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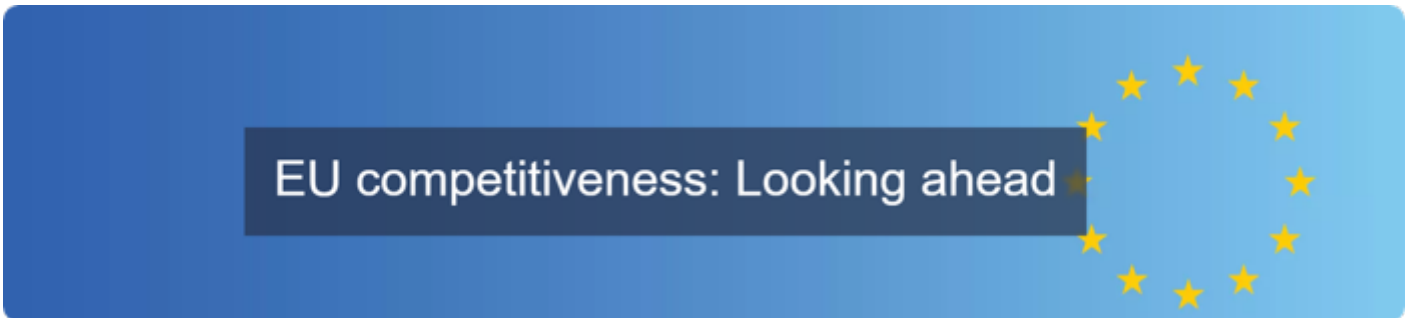


Agrifood
Ecosystem

Newsletter No.2: July-September

Advancing Skills for the Agri-Food
Ecosystem Partnership

NEWS



Draghi’s report highlights Pact for Skills in boosting EU competitiveness

On 9 September 2024, Mario Draghi, former President of the European Central Bank, published his much-anticipated report, ‘The future of European competitiveness’. This insightful document outlines the key challenges facing industries and companies within the Single Market and presents Draghi's vision for strengthening the EU’s competitive edge in the global economy. The report highlights the Pact for Skills as one of the successful initiatives driving Europe's competitiveness by addressing upskilling and reskilling needs across key sectors.

For a deeper understanding of Draghi's recommendations, [read the full report](#).



New Commissioner for Skills

Roxana Mînzatu has been appointed as the new Commissioner for Skills. In her role as Executive Vice-President for People, Skills, and Preparedness, Commissioner Mînzatu will lead the European Commission's efforts to strengthen skill development, with a focus on addressing the growing demand for digital and green competencies across sectors, including agri-food.

Her mandate centers on enhancing the European Union's workforce capabilities, ensuring readiness for future challenges, and bridging the skills gap through targeted programs and initiatives.

For more details on Commissioner Mînzatu's responsibilities and goals, read her full [mission letter](#).



Blueprint Alliance: new project announced in agri-food

The selection of eight proposals for a Blueprint Alliance following the Erasmus+ 2024 call for proposals has been [announced](#) during on the 1st of October. The Erasmus+ project AGRIFOODSKILLS is the first project that has the Pact for Skills at its heart and has been designed to develop an observatory for data on upskilling and reskilling of the sector, among other actions, gathering many relevant partners with high experience in the agri-food sector.



European Higher Education Sector Observatory

The first edition of the European Higher Education Sector Observatory ([EHESO](#)) newsletter has been released, providing valuable updates and insights into the European higher education landscape. EHESO is a centralized platform that integrates EU data and transparency tools, offering a comprehensive overview of the sector. The newsletter introduces the four key EHESO tools, designed to support various stakeholder groups, and highlights significant upcoming events, including the launch of the Scoreboard and the first training sessions. The Higher Education News section also covers the latest developments and reports shaping the future of education across Europe.

For more information or to subscribe, [visit this page](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Technical Support Instrument 2025 call

The Technical Support Instrument 2025 call aims to provide Member States with technical assistance for reform projects implementation in 2025, focusing on areas such as green

and digital transition, public and private finance, migration, health, and education. This call is open for applications from 24 April 2024, with a deadline of 31 October 2024. The European Commission allocates €864 million for the period of 2021-2027 to support Member States in designing and implementing reforms in various policy areas as part of the RRF/TSI funding programme. [Further information can be found here](#).

Specialised Education Programmes in Key Capacity Areas

The Specialised Education Programmes in Key Capacity Areas aim to support excellence in higher education institutions, train digital specialists of the future, and increase the capacity of educational offerings in advanced digital skills. This call is open for applications from 4 July 2024, with a deadline of 21 November 2024. The European Commission will provide up to €55,00,000 per project under the Digital Europe Programme. Proposals must address the design and delivery of advanced digital skills programmes in areas such as virtual worlds, edge computing, quantum computing, photonics, robotics, and automation. [Details available here](#).

Other funding opportunities

There are relevant funding opportunities for skills under current programmes running from 2021 until 2027. Those include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Just Transition Fund (JTF), and Recovery and Resilience Facility funds. Further information is easily accessible through the [Pact for Skills funding opportunities website](#).

KEY PROJECTS

I-RESTART



The [I-RESTART Erasmus+ project](#) has conducted focus groups across several European countries to identify the food industry's current and future skills needs. Experts from Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain participated in these discussions between March and May 2023.

Key skill needs were identified in several areas:

- **Sustainability:** Skills in resource management, environmental impact measurement, and circular production are essential, with a growing need for environmental labeling on food products.
- **Business and Soft Skills:** Leadership, teamwork, and innovation management were emphasized as critical to driving progress and maintaining efficient operations.
- **Digitalization:** Data management, IT proficiency, and familiarity with advanced digital tools like robotics are becoming increasingly important for the modern workforce.
- **One Health:** Food safety, security, and nutrition knowledge are vital, and continuous training is necessary to address these areas effectively.

The findings will guide the development of training programs, ensuring the agri-food workforce is prepared for future challenges.

#LEADFARM 5.0



#LEADFARM 5.0

The [#LEADFARM5.0](#) project, coordinated by Irish Coops (ICOS) and with participation from CONFAGRI, aims to help the agri-food cooperative sector embrace digital transformation. As technologies like Big Data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) become central to addressing societal challenges, the agri-food sector risks falling behind. #LEADFARM5.0 offers an innovative **online training program** tailored to cooperatives' digital needs.

Supported by the Erasmus+ Programme, the project provides essential resources such as:

- **Competency model and skills matrix:** Tools to assess and close skills gaps.
- **Roadmap to society 5.0:** A guide to digital transformation.
- **Training materials:** Focused on ICT, sustainability, and management.
- **Game-based learning platform** and **digital chatbot:** Engaging, interactive learning tools.

These resources are available through the [DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORM](#), where members can register for free and access downloadable materials tailored for both in-person and online training.

Watch the explainer video [here](#) to learn more about #LEADFARM5.0.

AI Skills4CT: Advancing Digital Competencies with Artificial Intelligence

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



AI Skills4
CircularTransition

The [AI Skills4CT](#) project, supported by the Erasmus+ Programme, aims to equip educators and trainers with the necessary skills to incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into teaching and training practices. As AI continues to revolutionize industries and education, this project focuses on bridging the gap by enhancing the digital competencies of educators, ensuring they can effectively integrate AI tools into their curriculum.

AI Skills4CT offers a range of resources and tools to help educators stay ahead of the curve in AI technology. These include:

- **Comprehensive training materials:** Covering the essential aspects of AI for education.
- **Interactive learning modules:** Designed to improve understanding and application of AI in various teaching contexts.
- **Guides for educators:** Helping trainers develop AI-focused curricula tailored to different educational settings.

For more information about the project and to access its resources, visit the official website [here](#).

AGRIFOOD4Future



The [AGRIFOOD4FUTURE Erasmus+ project](#) has launched new initiatives aimed at enhancing skills and driving innovation in the agri-food sector. Interested in contributing to the transformation of this dynamic industry? Here's a look at some key programs and activities you can get involved in:

1. **Student mobility program**

The project's [mobility platform](#) offers students international internship opportunities with companies across France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Greece, Belgium, and Portugal.

2. **Programs for innovators**

- [Open-innovation & challenge-based program](#)

Gathering challenges from companies and farms, the project seeks innovative solutions. Both innovators and companies with challenges are encouraged to apply.

- [Test-farm innovation program](#) Connecting startups with farmers to implement cutting-edge solutions that promote sustainable and efficient agriculture.

3. [Opportunities for SMEs and farmers](#)

The capacity building program helps SMEs and farmers adopt new technologies, while the technical assistance program offers personalized support in digitalization and decarbonization.

NATIONAL AGRI-FOOD PACT FOR SKILLS

The Irland experience



General objective:

The primary goal is to promote and facilitate the dissemination of new agrifood training policies, helping Ireland's agri-food workforce stay competitive and innovative in the face of global challenges.

Specific objectives:

- **Innovative training model:** Ireland is experimenting with a new model of training that includes data collection, organizational analysis, and the implementation of tailored training interventions. This approach aims to assess the effectiveness and replicability of these interventions across various sectors.
- **Partnership model:** Ireland is also fostering innovative partnerships to develop multiple projects within the Pact for Skills framework, ensuring these models are scalable and adaptable.

For more information, visit [Skillnet Ireland](#).

NEXT EVENTS



Pact for Skills Networking Event – October 23, 2024

Mark your calendar for the **Pact for Skills Networking Event** on **October 23, 2024**, from **10:00 to 15:00 CEST**. This exclusive event brings together members of the Pact to tackle common challenges in upskilling and reskilling, share insights, and explore new opportunities for collaboration.

The event agenda features keynote presentations from the European Commission, practical sessions on increasing your visibility and forming partnerships, as well as an engaging panel discussion on '**Remote Training, Learning, and Upskilling**'. Members will also have access to networking tools to connect with relevant stakeholders in the field.

For more details and to register, visit the **official event page** [here](#).



ECOMONDO: the Green and Circular Economy event

Ecomondo, Europe's premier event on the green and circular economy, will take place from **5-8 November 2024** in Rimini, Italy. The event brings together experts, policymakers, and innovators to explore the latest trends, technologies, and strategies in sustainability, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental innovation.

Ecomondo offers a platform for attendees to network, learn, and engage in discussions on how to drive Europe's transition to a more sustainable and circular economy.

For more information and to register for the event, visit the official **Ecomondo website** [here](#).



EFFoST conference 2024

The **EFFoST Conference 2024**, a leading event in food science and technology, will take place from **12-14 November 2024** in Bruges, Belgium. This year's theme focuses on innovations and breakthroughs that can drive the future of the food sector.

One of the key sessions to watch is **Interactive Session IV: Food Science and Technologists Discuss Their Future Educational Program Needs**, organized in collaboration with the ISEKI Food Association. The session will address the declining interest among students in higher education programs specializing in food science and technology. Through expert testimonies, participants will explore ways to make these fields more attractive to the younger generation.

Attendees will engage with academics, young scientists, and industry experts in a lively debate on how to reshape educational programs to meet the evolving needs of the food industry.

For more information and to register for the event, visit the official **EFFoST Conference website** [here](#).



SAVE THE DATE:
Social Dialogue for Skills

On Tuesday 19th November (10 am to 12 pm, Brussels time), all Agrifood pact for skills members are invited to the online event of the Social Dialogue for Skills project. The project is strongly linked to the development of our Pact at national level. The event will therefore focus mainly on the initiatives arising from several Member States. We will also take the opportunity to update all members on the newest developments of our Pact and offer the opportunity to learn more about the social dialogue in our sector.

The meeting will be held fully online with interpretation in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Polish. Registrations will open in the coming days.

HOW TO JOIN THE PACT

It is important to quote the Agri-food LSP registration number on the application. The number to quote is **916**.

[Download the guidelines.](#)

SHARE WITH US

[Please complete this form](#) to share your events, news, or project outcomes with the Pact for Skills members.