



EAfa 10 YEARS



European Alliance for Apprenticeships

Action Plan 2024

Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion

1. Overview of activities

EAfA 2024 Activities - Overview	
Learning tools	
Toolkit	One toolkit will be published on the integration of digital skills in apprenticeships as a follow-up to the Country Recommendations (CR) on digital education and skills (incl. AR/VR, AI, deep tech, with examples from ESF+) (<i>October</i>)
Fact-sheets	Three fact-sheets focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Transversal skills (<i>February / March</i>) ▶ Support to SMEs to offer apprenticeships (<i>September</i>) ▶ Awareness raising (guidance/outreach) on apprenticeships (<i>December</i>)
Webinars	Two webinars with experts and practitioners to discuss together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Apprenticeships in the tourism and hospitality sector (<i>April</i>) ▶ A sectorial view on green apprenticeships (<i>November</i>)
In-person events	
High-level event	<p>The High-level event in 2024 will explore how apprenticeships can be used to unleash untapped potential to address existing and future labour shortages. In particular, it will focus on the outreach, activation and guidance to underrepresented groups as NEETs, women, people with disabilities and third-country nationals, including adults. It will gather speakers from the Commission, key stakeholders, EAfA members and apprentices.</p> <p>Brussels, <i>May / June</i></p> <p>150 participants</p>
Get-Together	<p>The EAfA Get Together event takes place back-to-back with the High-Level event. The event is a valuable opportunity for members to network, explore cooperation opportunities and share good practices with each other. It is organised collaboratively with members and the EAfA communities.</p> <p>Brussels, <i>May / June</i></p>

	70 participants
European Apprentices Network (EAN) member meeting	<p>The European Apprentices Network member meeting takes place back-to-back with the High-level event. The meeting is an opportunity for the network to connect with and understand the main concerns of apprentices, taking stock of how EU policy can help address the main challenges faced by apprentices.</p> <p>Brussels, <i>May / June</i> 35 - 50 participants</p>
Regional seminar co-organised with the European Training Foundation (ETF)	<p>The EAfA stakeholder meeting is co-organised with the European Training Foundation (ETF) in an ETF country. The event will explore opportunities for developing and implementing apprenticeship systems in EU Member States and partner countries.</p> <p>Host country to be defined, <i>October / November</i> 100 participants</p>
EAfA communities	
<p>Existing communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Learning mobility of apprentices ▶ Social inclusion and gender equality ▶ Green and digital transitions ▶ Role of cities and regions in fostering apprenticeships <p>Second call for launching new communities (Spring 2024)</p>	
Website	
<p>EAfA will publish 2-3 news items a month focussing on EAfA members and Champions (spotlight articles), event/webinar promotion and recaps, thematic news items (skills and labour market as topics, for example) and quizzes. EAfA will also publish a monthly stakeholder article, for example, success stories, good practices, examples of ESF+ and Erasmus+ funding for apprenticeships, and social partner cooperation.</p> <p>Examples of specific topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EU Parents Association and their opinion on apprenticeships ▶ EAN and their work on well-being and mental health ▶ Apprenticeships in rural areas ▶ Sectoral Social Partners and apprenticeships 	

Online library of tools and resources

EaFA will add up to eight items to the online library on a monthly basis, including quality materials, practical tools and guidance on apprenticeship to help EaFA members and key stakeholders in designing and delivering quality and effective apprenticeships.

Newsletter

The EaFA quarterly newsletter will update members and supporters on:

- ▶ News
- ▶ Upcoming events
- ▶ Welcome to new members
- ▶ Member of the month (linked to upcoming articles)
- ▶ Country of the month (linked to upcoming articles)
- ▶ Online library
- ▶ Past activities

Social media

EaFA LinkedIn Group

Up to 16 new posts will be published each month on the LinkedIn group.
Content on the EaFA LinkedIn group is tailored to the EaFA community and designed to encourage online conversation around EaFA membership, pledges and thematic topics. The group also welcomes new EaFA members to the community.

EU Social social media accounts (X and Facebook)

Up to four posts monthly published on the EU Social social media channels will improve the visibility and awareness of EaFA via key social media platforms X and Facebook.

Advertising campaigns

The EaFA paid advertising campaigns will promote EaFA with the aim of increasing membership, newsletter sign-ups and pledges.

Annual survey

The EAfA annual monitoring survey is an annual exercise among EAfA members to capture the progress made on their pledges and achievements, as well as to get their feedback on EAfA's past and upcoming activities. The survey takes place yearly in September. (*September*)

Annual communications action plan

The communications strategy will be supplemented by an annual Communication Action Plan with detailed actions for the upcoming year. The Communication action plan will be coordinated with DG EMPL's overall communication strategy 2022 - 2025 to avoid overlaps and ensure synergies. The 2024 communication action plan will be drafted in February 2024 and will include a detailed overview of the EAfA communication activities, channels and a timeline of activities.

2. Introduction

This document outlines activities and topics that will be implemented by the Apprenticeship Support Services in 2024 in line with The European Alliance for Apprenticeships' (EAfA) objectives and priorities.

The Alliance unites governments and key stakeholders with the objectives of strengthening the quality, supply and overall image of apprenticeships across Europe, as well as the mobility of apprentices. These aims are promoted through commitments made by national governments and voluntary pledges from stakeholders involved, with different roles, in apprenticeships.

On 9 May 2023, the European Commission launched the **European Year of Skills (EYS)**, which will run until 8 May 2024 with the aim of promoting skills policies and investments to support companies in addressing labour shortages for a better skilled and adaptable workforce in Europe. The importance of skills for the European Union's agenda for the upcoming year was further highlighted by the European Commission President's *State of the Union* speech in September 2023.

The EYS and its related activities have given a concrete boost to the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan targets of 78 % employment rate and 60 % of adults participating in up- and reskilling each year by 2030. By bringing together governments, social partners, businesses, chambers, regions, youth organisations, VET providers and think tanks to promote quality apprenticeships, the EAfA has made a direct contribution to these objectives and will continue, throughout 2024, to support the Pillar's long-term goals.

In line with this overarching goal, since the launch of the renewed EAfA in July 2020, the Alliance has addressed the following **six priorities**:

1. Encouraging commitment among Member States and companies to quality and effective apprenticeships, including by fostering national apprenticeship coalitions;
2. Incentivising support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in providing a stable supply of quality and effective apprenticeships;
3. Mobilising local and regional authorities as catalysts for apprenticeships within the local business environment;
4. Strengthening social dialogue through more active involvement by national social partner organisations;
5. Proactively engaging European sectoral social dialogue committees on apprenticeships, with a view to obtaining agreement on joint sectoral pledges;
6. Supporting the representation of apprentices in Member States by relaunching the European Apprentices Network (EAN).

Important horizontal issues such as the green and digital transitions, gender, social inclusion, mobility, and the internationalisation of vocational education and training will also continue to be addressed through the activities delivered by EAfA in 2024.

3. Three areas of services



3.1 Pledges and National Commitments

Following the [Council Declaration of 15 October 2013](#) on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, 40 countries have submitted concrete commitments on their next steps to increase the quantity, quality and supply of apprenticeships. This includes 27 EU Member States, nine Candidate countries (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye) and all four EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland). Since 2021, EAfA opened for membership to potential candidate countries, Eastern partnership countries and Neighbourhood South countries. In this framework, Armenia has been the latest country to officially join the Alliance in October 2023.

EAfA also welcomes pledges by stakeholders, companies, VET providers, social partners, chambers and other intermediaries across Europe willing to contribute to strengthening the supply, quality and/or attractiveness of apprenticeships, as well as mobility of apprentices. By the end of 2023, EAfA received 424 pledges¹.

All [national commitments](#) and [pledges](#) are published on the EAfA website.

New pledges

Measures to increase awareness of apprenticeships and EAfA will be put in place to increase the number of pledges:

- ▶ **Mobilise EAfA members:** members are the main asset of the EAfA, they contribute to moving the network forward and can help widen the Alliance by promoting it within their network. About 90 % of the respondents to the 2022-2023 EAfA monitoring survey indicated their availability to promote the EAfA within their network. These members can be mobilised by developing material that can be easily shared such as: presentations, infographics, factsheets etc. New networking opportunities such as the EAfA Communities can also be an effective way to increase membership through inviting the networks of the Community Leads to join the Communities and

¹ Number of pledges up until December 2023.

the EAfA.

- ▶ **Specific stakeholder or sector targeting** should be included in promoting EAfA, as done in 2022 with the campaign and the event targeting the rail sector, resulting in 9 new pledges. In 2023, paid advertising campaigns were carried out targeting people and organisations in the care/social economy and construction sectors.
- ▶ **Promote in-person events to specific possible pledgers:** The events have the potential to inspire new stakeholders to join the Alliance, as new members are invited to participate in person. Targeted efforts to attract potential new members to join the EAfA should be made in the months leading up to an in-person event.
- ▶ **Organise pledge campaigns** as done for Ukrainian refugees and for green and digital apprenticeships. The possibility of pledging green and digital apprenticeships was included in the pledge template in 2020. A campaign for pledging apprenticeship places for Ukrainian refugees was launched in October 2022. A new pledge campaign could be launched in 2024 and followed up with spot-light promotion of received pledges further inspiring and encouraging new pledges.

Pledge renewals

The pledge renewal process was launched in April 2023 alongside the implementation of the new pledge form. Existing members who joined the Alliance before 2023 were asked to refresh their commitment to EAfA and update the content and contact details of their pledge through the new online form. The new form also allows selecting relevant actions and related KPIs under each of the main EAfA objectives to allow gathering better information about members' activities and how EAfA can support their work.

Members that have not updated their pledges should be contacted. Some 78 EAfA members have updated their pledges in 2023. Efforts should be focused on encouraging members who joined the EAfA before 2022 and who are expected to refresh their commitment to the Alliance by submitting a renewed pledge this year.

As done in 2023, further reminders will be sent to these members for the renewal of their pledges. The participation in future in-person events of members who renewed their pledges should also be favoured to stimulate a higher number of renewals.

National Commitments

In 2023, eight countries updated their commitment to the EAfA (Belgium FR, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden), while Armenia became the 40th country to join the Alliance through a national commitment. Countries that have not updated their commitments should be contacted, with targeted efforts focusing on countries who previously expressed interest in renewing their commitment and countries who joined the Alliance before 2021.

More EAfA Partner Countries are expected to join the European Alliance for Apprenticeships with a national commitment (potential partner countries are Eastern Partnership and Southern Neighbourhood countries).

EAfA member survey

The EAfA monitoring survey is an annual exercise to capture members' progress on their pledge and get their feedback on EAfA past and upcoming activities based on their needs and interests. The next survey will take place in September 2024 and the report will be published by December 2024.

The survey report will highlight important achievements and results by pledgers that could be selected to be presented in articles on the EAfA website and in the EAfA LinkedIn group. The Apprenticeship Support Services contractor will implement a user-friendly visual tracking of progress under pledges and commitments to be made available on the EAfA webpage.

3.2 Networking

Creating networking opportunities for EAfA members is one of the key objectives of EAfA. Networking allows members to exchange ideas and collaborate on projects. It also allows them to share good practices and to learn from each other. The increased availability and use of digital networking tools have allowed for a multiplication of networking opportunities across borders over the past years and have contributed to limiting the environmental impact associated with in-person events. In this context, it is important to strike the right balance between in-person and online events and activities. While participation in in-person events remains limited to a fraction of EAfA members, online opportunities allow for broader participation.

In-person events

EAfA will arrange two major yearly events:

► High-level conference

This conference will take place in Brussels in May or June 2024 with indicative in-person participation of 150 attendees. In 2024, it will focus on apprenticeships as a tool to unleash untapped potential, linking to the issue of labour shortages and the need for the activation of specific groups.

Possible topics include:

- Outreach, activation and guidance to NEETs
- Attracting women in sector where they are under-represented
- People with disabilities
- Third-country nationals
- Adult learning

Two meetings will be arranged back-to-back with the event:

- a Get-Together in-person networking event for EAfA members (with about 70 participants)
- a European Apprentice Network (EAN) member meeting (with about 35 to 50 participants)

► EAfA-ETF seminar for candidate countries and EAfA Partner countries

In 2024, this will be the 9th annual seminar to be organised by EAfA in cooperation with the European Training Foundation (ETF). The event is foreseen to take place in October or November 2024 and welcome around 120 participants. The main purpose will be to enable learning and networking among candidate countries, EAfA partner countries and EAfA members: governments, individual employers and employers' associations, chambers and VET providers. This type of event raises awareness and promotes cooperation and exchange of experience, including with third countries.

Delegations will comprise several members from each candidate country and EAfA partner country (8 countries in 2023 joined the seminar) having submitted a commitment to EAfA. Additionally, participants from the host country, observer countries with a potential interest in joining the Alliance and a number of EAfA/Member States will be invited. EU-level institutions and relevant stakeholders will contribute with examples of good practices on priority themes, responding to the challenges identified in the candidate countries. In addition, five representatives of the European Apprentices Network will be invited to the seminar.

EAfA Communities

Four thematic EAfA Communities were launched on the occasion of the 2023 High-Level Event. Their aim is to complement and deepen the existing EAfA networking opportunities, and to stimulate interactivity and bottom-up engagement among EAfA members sharing similar interests. They act as a tool for EAfA members to exchange knowledge and best practices, and build strong collaborations.

Communities primarily rely on web-based collaborative environments to communicate and connect, with a focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to foster the quality and availability of apprenticeships. Participation in the Communities is open solely to EAfA members.

New interests from EAfA in joining a Community will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis. Members can express their interest by sending an email to EAfAmembers@ecorys.com.

The current² four Communities are the following:

- ▶ **Community on the Learning Mobility of Apprentices** – Leading organisation: Euro App Mobility
- ▶ **Community on Social Inclusion and Gender Equality** – Leading organisation: Fundació Catalana de l'Esplai
- ▶ **Community on the Green and Digital Transitions** – Leading organisation: ESB Networks
- ▶ **Community on the Role of Cities and Regions in fostering apprenticeship** – Leading organisations: European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), Fundación Bertelsmann and the Metropolitan City of Rome

Each Community will organise meetings within its members to share best practices and decide on future activities (e.g. mappings, repository of best practices, etc.). More Communities can be established in 2024, depending on the needs and interests of the wider EAfA Community.

LinkedIn group

EAfA has a large LinkedIn group with nearly 3 500 members³ and counting. The group mostly functions as a channel for promoting EAfA activities but should be developed further to increase interaction. In 2023, the group was changed to a LinkedIn public group, allowing everyone (not just group members) to view and reshare posts published. Online discussions were introduced in the group, whereby group members were invited to discuss EAfA activities and wider DG EMPL activities. This year, the LinkedIn group has seen 185 posts and 1 933 engagements and counting.

3.3 Knowledge sharing

During the past five years EAfA has produced a large number of online activities (e.g. webinars, factsheets, newsletters,

² Up until December 2023.

³ 3 444 members up until end-November 2023.

etc.) covering all EAfA's objectives and priorities with the support of the Apprenticeship Support Services.

Website

All activities in EAfA from the last five years have been organised according to the EAfA objectives and priorities in a Knowledge hub ([Activities Hub webpage](#)) on the EAfA webpage. This hub is constantly updated with the new activities implemented. In particular, it will contribute to the promotional campaign for the high-level event in May/June.

► News articles

The EAfA website will remain a central hub of activity to promote EAfA and membership benefits. Articles will cover topics relevant to apprentices and training providers (for example, skills and labour in relation to the green and digital transitions). Articles will also promote upcoming events (both online and physical), summarise key insights from past events and provide useful tips and tricks for the EAfA community (for example, quizzes and member spotlights, or promoting the EAfA Champions). The themes of the news items will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and content will be adapted in line with EU priorities and news announcements.

► Stakeholder articles

One stakeholder article will be published per month on the website. The article will focus on success stories, good practices, examples of ESF+ and Erasmus+ funding for apprenticeships, and/or social partner cooperation. Examples of specific topics that could be included are:

- EU Parents Association and their opinion on apprenticeships
- EAN and their work on wellbeing and mental health
- Apprenticeships in rural areas
- Sectoral Social Partners and apprenticeships

Online library

The online library on the EAfA website includes guidelines, studies/research, toolkits and examples of best practices. Materials are collected in a variety of EU languages and from across the EU and other EAfA member countries, as well as EU-level and international-level resources. As of December 2023, there are 573 entries.

About 8 items will be uploaded monthly in 2024, encompassing a variety of sources and quality materials, such as practical tools and guidance on apprenticeship to help EAfA members and key stakeholders in designing and delivering quality and effective apprenticeships. The sources uploaded will be promoted through the newsletters and LinkedIn.

Learning tools

► Factsheets

3 factsheets are planned to be drafted, published and promoted in 2024, on the following topics:

- Transversal skills (March 2024)
- Support to SMEs to offer apprenticeships (September 2024)
- Awareness raising (guidance/outreach) on apprenticeships (December 2024)

► Toolkit

An online toolkit on the integration of digital skills in apprenticeships as follow-up to the Country Recommendations (CR) on digital education and skills (including AR/VR, AI, deep tech, and examples of relevant projects implemented through ESF+) will be developed and published in October 2024.

► **Webinars**

Two webinars of approximately 60 minutes, with the involvement of 2-4 thematic experts each will be streamed live as well as recorded and included in the EU Social YouTube channel. The foreseen topics of the 2024 webinars are the following:

- Apprenticeships in the tourism and hospitality sector in cooperation with DG GROW (April 2024)
- A sectorial view on green apprenticeships (November 2024)

Newsletter

EAFa will publish quarterly newsletters that will include:

- News
- Upcoming events
- Welcome to new members
- Member of the month (linked to upcoming articles)
- Country of the month (linked to upcoming articles)
- Online library
- Past activities
- Other non-EAFa events related to apprenticeships

Social media (LinkedIn group)

Up to 16 new posts (including visuals and video clips) will be published monthly on the EAFa LinkedIn group as well as 2-4 posts for the *EU Social* social media accounts (X and Facebook) and ad campaigns for 2-3 EAFa events and activities.

The posts will include, for example:

- Promotion of events and activities
- Promotion of newsletters
- Promotion of content on online library
- Welcoming new members to the group
- Shining the light on members
- Shining the light on countries
- Celebration of dates connected to apprenticeships (Youth Skills Day, Youth Day, Women's day etc)
- Polls

4. Calendar

January	February	March	April
		Factsheet: Transversal skills Newsletter 1/4	Webinar: Apprenticeships in the tourism and hospitality sector
May	June	July - August	
	High-Level event Get Together Event EAN member meeting	<i>Summer break</i>	
	Newsletter 2/4		
September	October	November	December
Factsheet: Support to SMEs to offer apprenticeships Newsletter 3/4	EaFA-ETF seminar Toolkit: Integration of digital skills	Webinar: A sectorial view on green apprenticeships	Factsheet: Awareness raising (guidance/outreach) on apprenticeships Newsletter 4/4

