

European Alliance Against Coronavirus

Friday 10th July 2020 at 8:30

Towards a European Pact for Skills

Working format is based on “Gilles Rules”:

1. conceptual framework
2. needs and disruptions
3. solutions

Speakers:

- André Richier, DG GROW

[Link to session’s recording](#)

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The roadmap for the Pact for Skill was illustrated by André Richier from DG GROW. Initially, the agenda was set to be launched in March 2020, but due to the health emergency it was postponed. The launch of the new Pact for Skill is scheduled for 10 November 2020 in Berlin.

The objectives of the Pact for Skills

The main objectives of the Pact for Skill are the (i) digital transformation, already accelerated by Covid-19, and investment in all types of skills (ii) upskilling and reskilling of people of working age, (iii) supporting and encourage companies to apprenticeship.

To implement the skills agenda, there are 4 building blocks: “Large scale partnerships” to focus on upskilling investments, involve major players from industrial ecosystem and public authorities; “national/regional/local partnerships” with a sectoral or regional focus on upskilling; “Social Partners Arrangements”; and “individual commitments”.

WHAT?



Thus, partnerships can be developed at both national, regional and local level, involving workers, public authorities and social partners to join together and cooperate for a sectoral or regional upskilling. Social partners are a key element to facilitate the dialogue, concerning individual learning account, access to training and identify the upskilling needs.

Blueprints and EU actions

André shared previous blueprints of sectorial cooperation on skills: they are divided into three waves to define a common vision, priorities, new skills and new jobs. Blueprints are the key elements to achieve new kind of partnership. They are the basis for the new European skills agenda.

The first took place last 2018 and addressed to the automotive sector, maritime technology, space, textile, clothing, footwear and leather, and tourism. The second wave in 2019 destined for additive manufacturing, construction, maritime shipping, and steel. The third one in 2020 focusses on bio-economy, new technologies and innovation in agriculture, batteries for electro-mobility, defence technologies, digitisation of the energy value chain, energy-intensive industries, and microelectronics manufacturing and design.

Regarding a general overview linked to the ongoing initiatives, the European Alliance Apprenticeship has generated 900,000 opportunities since 2013 and mobilized new partnership possibilities for SMEs. To date, it is necessary to renew the alliance by structuring it around new emerging issues.

Linked to the implementation of re- and upskilling, the European Commission developed a specific multi-stakeholder partnership on digital skills and jobs coalition, including more than 500+members and 24 national coalitions. The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition offered digital training to millions of people. Related to the Covid-19 emergency, the coalition launched a new Call for Pledges to recruit new workforces with digital skills.

The Roadmaps to the Pact for Skills

André shared the roadmap to the launch of the Pact for Skills:

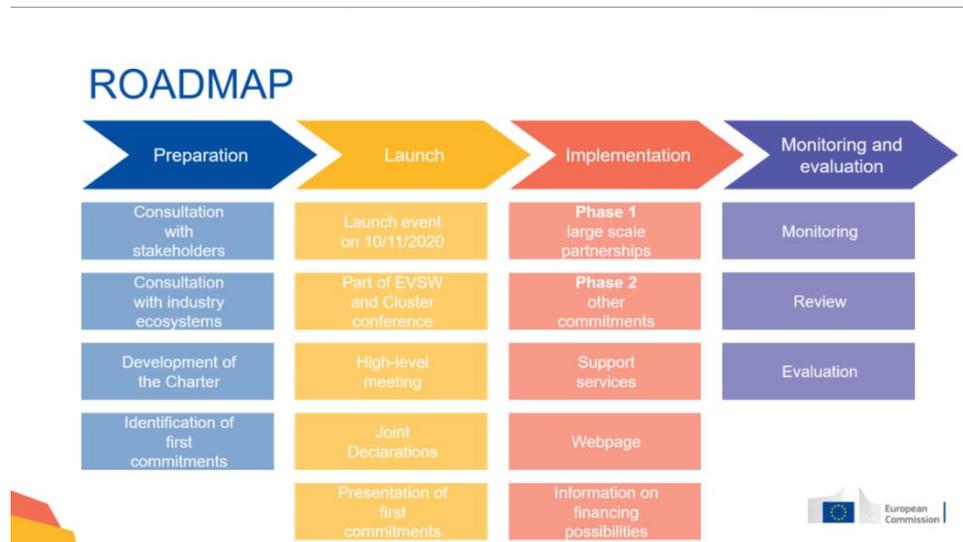
1. Consultation on the Charter will run from July to September 2020 in order to develop a set of principles and guideline to measure the quality level of upskilling and reskilling
2. Consultation of stakeholder will run from July to September 2020 to seek agreement and define KPIs
3. Roundtables will run from September to October 2020 to join and engage ecosystems and sectoral social partner
4. Launch of the Pact for Skills and Joint Declaration will be set in Berlin on next 10 November

Road to the Pact for Skills



The ecosystems which are most affected by the health emergency will have priority in the agenda. These sectors are: Health, Construction, Automotive and Transport, and Tourism.

The launch will be followed by the implementation and monitoring and evaluation, as shown in the image below:



The role of clusters in the Pact for Skills

One main question of the following discussion was about the role clusters could play in the skills agenda. Since clusters are made up largely of SMEs, they are important to cover the whole value chain. They could be engaged both on a large scale as well as at national, regional and local level. André encourages the group to explore the possibilities of collaborations with potential partners.

Building on this point, it was pointed out that clusters should not be considered as isolated entities. They can also enter collaborations among themselves, making the network even stronger. It could be a good help to map - via the ECCP - the sectoral European networks of clusters in order to create cross-sectoral connections/initiatives at European scale. It was announced that the ERCI will have soon the possibility to profile itself on the new ECCP website as a sectorial network and interact with others.

The European Clusters Alliance offered formally their readiness to work on the skills agenda. They will establish a working group on the topic.

The role of educational and VET centres in the Pact for Skills

In the course of the discussion, it became clear that it is also needed to establish the role of the educational system in the Pact as it is the first promoter of the development of competences and skills related to green and digital themes.

Useful links

The participants shared the following links:

- catalogue of training services an Austrian cluster has set up: https://www.kunststoff-cluster.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Cluster/KC/2020/Statistische_Seiten/KC-Schulungskatalog2020_CoronaUpdate.pdf
- renewed webpage of the EU Europass: <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

2. IDENTIFICATION OF DISRUPTIONS

First disruption: increase in requests for digital skills due to Covid-19 pandemic

Evidence: The sanitary crisis of Covid-19 and the consequent lockdown imposed in all the countries around the world have forced companies to revolutionize their way of working. In many contexts, smart working has increased. This was possible thanks to a massive support of digital tools available for employees. However, digital skills are not always widespread in job contexts and the Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the need for companies to adapt fast on this front.

The main goal is to upskill and reskill people of working age, since the crisis has forced a reshaping of skills in many sectors. With the Covid-19 crisis, Europeans need digital skills more than ever.

Geographical impact: EU

Stage of value chain: Human Resources Management

Character of the disruption: lack of digital skills

Time frame: short-term

Recommendations:

- Up- and reskilling can be improved by many cross-sectoral initiatives. The agenda should not only focus on the sectors, but allow cross-sectoral collaboration and support the movement of people between sectors.
- The lockdown has generated a crisis of labour market in many sectors, creating many difficulties for young people. As provisioned in the skills agenda, they need to have opportunities to do apprenticeships.
- Online training has increased a lot during pandemic period. This developed needs to be monitored and included in the implementation of the agenda
- Sectors most affected by the crisis are: health, construction, automotive & transport and tourism. These sectors will take longer to be up- and reskilled and need special focus.

Second disruption: up-/reskilling difficulties for SMEs

Evidence: Training and up-/reskilling often represent a difficulty for SMEs because they have fewer resources available and must concentrate their efforts on other fronts. The big companies are those that benefit most from funds to support training, since they have more robust bureaucratic structures to request and obtain them. The result is that SMEs, which are the ones that need the support the most, are the ones that get the least. Clusters can help in this point.

Geographical impact: EU

Stage of value chain: Human Resources Management

Character of the disruption: lack of opportunities in training programs for SMEs

Time frame: short and mid term

EU action needed:

- **Coordination:** partnerships must be created at European level, but then cross-sectoral and local/regional collaborations must be established. ECA can support in all actions

Recommendations:

- Clusters should be included in the implementation of the skills agenda. One of their tasks should be to support SMEs to access funding.
- Methods and tools (e.g. KPIs) for evaluating and monitoring the evolution of skills should be better conceived and structured
- Industrial associations, which provide training programs, should be considered for cross-sectoral collaborations