

## **Flexible digital training for everyone: – European Year of Skills interview series with Melina Schneider from the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber**

As part of Eurochambres' series of interviews showcasing the chamber network's efforts to contribute to upskilling and reskilling, this week we present the project "wise up", an initiative of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ) to help companies in the field of digital education and training. In this interview, Melina Schneider, Head of the Department for Education Policy at WKÖ, tells us more about this comprehensive tool built to support the development of digital skills.

### **1. 2023 is now officially the European Year of Skills. What are your expectations for this year?**

We are convinced that the European Year of Skills will be an important contribution to making vocational training more attractive and to promote reskilling and upskilling. We expect the European Year of Skills to help raise awareness that successful green and digital transitions can only be achieved with well-trained workers who have the skills we need to build the Europe of tomorrow. From this perspective, we envisage this initiative to offer the opportunity to reflect on how countries can better position themselves in the face of the twin transition. It is crucial to adapt job profiles to the future changes of the economy and to provide guidance to young people towards these future-oriented professions.

### **2. Can you tell us a few words about the digital education and training platform "Wise up", and how it can bridge a gap in terms of skills development?**

During the pandemic, digital learning became the new standard for all of us. Everybody got used to it and we collectively saw for the first time the many opportunities digital learning can offer. We wanted to continue this positive experience after the pandemic, this is why WKÖ decided to launch the digital education and training platform "wise up". The project is one of the lighthouse projects of a larger initiative of WKÖ to support companies in the field education and training. One-person businesses and smaller companies that have neither IT, legal nor HR departments currently need to respond to major questions: Which learning software covers the needs of my business? How much does such learning software cost? What do I save by going digital? Are the servers secure, is the data storage GDPR compliant? Where can I find quality-checked educational content for Austria? Since there was no adequate offering for these requirements in the German-speaking area until now, WKÖ, as the country's largest non-governmental education provider, decided to make this investment in the future as part of our education offensive.

"Wise up" supports skills development in many ways, as the areas of application of the platform are broad and varied: They range from training employees in the latest safety and hygiene standards, to onboarding, to the documentation of internal best-practice projects, or the promotion of soft skills. We even develop learning content for apprenticeships to add a digital dimension to

our traditional dual education system. The learners can access the content anytime and anywhere - whether on a PC, laptop, tablet or via the app on a smartphone. This flexibility facilitates lifelong learning and motivates users to improve their skills portfolio.

### **3. How do you see the contribution of the chamber network to the upskilling and reskilling effort needed across the EU?**

The network of European chambers offers above all the unique opportunity to exchange promising initiatives among key stakeholders and the sharing of national best practices which can then be implemented in other countries. This is a crucial advantage which will help us to excel at European level.



Melina Schneider,  
Head of the Department for Education Policy at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)