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Agrifood
Ecosystem

An initiative of the European Commission

Advancing Skills for the Agri-Food Ecosystem Partnership

NEWS

Save the Date: Agrifood Pact for Skills Annual Event 2026

21 April 2026 | Brussels



The **Agrifood Pact for Skills Annual Event 2026** “*Shaping Skills for the Future*” will bring together stakeholders from across Europe’s agri-food ecosystem to shape the future of skills and talent development.

This year’s edition will focus on inspiring and attracting the next generation of professionals to careers in agri-food, while addressing the sector’s evolving skill needs.

The programme will feature high-level dialogues, project showcases, and interactive exchanges, highlighting successful initiatives and EU-funded actions that make the agri-food sector more attractive, future-proof, and inclusive.

Join industry leaders, educators, policymakers, and young professionals to co-create actionable solutions supporting the twin transition and the sector’s long-term resilience.

[Register here](#) - More details to follow, stay tuned!

Geopa urges stronger support for agriculture at the European Social Summit



On 22nd October, Geopa, the European Employers’ Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations, represented by President Claudia Merlino, participated in the [Tripartite Social Summit](#) at the Council of the European Union, advocating for a robust agricultural sector. Summit participants, including President Ursula von der Leyen and the President of the European Council António Costa, received Geopa’s “[Growing Europe’s Strengths](#)” paper, urging EU leaders to prioritise agriculture amidst growing challenges. In her speech, the President **called on European leaders to decisively invest in the digital and skills transition** for the sector, highlighting the need for safer, greener, more attractive and competitive jobs. The President added that digital **investment must be supported by strong skills development and education-to-employment pathways**.

Two new Pact for Skills RSPs upskilling workers to drive regional competitiveness

The Pact for Skills launched **two new Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)** that aim to build a long-term, coordinated approach to upskilling and reskilling across the regions' agri-food ecosystems.

The [Campania RSP](#) aims to make agri-food jobs more attractive to young people and sustainably grow the sector and help smaller agricultural producers through opportunities for lifelong learning, skills certification and digitalisation.

Similarly, the [Piemonte RSP](#) is building a long-term culture of upskilling and reskilling for the region's agri-food sector. The RSP is focusing on vocational education and training to deal with the changing job profiles of workers due to factors like seasonal work, automation and changes to the environment.

[Explore the new partnerships](#)

Agri-food Pact for Skills featured in EU Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture

The European Commission's recent *Communication on the Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture*, explicitly recognises the role of the **Agri-food Pact for Skills** in supporting upskilling and reskilling for the green and digital transitions.

The Pact is presented as a key initiative under the current MFF, offering knowledge sharing, funding advice, and collaboration opportunities. Alongside the Pact, the **Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence** are also mentioned for their contribution to addressing skills challenges in agriculture.

Looking ahead, the Communication underlines the need for alignment with CAP instruments and continued support through initiatives such as **EIP-AGRI**, the **Talent Platform**, and **Smart Specialisation Strategies**. These tools are essential to help young farmers and new entrants adopt innovative technologies, strengthen rural resilience, and build attractive career paths in agri-food.

[Read the full Communication](#)
[More info on the Commission's strategy](#)

KEY PROJECTS



Co-funded by
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The [AGRIFOODSKILLS](https://www.agrifoodskills.eu) project continues to strengthen skills development across Europe's agrifood sector through the Pact for Skills Observatory.

In September 2025, the **Policy Forum 2050** gathered experts, policymakers, and industry leaders in Rome to discuss future skill needs, innovation priorities, and strategies for a more resilient agrifood system. Six **Position Papers**, covering entrepreneurship, crisis management, innovation, consumer trends, and policy recommendations, are now being finalized. Meanwhile, **training pilots** are addressing urgent skill needs in digital, green, deep-tech, and entrepreneurial areas, while **skills mapping and forecasting** activities are identifying current and future needs across production, food industry, and veterinary sectors.

The next AGRIFOODSKILLS **Annual Meeting** will take place in **Turin** on **27–28 January 2026**.

Learn more: www.agrifoodskills.eu



Co-funded by
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The Erasmus+ project [I-RESTART](https://www.erasmus-i-restart.eu) continues to advance reskilling and upskilling across Europe's agrifood, animal production, and veterinary sectors, as part of the **Agri-food Pact for Skills**.

In October, partners met at **Wageningen University & Research** to align next steps and strengthen collaboration, while a **Train-the-Trainer session** in the Netherlands prepared 26 trainers from 10 countries to deliver I-RESTART modules adapted to national contexts. **Pilot trainings** are currently taking place in eight countries, including a session hosted by **Aarhus University** on processed and ultra-processed foods, exploring impacts on health and sustainability through interactive learning.

I-RESTART provides **free online training modules** designed around flexible learning paths to help professionals and students build the skills needed for a more resilient and innovative agrifood sector.

Learn more: www.erasmus-i-restart.eu , [Training platform](#)



The [AGRIFOOD4FUTURE](#) project continues to deliver new opportunities for training, skills development, and exchange across Europe. Below are the latest highlights:

- **VET Courses:** The first pilot phase has started in Italy, Greece, and Spain, engaging students in practical learning experiences.
- **[Academic Semester Exchange:](#)** Calls for students from consortium universities are now open.
- **[Agricultural Advisors Training:](#)** A dedicated programme designed to support and upskill advisors in digital transformation and sustainable agriculture.
- **[MOOC on Digital Skills in the Agricultural Sector:](#)** An open online course for anyone interested in digitalisation and innovation in agriculture.

The project offers also VET and university students the chance to gain international work experience, strengthen professional networks, and enhance employability through internships with agri-food companies across Europe. [Apply here.](#)

Join the national Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) or thematic Working Groups. [Learn more here.](#)

SOCIAL DIALOGUE *for* SKILLS



After two years, the project reached a successful conclusion with its Final Conference in Lisbon, hosted by Confederação dos Agricultores de Portugal (CAP), the Portuguese member of Geopa. The event brought together more than 60 participants, including policymakers and key stakeholders, and focused on social dialogue and skills in Portuguese and European agriculture. Maria do Rosário Palma Ramalho, Portuguese Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, opened the event alongside Geopa President Claudia Merlino and CAP President Álvaro Mendonça e Moura.

The conference also marked an important step forward for collaboration, as it gathered the three national structures of the Agrifood Pact for Skills from Ireland, the Netherlands, and Italy, strengthening the shared commitment to skills development across Europe's agri-food sector.



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The FOODCastS podcast series explores the complex picture of the overall food system. The latest episodes, include a special "Chefs as catalysts of food systems series" featuring Anthony O'Toole and Ali Honour, and an episode on "How schools are shaping Europe's food future" with Katerina Riviou.

[Listen to all episodes here](#)

The FOODPathS project has released several key publications, offering valuable research and analysis for the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership. Recent titles include work on Partnerships for sustainable food and bioeconomy systems in Europe and Transforming food and agriculture through a systems approach.

[Explore and download all resources here](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for EU funding to support your upskilling and reskilling initiatives? The Pact for Skills can help!

The funding opportunities database and search tool is updated monthly with the latest open and upcoming calls from major EU programmes, including Erasmus+, Digital Europe, Horizon Europe, and Creative Europe.

You can browse by theme, sector, or programme to find the most relevant opportunities for your organisation.

[Explore the opportunities](#)

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.