

The Union of Skills

March 2025

#UnionOfSkills



Skills shortages and gaps are hindering EU competitiveness. Many people are falling behind as job requirements evolve, while businesses struggle to find people with the right skills and qualifications.



To address these challenges, the Union of Skills delivers a new approach, combining education, training and employment policies with a common vision of competitiveness.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

- There is a need to **increase access to skilled workers for SMEs**, as many report difficulties in recruitment.
- **Strengthening basic skills** in education is essential to ensure all students are equipped for the future, particularly in literacy, maths, science, digital skills and citizenship.
- **Shortages in STEM** are persisting, driven by low take-up among women.
- **Boosting digital skills** remains a priority for both adults and students, with efforts to expand training and participation in lifelong learning.
- Addressing demographic shifts is key, as the active **working-age population is decreasing**.
- **Encouraging more girls and women** to enter STEM and ICT fields remains important to close persistent gender gaps.

OUR GOALS:



Empower our people by enhancing skills to access quality jobs and navigate transitions

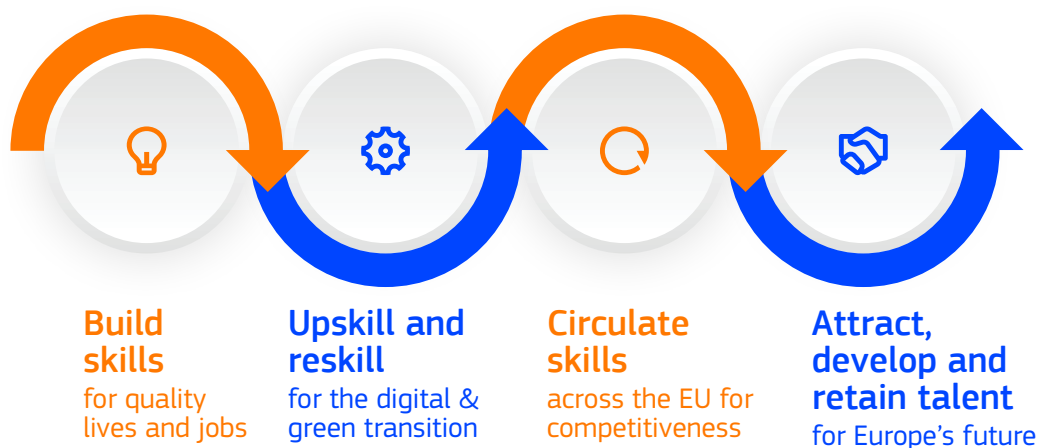


Enhance companies' competitiveness by helping them find the talent they need



Make skills portable across the EU, independently of where or how they were acquired

To achieve this, the Union of Skills sets out a plan to:



INITIATIVES



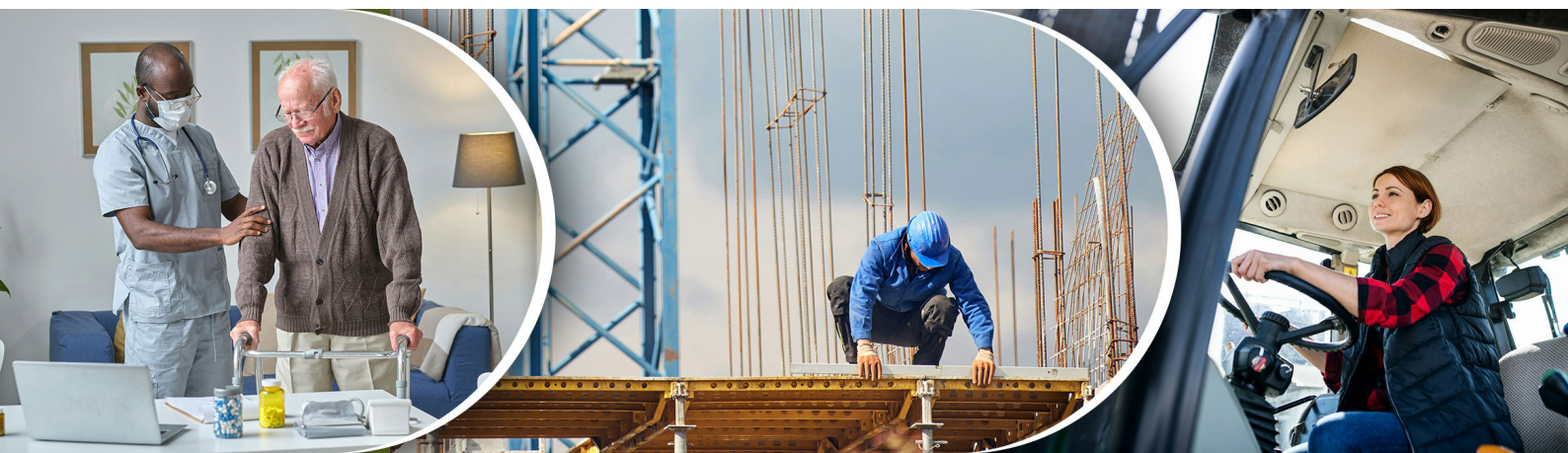
Building a solid foundation through education and training

- Boost basic skills from early years to adult learning.
↳ *Action Plan on Basic Skills*
- Ensure all children and young people leave school with adequate basic skills.
↳ *Basic Skills Support Scheme pilot*
- Foster excellence in STEM education and training.
↳ *STEM Education Strategic Plan*
- Make Vocational Education and Training (VET) more attractive, innovative, and inclusive.
↳ *EU VET Strategy*
- Tackle shortages, improve conditions, and boost careers for educators.
↳ *Teachers and Trainers Agenda*



Regular upskilling and reskilling as the new norm

- Upskill and reskill more workers in strategic sectors
↳ *Reinforced Pact for Skills*
- Provide skills for sectors undergoing transitions.
↳ *Review and strengthen EU Skills Academies*
- Help workers involved in restructuring processes. ↳
↳ *Skills Guarantee pilot*
- Train people for sectors with skills gaps.
↳ *University-business partnerships*



INITIATIVES



Free movement of knowledge and skilled people

- **Simplify recognition** of skills and qualifications across the EU.
↳ *Skills Portability Initiative*
- Improve the **free movement of learners** and workers.
↳ *European degree and European VET diploma*
- Strengthen cooperation between universities.
↳ *European Universities alliances*
- Enhance **pupil and teacher' mobility** across schools.
↳ *European School Alliances*
- Make Erasmus+ more **inclusive and accessible**.



Making the EU a magnet for talent

- Facilitate targeted recruitment of non-EU skilled professionals to address critical shortages.
↳ *EU Talent Pool*
- Attract **top students and researchers** from non-EU countries.
↳ *Visa Strategy*
- Offer competitive work conditions to attract top talents to Europe.
↳ *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Choose Europe pilot*

FUNDING

The EU is investing over **€150 billion*** to support people, businesses, education institutions and others to develop the **education and skills** needed for a thriving, competitive European economy.

*Estimation for 2021-2027 including RRF, ESF+, Erasmus+, ERDF, JTF, InvestEU.