

## News Skills Agenda underwhelming

The New Skills Agenda presented today by the European Commission covers many key issues, but contains little to convince EUROCHAMBRES that it represents an upgrade on similar initiatives over the last decade. Some new elements are nonetheless welcomed, notably measures aimed at the integration of refugees.

EUROCHAMBRES CEO, Arnaldo Abruzzini, commented: *“In 2008, the Commission brought us ‘New Skills for New Jobs’, in 2010 it was an ‘Agenda for New Skills and Jobs’ and now in 2016, it’s a ‘New Skills Agenda’. Like the title, the contents seem to be a reshuffle of familiar concepts, but it is delivery and impact that we miss.”*

### Skills Guarantee

The communication attaches great importance to the announced Skills Guarantee. However, the so far negligible impact of the 2013 Youth Guarantee – also a Council recommendation – is telling. The Commission must think carefully about next steps and ensure that responsibility for this ‘guarantee’ is not just passed on by public authorities to the private sector.

*“Businesses are of course the main job creators and are important actors in raising skills. However, it is the responsibility of the state to oversee the provision of skills and to cooperate closely with employers to ensure that supply matches demand,”* said Mr Abruzzini.

### Strengthen apprenticeship schemes and improve skills forecasting

EUROCHAMBRES is also disappointed that a quantifiable target for apprenticeships in vocational education & training (VET) and the development of a pan-European approach to skills forecasting are not included in the Communication.

Mr Abruzzini added: *“The Commission’s role is limited when it comes to education and training, so they should have focused on a small number of high added value measures which could create real socio-economic benefits.”*

### Refugee integration

On the positive side, EUROCHAMBRES warmly welcomes the proposals to identify refugees’ skills earlier, yet stresses that this must form part of a coherent and comprehensive strategy for the economic integration of migrants, not just across the EU, but also in countries of transit and even origin.

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