

PRESS RELEASE

EP, EC and five EU Agencies spearhead green and digital skills development in the EU and beyond

Brussels, 20 September 2023 – The European Parliament hosted today the landmark event “Skills, skills, skills! Skills for people, skills for competitiveness, skills for sustainability”. The initiative was proposed by the Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) Committee Dragoş Pîslaru, MEP, co-hosted by the five EU agencies working in the field of employment, social affairs and inclusion, in partnership with the European Commission.

The initiative marks a milestone of the European Year of Skills, signalling the European Union's determination to focus on current and future skills needs. After introductory remarks by Dragoş Pîslaru, MEP, Chair of the EMPL Committee, and Joost Korte, Director-General at the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, the directors of Cedefop, Eurofound, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Labour Authority (ELA) shared their knowledge on the transformative power of skills that will have an impact in shaping Europe's future.

The 120 participants in the room, and the 200 followers online – members of the European Parliament and the European Commission, policymakers, social partners, civil society and other stakeholders – engaged in an open and frank debate with directors and experts from the five social Agencies, about getting the balance right between challenges and opportunities to ensure the future is fair, healthy and safe for the EU and beyond. The agenda of the meeting included presentations and debates about the most relevant skills for people, competitiveness, sustainability, and how to get the right balance in meeting the skills needed for the green and digital transitions.

Dragoş Pîslaru, MEP, Chair of the EMPL Committee at the European Parliament, said: “Investing in skills is the ultimate approach to achieve a competitive economy for the benefit of all. Economic and social objectives can no longer be treated separately and operating in silos has already shown its limits. The investment in skills needs to go hand in hand with the social investment in people.”

Joost Korte, Director-General at the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, added: “The European Year of Skills empowers us to spread the message throughout every corner of Europe about the importance of investing in people and their skills. EU agencies are integral members of the EU family, working closely with Member States, stakeholders, and social partners to elevate skills.”

Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director at Cedefop, said: “Population ageing poses a big challenge to the successful implementation of the green and digital transitions. We can best meet this challenge with formal and non-formal education and training and with continuous up-skilling – a skills revolution.”

Ivailo Kalfin, Executive Director at Eurofound, said: “Skills and training should be part of the DNA of a thriving and competitive EU economy. However, to fill the employment gaps there are two sides - jobs need to be attractive and job seekers - skilled. Hence, job quality needs to be addressed – wages, working conditions, non-discrimination, affordable public services.”

William Cockburn, Interim Executive Director at EU-OSHA, highlighted: “Every day, the EU loses thousands of skilled workers from the labour market due to injury, illness or even death. Apart from being an obligation under EU law, effective occupational safety and health measures, including training, can help stem this terrible loss and so support the EU’s growth and competitiveness.”

Pilvi Torsti, Director at the ETF, said: “Skills are at the core of creating fairer and more inclusive societies at a global level. The European Year of Skills offers a unique opportunity to join forces and continue our work in supporting skills development considering the geopolitical landscape in the EU and beyond. The ETF is committed to working with all institutions on key aspects - ranging from skills anticipation to the recognition of qualifications - to generate impact in the long term.”

Cosmin Boiangiu, Executive Director at the ELA, said: "Cross-border labour mobility is not the silver bullet to solve labour markets imbalances, but it does contribute sensibly to a well-functioning EU Single Market. ELA’s ambition is to use the full potential of EURES, in particular through better matching of jobs with skills, and more dynamic targeting of labour shortages and surpluses. We will do so in cooperation with the European Commission, other EU agencies and institutions, Member States and social partners, aiming at more effective labour mobility."

Background

Cedefop, Eurofound, EU-OSHA, the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Labour Authority (ELA) are decentralised EU Agencies working under the remit of the European Commission's Directorate for Employment, Social Affairs and inclusion.

- **Cedefop** was founded in 1975 and has been based in Greece since 1995. It supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET) as well as skills and qualifications policies by working together with the Commission, Member States and social partners. To this end, Cedefop enhances and disseminates knowledge, provides evidence and services for policy-making, including research-based conclusions and facilitates knowledge sharing among and between EU and national actors.
- **Eurofound** is a tripartite European Union Agency based in Dublin, whose role is to provide knowledge to assist in the development of better social, employment and work-related policies. Eurofound provides information, advice and expertise on working conditions and sustainable work, industrial relations, labour market change and quality and life and public services, to support the EU Institutions and bodies, Member States and Social Partners in shaping and implementing social and employment policies, as well as promoting social dialogue on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis.
- **The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)**, is the European Union information agency for occupational safety and health and is based in Bilbao. The agency's work contributes to the European Commission's Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 and other relevant EU strategies and programmes. EU-OSHA works to make European workplaces safer, healthier and more productive — for the benefit of businesses, employees and governments and promotes a culture of risk prevention to improve working conditions in Europe.
- **The European Training Foundation (ETF)** is a European Union agency, based in Turin, Italy and operational since 1994, that helps transition and developing countries harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems, and in the context of the EU's external relations policy.
- **The European Labour Authority (ELA)** was set up in July 2019 and has been created to help strengthen fairness and trust in the internal market by helping Member States and the European Commission to ensure that EU rules on labour mobility and social security coordination are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. ELA also has an important

role to play in facilitating and ensuring effective labour mobility in Europe, by activities of the European Employment Services (EURES).

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