



The European Year of Skills continues: Europe powered by skills and workforce development

Brussels, 17th of June 2024

The European Year of Skills just ended, casting a light on the necessity and opportunity ahead to grow a skilled workforce fit for Europe's multifaceted priorities.

We represent companies and professionals at the forefront of challenges ranging from re-industrialisation to digitalisation, energy transition and supply chain resilience. These megatrends are reshaping the labour market and creating new job opportunities. Despite our eagerness to recruit and train new talent, we are confronted with the following realities: the working-age population has decreased by nearly 10 million between 2009 and 2023¹, unemployment rates are at historic lows, and many workers experience a lack of purpose in their careers.

In this period of electoral and strategic redefinitions, we believe it is crucial to integrate further the labour agenda with the broader European agenda. Policymakers must address systemic skills and labour shortages as a top priority for Europe's transformation, so that the labour market is an enabler rather than an obstacle to realise the objectives set in Europe for the past 5 years. Furthermore, focusing on skills and workforce development is a significant opportunity to respond to European citizens and residents' aspiration to secure long-term, fulfilling careers.

Labour shortages already doubled between 2015 and 2021 in key sectors for the European green transition². Not only do we need to up and re-skill professionals, but we must attract and train much more candidates, especially in (much-needed) technical jobs which too often are viewed as a last resort option instead of a fast-evolving and durable opportunity.

To help break new ground, **we highlight two new skills provisions to be implemented this year by the Commission and Member States** under the revised Energy Efficiency Directive (Article 28):

- By 11 October 2024, the Commission shall, in cooperation with a group of experts nominated by Member States, set up a framework for or design a campaign to attract more people to energy efficiency professions while ensuring respect for the principle of non-discrimination. This unparalleled opportunity can turn the energy transition into a driver for meaningful, quality job creation.

¹ Communication: Labour and skills shortages in the EU: an action plan (2024)

² Communication: A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age (2023)

- By 31 December 2024, Member States shall assess the adequacy of qualification and certification schemes, as well as assess the gap between available and in demand professionals. This EU requirement paves the way for Member States to draw an informed balance on labour and skills shortages and set up effective policies to match their workforce with the energy transition's needs and opportunities.

Such provisions can lay the groundwork for a fundamental shift in the way we train and recruit professionals for all upcoming challenges, not only for energy efficiency goals.

The Signatories of this letter call on EU and national policymakers to put skills and workforce development on top of the agenda, so that Europe delivers on the above-mentioned megatrends:

- Commission and Member States should implement thoroughly and on time the skills provisions under the Energy Efficiency Directive;
- Policymakers should secure sufficient funding to support the rollout or scale-up of awareness campaigns;
- Member States should conduct a detailed and effective assessment of their current workforce for strategic sectors, and project future workforce growth needs;
- Member States should reform education and qualification systems to expand the candidate pool in strategic sectors, with a focus on technical education and careers. Such reforms must aim at developing up-to-date and high-quality curricula that create durable jobs.

We thank you for your attention to these defining matters. We look forward to your support and collaboration in these initiatives.

The co-signatories:

AVERE – the European Association for Electromobility, **CECAPI** – European committee of electrical installation equipment manufacturers, **EBC** – European Builders Confederation SMEs, **EHPA** – European Heat Pump Association, **EPB Center** – Energy Performance of Buildings Center, **EU-ASE** – European alliance to save energy, **EU.bac** – European Building Automation and Controls Association, **EUEW** – European union of electrical wholesalers, **Efficient Buildings Europe** (formerly EuroACE), **EuropaCable** – European association of cable manufacturers, **EuropeOn** – European association of electrical contractors, **GCP Europe** – the voice of efficient building engineering services, **International Copper Europe** – Copper industry in Europe, **Lighting Europe** – Trade association of the lighting industry in Europe, **REHVA** – Federation of European heating, ventilation and air conditioning associations, **SolarPower Europe** – European solar PV industry, **T&D Europe** – European grid technology providers, **Wind Europe** – European wind industry