



European  
Commission

**PACT FOR  
SKILLS**



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

Joining forces across Europe for upskilling  
and reskilling

European Commission

6 June 2024

*Employment,  
Social Affairs  
and Inclusion*

## The Pact for Skills Support Services organised a Pact for Skills networking event for existing and potential members of the Pact.

The event provided an overview of the achievements of current Pact members, aiming to inspire potential members to join and to remind current members of the importance and relevance of their activities to address current skills challenges. Highlighting the importance of the Pact community, the event also provided a platform for Pact members to engage with each other and discuss their shared activities, goals, or challenges in up-skilling and re-skilling. The event was livestreamed and had 216 attendees.

### Key messages of the event

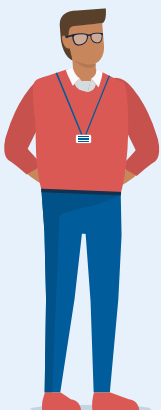
A major take-away from the event is the continued relevance of the efforts from Pact for Skills members to answer the skills needs of the European labour market. Presentations by representatives of the European Commission and members of the Pact highlighted the importance of community, information exchange, and cooperation in promoting upskilling and reskilling across all sectors. Membership in the Pact for Skills offers all types of organisations the opportunity to implement long-term initiatives to address skills shortages and meet the challenges brought about by the twin green and digital transition.

**Ann Branch**, Head of the Skills Agenda Unit of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion (DG EMPL), opened the event with a welcome speech, emphasising the continued relevance and importance of the Pact for Skills in addressing labour market challenges, particularly labour and skills shortages. As a key element of the European Year of Skills, the work done through the Pact for Skills so far has been crucial in addressing skills gaps and has generated increased awareness of the importance of skills. The [2023 Pact for Skills Annual Member Survey Report](#) provides key insights into the progress achieved so far. According to survey results, members' concerted efforts in upskilling and reskilling have reached roughly 3.5 million individuals between 2022 and 2023. In addition, Pact for Skills members have made an aggregated investment of nearly EUR 310 million into upskilling and reskilling activities since 2022. The Pact now includes over 2,500 members and the Large-scale Skills Partnerships have committed to upskilling 25 million individuals by 2030.<sup>1</sup> The effort to close the skills gaps accompanying the twin green and digital transition is evident in initiatives like the newly launched Regional Skills Partnership ProMIS, which aims to equip healthcare workers in Italy with essential digital skills. The obstacles to sustainable growth and innovation represented by labour and skills shortages thus can be overcome by leveraging the opportunities for collaboration and concerted action offered by the Pact for Skills.



*'The Year of Skills has created a momentum to mainstream skills across policy areas and has an underlining role in achieving EU priorities.'*

**Ann Branch**, Head of the Skills Agenda Unit of DG EMPL



*'The engagement of members of the Pact fits into Europe's vision for the future.'*

**Jakub Boratynski**, Director at DG GROW

The achievements of the Pact and the efforts of its members were reiterated by Jakub Boratynski, Director of Networks and Governance of the Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) during his closing speech of the event. He thanked the members of the Pact for Skills for their collective efforts in implementing up- and re-skilling activities under the Pact and encouraged potential members to join the Pact to benefit from essential information and guidance. While the European Year of Skills has ended, the persistent need to address skills gaps in the labour market and anticipate the job profiles of the twin transitions continues to place the Pact for Skills at the forefront of the European agenda.

<sup>1</sup> See Pact for Skills Survey Results one-pager 2023

## Benefits of joining the Pact for Skills

Following the welcoming speech, **Vicki Donlevy**, Director at Ecorys and representing the Pact for Skills Support Services, outlined the various benefits of joining the Pact to existing and potential members. The role of the Pact for Skills Support Services is to grow and support the Pact community under three distinct axes: the Knowledge Hub, the Networking Hub, and the Guidance Hub. Under the Knowledge Hub, Pact members have access to relevant and up-to-date information on relevant skills topics, through regular [knowledge events](#) and a wide range of [online resources](#). Additionally, members have access to a list of relevant [funding opportunities](#) which are regularly updated on the [Pact for Skills website](#). Under the Networking Hub, Pact Members have opportunities to connect with and learn from organisations across the EU pursuing similar up-skilling and re-skilling initiatives and objectives. Biennial networking events bring together Pact members and organisations interested in up-skilling and re-skilling efforts, providing a platform for engagement and exchange. Additionally, members can connect through the [LinkedIn group](#) and showcase their work on upskilling and reskilling. Finally, the [Guidance Hub](#) provides tailored



*'By joining the Pact, members join a community of committed organisations pursuing goals in up- and re-skilling.'*

*Vicki Donlevy, Pact for Skills Support Services*



support to [large-scale or regional partnerships](#) in defining, monitoring, and achieving their skills objectives. The presentation highlighted the central role of information and community within the Pact for Skills.

## Activities and achievements under the Pact: Experiences of current Pact members

During this session, participants had the opportunity to hear firsthand accounts from three Pact members, who shared their experiences with the Pact for Skills. They highlighted their achievements and the added

value of joining the community, offering insights from the perspectives of an individual Pact member and two coordinators of large-scale partnerships.

### Industry-based commitments to up- and re-skilling – Achievements of the LSP for the Energy-Intensive Industries



*'Basing the LSP on Blueprint projects means that LSPs are integrated and cooperating with the European industry structures'*

*Antonius Schröder, Coordinator of the LSP for Energy Intensive Industries*

**Antonius Schröder**, Manager of European Research at the University of Technology Dortmund and Coordinator of the [Large-scale Skills Partnership \(LSP\) for the Energy-Intensive Industries](#) introduced the participants to the activities and structure of his LSP. The LSP was founded by expanding on two industry-based and sector-specific skills Blueprint projects: [the Skills Alliance for Industrial Symbiosis \(SPIRE-SAIS\)](#), a cross-sectoral Blueprint for skills in the energy-intensive ecosystem, and [the European Steel Skills Agenda \(ESSA\)](#), which focused on upskilling in the steels sector. Since its establishment, the LSP has been successful in implementing strategic skills projects that address the industry-specific challenges of the energy-intensive sectors, such as [Skills4Planet](#), a collection of micro-credential training courses on sustainability issues for EEI workers. The LSP currently has 41 members operating in various industries including the mineral, welding, and chemical sectors. Mr Schröder emphasised the commitment of the LSP to welcome new members, from other energy intensive sectors such as glass and fertiliser.

## Upskilling to meet the challenges of the digital transition – Activities of the Large-scale Skills Partnership for Health

**Marco Di Donato**, Policy Officer for [EUREGHA](#) and Coordinator of the [LSP for the Health Ecosystem](#), presented an overview of the recent activities of the LSP. He emphasised the LSP's mission to upskill European healthcare workers to meet the challenges of the green and digital transition and to enhance Europe's health systems' global competitiveness. To address these challenges, the LSP is committed to anticipating skill needs in the health sector and to creating a future-

proof skills strategy. Mr Di Donato also highlighted the benefits of joining an LSP, such as collaborating on shared commitments, participating in sector-specific events such as workshops, and receiving dedicated access to European Commission tools and resources. The LSP has organised in-person workshops in Brussels and plans to continue engaging its members through activities such as open consultations, networking opportunities, and information events.



*'The benefit of being part of an LSP is to connect with key actors across Europe engaged in the re-skilling and up-skilling of the health workforce at all levels – European, national, regional and local.'*

*Marco Di Donato, Coordinator of the LSP for the Health Ecosystem*

## Shaping the future of skills development

The panel discussion focused on shaping the future of skills development through micro-credentials, digital innovations, and new technologies and provided the participants with practical insights into how these tools can help achieve the up-skilling goals of different organisations.

Moderated by **Andrei Bunis**, Policy Officer at DG GROW, the panel comprised two LSP Coordinators sharing best practices and practical examples of using these innovative up-skilling and re-skilling methods. The panel also explored how these approaches can reduce skills shortages in their industrial sectors.

**Caterina Bortolaso**, leader of Skills Initiatives at [Digital SME Alliance](#) and Coordinator of the [LSP for the Digital Ecosystem](#), presented several examples of the up-skilling initiatives that her organisation is implementing to address skills challenges for SMEs in the digital ecosystem. The Digital SME Alliance is actively engaged in European projects, such as the Erasmus+ Blueprint Alliance [CHAISE](#) (Blockchain Skills for Europe), which develops strategic skilling solutions to address the current and future skills needs of the European blockchain workforce. The Digital SME Alliance will also train over 1,000 ICT and sustainability professionals through the Erasmus+ [Digital 4 Sustainability](#) project, which aims to align the digital sector and its workforce to the green transition. Looking ahead, the alliance plans to launch a White Paper on digital skills in the SME sector and promote best practices during the [Digital SME Awards](#), creating awareness and interest among their members and beyond.



*'SMEs need to be at the centre of up-skilling and re-skilling the European workforce.'*

*Caterina Bortolaso, Coordinator of the LSP for the Digital Ecosystem*



**Jakub Stolfa**, President of the [Automotive Skills Alliance \(ASA\)](#) and Coordinator of the [LSP for the Automotive Ecosystem](#), introduced the Skills Hub micro-credentials tool implemented by the ASA in 2017. Through a collaborative effort, the Automotive LSP created a database of skills, job roles, and training courses, making it easy for individuals looking for micro-credential training to access upskilling opportunities relevant to the Automotive industry. Upon completing a training course, participants receive a digital badge that reflects the skills they have acquired. The badge allows them to showcase their accomplishments and ensures the training is recognised by European systems such as Europass. Mr Stolfa highlighted the importance of collaboration in establishing this system, highlighting that the quality of training offer depends greatly on community involvement.

Both panellists agreed on the benefits of the Pact for Skills community in addressing the challenges of implementing micro-credentials. Ms Bortolaso mentioned the existing skills gaps in the ICT sectors, and the challenges in addressing these gaps for SMEs, including limited budgets. In response to these challenges, the large number and wide variety of stakeholders present in the Digital LSP have allowed Digital SME Alliance to expand the reach and offer of their upskilling activities. The Blueprint projects implemented by the LSPs offer micro-credentials that are recognised, validated, and used by the LSP and the wider Pact for Skills Community. Mr Stolfa also emphasised the need for a unified European approach to micro-credential recognition to allow for a more uniform certification of skilled professionals.



*'There is no digital transformation without a skilled workforce that can match technological evolutions. The work done within the Pact for Skills is fundamental in matching these changes.'*

*Caterina Bortolaso, Coordinator of the LSP for the Digital Ecosystem*



## 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 an introduction and guidance on: how to join the Pact for skills and make commitments to up- and re-skilling; how to set up or join a Regional Skills Partnership under the Pact; how to access and use the Pact for Skills online tools (including the funding tool, the library, and the Guidance Handbook); and how to find potential partners through the Pact for Skills tools and Support Services.

Finally, event participants had the opportunity to book **one-on-one networking sessions** with each other or panel speakers. During these one-on-one meetings, participants could discuss the potential for cooperation and exchange information and good practices.



