



**PACT FOR
SKILLS**

NETWORKING EVENT FOR POTENTIAL AND NEW **PACT FOR SKILLS** MEMBERS

European Commission | 21 September 2022

After the launch of the Pact for Skills in November 2020, the European Commission organised its second networking event to allow organisations that are not yet part of the Pact to learn more about the initiative and how to join, and to exchange with current members of the Pact and Large-Scale Partnerships. The event was livestreamed and had 215 participants.

This second networking event provided a unique opportunity for members and non-members of the Pact to exchange their ideas and experience of dealing with upskilling and reskilling challenges in Europe. Participants who are not yet members of the Pact were invited to make connections and take inspiration from current members, who shared their experience and the benefits of joining the Pact.

Take-aways of the event

A key take-away of the event is the importance of collective efforts and joining the forces to address the skills challenges in Europe. The Pact for Skills is a growing community of like-minded organisations providing space for working together, sharing good practice, mutual learning and pooling resources. As mentioned by Justina Bieliauskaite (European Digital Alliance for SMEs), the key benefit of being part of the Pact for Skills is the ability to collaborate with all ecosystems, large-scale partnerships and beyond. Join the Pact for Skills community during the pivotal moment in preparation for the *European Year of Skills 2023!*

Key messages from the European Commission

As the green and digital transitions trigger pressure on skills needs, the event provided a platform for organisations to share best practices to address shifts in the labour market. As underlined by **Stefan Olsson**, Deputy Director General at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), adapting one's skills throughout life is a challenge but has to become the new norm. In this context, increasing investment in re-skilling and up-skilling European workforce is of paramount importance. . The upcoming European Year of Skills 2023 will bring the Pact into the spotlight and will act as a catalyst to **boost commitments and actions** in this direction.

'We need a skills revolution that makes participation in training the new normal.'
Stefan Olsson, Deputy Director General at DG EMPL.

Julie Fionda, Deputy Head of the Skills Agenda Unit (DG EMPL). They emphasised the need for public and private stakeholders to work together by bringing shared vision, pooling expertise and resources and yielding impact through economies of scale. There are many ways in which interested organisations can join forces and support under the Pact for Skills can help its members to achieve their ambitions.

Finally, **Jakub Boratynski**, Director for Networks and Governance at DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) emphasised the importance of collaborating in the framework of large-scale skills partnerships and of boosting collective effort for the success of the Pact for Skills and the need to connect at regional level and build on the energy of the members in addressing the up-skilling and re-skilling challenges.

Members' experience: why to join and what difference it makes

The members of the Pact were invited to share their reflections and experience of what difference the membership has made so far to their organisations and what they expect to be able to achieve going forward. Two organisations shared their experience during this session and the summaries of their presentations are outlined below.

Katja Schager

Representing Eurochambres; Policy Advisor, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

European companies need support to overcome crises, where vocational education and training are part of the answer. The Pact for Skills helps companies to fix the skills mismatch and provides a great opportunity to broaden cooperation. It has the potential to bring together the relevant actors for European competitiveness.

Justina Bieliauskaite

Projects Director, European Digital Alliance for SMEs

Joining the Pact provides the right skills to move forward and to make a step towards European sovereignty. It also offers opportunities to network and exchange, create actions that are complementary, broaden horizons by meeting new people, and helps build new partnerships.

How to join and make concrete commitments

The practical information on how to join the Pact and how to make **concrete commitments** as an organisation was explained by **Marianna Georgallis**, Associate Director at Ecorys. Those organisations who are interested in joining forces with their colleagues across Europe were invited to complete their [application form](#), which are available on the [Pact for Skills website](#). Marianna also outlined the opportunities and support that is available to the members of the Pact:

- **Networking Hub:** support in finding partners, support to identify relevant policy makers to upscale actions, dedicated [LinkedIn group](#) for the community, networking events.
- **Guidance Hub:** tailored support for large-scale and regional partnerships, partnership handbook with practical advice for creating new and running existing partnerships.
- **Knowledge Hub:** webinars and peer learning activities, [online library](#) of tools and resources, [online funding tool](#).

Some of the upcoming events include a peer learning activity for existing members focusing on regional partnerships 'Developing partnerships at regional level: Good practice examples from Centres of Vocational Excellence, Cluster platform and 3S regions' (4 October 2022), a Pact of Skills session at the Employment and Social Rights Forum (16-17 November 2022), peer learning activity on 'Initiatives to strengthen skills partnerships under the Pact, including blueprints for sectoral cooperation on skills and three-step approaches' (December 2022) and the Biennial Pact for Skills Forum (early 2023).

Funding opportunities: the example of the Digital Europe Programme

Several funding opportunities are available to Pact members, that can be identified through the [funding tool](#) available on the Pact for Skills website. The event introduced the audience to the new [Digital Europe Programme](#) that was presented by **Arthur Tréguier**, Policy Assistant in the Digital Economy, Recovery Plan and Skills Unit at DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT). A budget of €56 million under this programme will address the shortage of digital skills by funding Master's and Bachelor's programmes in digital technologies. It will contribute to reaching the ambitious target included in the Digital Decade Strategy of training additional 20 million ICT and digital specialists in Europe by 2030. The funding is available for universities, businesses and research centres. The call opens on 29 September 2022 and will close on 24 January 2023.

Regional and sectoral dimensions of the Pact

The importance of working both at regional and sectoral levels was recalled by **William Hammonds**, Associate Director at Ecorys. Regional partnerships have the potential to bring forward impact at local level and to foster meaningful action. Examples of benefits generated by Large-Scale Partnerships (LSPs) and by regional partnerships were presented by current members of the Pact.

Isabelle Vêrilhac

Head of International Affairs and Innovation, Cité du design, Saint-Etienne (France), President of the Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)

The partnership will help in finding new partners and experiment new models in real places and on concrete projects. Being a member of the Pact makes collaborations stronger, and helps connecting at European, national and local levels. potential to bring together the relevant actors for European competitiveness.

Maria Pascual

International Relations Officer at the Regional Ministry of Education of the Government of Catalonia, Directorate-General for VET, Board Member of the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)

Regional cooperation is key for the success of vocational training. The Pact is a platform for sharing, networking and is a vehicle to promote and/or validate regional initiatives.

Engagement with the different ecosystems

10 parallel sessions were organised to give participants the opportunity to **initiate contacts with the different LSPs and engage with regional stakeholders**. These sessions aimed at increasing membership in the LSPs for Agri-food, Automotive, Construction, Cultural and Creative Industries, Digital, Energy Intensive Industries, Health, Microelectronics, Offshore Renewable Energy, Proximity and Social Economy, Shipbuilding and Maritime Technology, Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear Industries and Tourism.

- Being part of an LSP allows its members to **discuss and assess common challenges** in their ecosystem. This includes challenges such as the difficulty of attracting new talents, the necessity of up-skilling and re-skilling, and the need for green and digital skills for workers.
- LSPs help **members exchange thoughts about sectoral opportunities**. In the different parallel sessions, participants shared ideas, best-practices examples, initiatives they know about, and funding opportunities they are aware of.
- Parallel sessions allowed new members to learn about the tangible benefits of joining partnerships in their ecosystem. These benefits include, for example, the access to mappings of skilling initiatives and statistics, the networking opportunities, the possibility to engage at regional level, and the **opportunity to bring local initiatives together** – some of which can be replicated.

Join the forces with other like-minded organisations by becoming a member of the Pact for Skills and contribute to addressing upskilling and re-skilling challenges by:

- Making commitments to implement and monitor upskilling and reskilling in your organisation.
- Join an existing large-scale or regional partnership to join forces with others.
- Establish new sectoral or regional partnerships.

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