for Skills Support Services, provided guidance on opportunities for members to showcase their work within the Pact. Participants were encouraged to register to the Pact for Skills through [the application form](#). Registering allows organisations to access dedicated EU funding opportunities, receive information about networking events, knowledge events,

participate in the Pact's [LinkedIn](#) group and share direct feedback with the Support Services. Another important way through which members can showcase the progress made under the Pact is to respond to the annual Pact for Skills survey. Survey results are presented in the [annual Pact for Skills report](#) which includes examples of Pact Member's activities and is disseminated to a wide audience, including the Pact community, policy makers, and industry stakeholders. To prepare for the upcoming Pact for Skills survey, which will cover the progress in 2024, members were encouraged to register to the Pact and to reach out to the survey Support team² and the membership Support team³ in case of questions.



'Participating in the Pact's activities, such as the annual survey, builds momentum and maximises the potential of members' work.'

Keelin Dunn, Pact for Skills Support Services

Ms Dunn explained the implementation and outputs of the recent Large-scale Skills Partnership (LSP) commitment review exercise, which saw LSPs review their existing commitments to upskilling and reskilling. Building on the momentum of the European Year of Skills, the exercise involved an analysis of the skills needs of each of the [EU's industrial ecosystems](#) and a consultation with each Partnership to define a new commitment to upskilling and reskilling until 2030. Through the exercise, each LSP created a comparable and quantifiable commitment to upskill or reskill a percentage of their ecosystem's workforce. The outcome of the exercise was a collective agreement from 15 LSPs to train over 25 million people of working age across the EU by 2030. Defining commitments under the Pact allows organisations to clearly demonstrate their intent to address skills needs and contribute to EU-level ambitions and can guide their work and investments and provide a reference point for progress over time.



'Sector-level commitments showcase the overarching goals of an ecosystem, offering Pact members and key stakeholders a clear focus for their efforts and a shared vision for progress.'

Keelin Dunn, Pact for Skills Support Services



² PFSAnnualSurvey@ecorys.com

³ PactforSkillsMembers@ecorys.com

Maximising the Pact for Skills in a Large-scale Skills Partnership

During this session, two Pact for Skills members were invited to share their best practices and experiences related to their involvement in the Pact's community and activities.

Paula De Diego, Policy Officer at [Social Economy Europe](#) and Coordinator of the [Large-scale Skills Partnership for the Proximity and Social Economy ecosystem](#) (P&SE), presented the LSP's most recent actions following the commitment review exercise. The LSP's membership includes over 200 organisations within the P&SE sector. These organisations are motivated by a set of core values and characteristics, such as the primacy of social value over capital,

democratic governance, and solidarity and responsibility. Following the review of their commitment and the introduction of a new Coordinating organisation ([Euricse](#)), the LSP created a new declaration focused on improving skills intelligence within the ecosystem and strengthening partnerships and cooperation. Based on a membership-wide survey that assessed the level of interest and the priorities of the LSP's members, the LSP will create working groups on skills intelligence and funding opportunities. Additionally, the P&SE LSP will collaborate with the consortium of the [B-Wise](#) Blueprint project to transform their work into a working group.



'Thanks to the LSP commitment-review exercise, the Proximity and Social Economy LSP has reviewed its partnership agreement and created new objectives, such as strengthening their partnership and improving skills intelligence in the P&SE ecosystem.'

Paula De Diego, Coordinator of the LSP for the Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem

Paola Viniello, Project Officer at [Euratex](#) and Coordinator of the [Textiles, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear LSP](#) (TCLF LSP), presented the outcome of the commitment review exercise. The exercise prompted the LSP's 170+ members to focus on the need to upskill the TCLF workforce for future skills demands, agreeing to commit to upskilling 5% of the TCLF workforce by 2030 - roughly 65,000 workers per year. To guarantee the feasibility of the target, the LSP based the commitment on the outcome

of previous skills initiatives in the TCLF sector such as Blueprint projects and consulted with the LSP's membership and its Steering Committee. Ms Viniello detailed the various ways the LSP monitors its activities to meet their target, including through the LSP annual reports, membership surveys, and the implementation of monitoring activities within key projects such as [MetaSkills4TCLF](#), [AEQUALIS4TCLF](#), and [TCLFSkillBridge](#).



'Through its renewed commitment, the LSP can track its progress and ensure the TCLF sector remains competitive.'

Paola Viniello, Coordinator of the LSP for the Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear Ecosystem



Shaping the future of skills development through digital innovations and new technologies

The panel discussion focused on shaping the future of skills development through digital innovations and new technologies. It provided participants with practical insights into how these tools can help achieve the upskilling goals of different organisations. Moderated by **Simon Broek**, Director of [Ockham IPS](#), the panel comprised two training providers within the Pact sharing best practices and practical examples of using innovative and digital upskilling and reskilling methods.

Gianluca Coppola, president and founder of the European Digital Learning Network ETS ([DLEARN](#)), promoted the advantages of hybrid and digital training for organisations with limited resources. This type of training allows upskilling actions to be provided flexibly, without

interfering with everyday operations. Mr Coppola pointed to several innovative methods which can assist trainers in increasing learner retention during virtual trainings, including interactive apps, stimulating infographics, live discussions, and game-based learning elements such as quizzes. To embrace the full potential of digital learning methods and reduce barriers to participation, training providers need to ensure that online training materials are flexible and accessible. For example, DLEARN takes into account the digital skills of their learners by assessing their digital literacy before the training, providing content in mixed formats (both digital and non-digital), and providing basic digital literacy classes. AI-adaptive learning tools can also be used to make content more accessible, by changing course content depending on an individual's needs and competences.



'Innovative training technologies support SMEs, since they increase learner motivation and retention, therefore generating a better trained workforce, able to respond to fast changes in the market.'

Gianluca Coppola, President of DLEARN

Kiera Kinahan, Strategic Programmes Manager at [SkillNet Ireland](#), presented SkillNet's "[MentorsWork](#)" initiative. This is an online and flexible training course that helps Irish SMEs and business owners gain the necessary business skills to increase their competitiveness. SMEs face particular challenges that may deter them from engaging in training initiatives, including limited awareness of initiatives, limited financial resources, and lack of time to engage in training. To address these challenges, MentorsWork offers one-to-one guidance with mentors at a time that best suits the trainee. The training programme is free for business owners who contribute to the Irish national training fund, and the online nature of the course makes it accessible country-wide and free of travel costs. Promoting the inclusive, personalised, accessible, and flexible potential of online training for small businesses is key to overcoming barriers to participation, including inconsistent quality of the online training offer and lack of peer-to-peer connections. Ms Kinahan emphasised the need to increase the visibility of training courses and to enhance SME's understanding of the importance of remaining competitive through upskilling initiatives.

Both panellists agreed that guaranteeing the accessibility of digital and innovative training is essential. By doing so, training providers can provide opportunities to learners who may benefit the most from training, including learners in rural areas, employees in SMEs, or students with limited financial resources. The inclusion of all learners, at all stages of their education or professional career, in training activities is essential to address the current social, labour, and transition challenges of the EU.



'The accessibility of the course allows SMEs to see tangible differences and increase their innovation.'

Kiera Kinahan, Programme Manager at SkillNet



Practical information and networking sessions

In the afternoon sessions, participants had the opportunity to join one of four information sessions hosted by the **Pact for Skills Support Services**. The information sessions provided guidance on: how to increase the visibility of the Pact for skills within your networks; how to set up or join a Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) under the Pact; how members can use the Pact for Skills database to update their contact details, add commitments, or join a partnership; and how the Pact can benefit different types of stakeholder groups.

During the session on the Regional Skills Partnerships, **Pietro Cumela**, coordinator of [the ProMIS RSP](#), provided insights into the experience of setting up a Regional Partnership to address local and national skills challenges. Established in 2024 to address digital skills needs in the Italian health sector, the ProMIS RSP aims to build on the outputs from local-level skills observatories and national health structures to identify skills needs in three Italian regions.

Mr Cumela highlighted the importance of the RSP's flexible approach, accounting for the different needs of the regions they are supporting, and their evolving skills needs. Mr Cumela also highlighted the support of the Pact for Skills Support Services, which contributed to the design of the RSP's regional strategy.



'The Support Services provided a meaningful contribution to finding a regional strategy.'

Pietro Cumela, Coordinator of the ProMIS RSP



During the session on the benefits of the Pact for Skills for different stakeholders, **George Brashnarov**, Board Member of BASSCOM, shared the main benefits of joining the pact. These include joining an active community of committed employers and providers, demonstrating one's organisation's commitment to skills, learning from peers and sharing experiences, accessing information and sharing intelligence, collaborating through sectoral or regional partnerships, developing projects and connecting with initiatives, utilising practical

tools or products (e.g., competency frameworks), and bringing visibility to activities and investments.

Finally, event participants had the opportunity to book one-on-one **networking sessions** with each other or panel speakers and to connect via the chat function offered by the platform. During these one-on-one meetings, participants were able to discuss the potential for cooperation and exchange information and good practices.



'The Pact's practical and results-driven concept has proven to be highly beneficial for our organisation. We are currently engaged in the [Digital4Sustainability](#) project and implementing several other initiatives. In our opinion, the Pact for Skills has already demonstrated its effectiveness in bringing together national industries like ours, providing a robust foundation for successful project execution.'

George Brashnarov, Advisory Board Member, BASSCOM



