



PACT for SKILLS

Report from the roundtable

Pact for Skills Roundtable with Commissioners Schmit and Breton for the Digital Ecosystem

The high-level roundtable on skills for the digital ecosystem, chaired by Commissioners Schmit and Breton on 19 July 2021, brought together senior representatives of industry and sectoral organisations, as well as educational and training organisations. The objective was to discuss and provide top-level political momentum to the development of partnerships and lay the ground for a Pact for Skills in the digital ecosystem. The discussion aimed at identifying skills gaps and deficiencies whilst reflecting on ways to address them by mobilising relevant stakeholders to create skills partnerships under a dedicated framework.

All digital ecosystem stakeholders expressed their interest in working together with the Commission to develop concrete commitments that take a forward-looking approach to develop skills training and match supply with demand. There was a general agreement that skills shortages exist in many areas within the digital ecosystems and is important to address them.

In line with the Pact for Skills, industry representatives presented examples of existing initiatives on skills, and sectoral associations underlined the peculiarities of the ecosystem.

Main ideas stated by participants during the roundtable:

- Digital skills bottlenecks of SMEs make them vulnerable to cyberattacks and reduce their competitiveness. Data protection and cybersecurity skills development is fundamental and can be facilitated with the creation, for example, of competence hubs for shared learning.
- The development and broad-scale deployment of 5G, which is essential for growth and digital leadership, require the need of a skilled workforce in this field.
- The data-driven economy requires new digital skills and thus new ways of educate.

- Digital skills are key to human capital development and new technologies should also be introduced to public administrations and to better address different age segments in the workforce.
- Digital skills are important for all partners within value chains. The focus must be on long-term customer success, i.e. demand for skills. Product development and skills training go hand in hand.
- Upskilling shall fit workers' need and must be developed in a life-long learning framework perspective. Particular attention should be devoted to middle-skilled workers, which are disappearing in Europe. Need to guarantee to workers the security that their skills will not become useless, and this requires incentivising skills pathways for up- and reskilling.
- Industry 4.0 development requires personalising learning pathways, including for soft skills. The creation of innovative learning material is important, as are public-private partnerships at all levels.
- Disruptive innovation requires strong entrepreneurial ecosystems to be profited. Education is essential for young entrepreneurs; strategic thinking and strong skills partnerships therefore become more important by the day.
- The digital skills of women in innovative technologies remain a largely untapped potential, so their inclusion must be fostered.
- Regulators and industries joint sandboxes and lighthouse projects offer interesting co-learning channels. Real use cases are key for learning.

