

Interview with Martha Schultz – Eurochambres Vice President and Skills Committee Chair: review and outlook on the European Year of Skills

One year after the launch of the European Year of Skills we aim to reflect on its achievements and explore the ongoing needs for the future. As we review the accomplishments thus far, we also seek to identify areas requiring continued attention and enhancement to ensure sustained progress in skill development across Europe.

1. What are the major achievements of the European Year of Skills?

The European Year of Skills has raised awareness of the key role of a well-trained workforce in successfully managing the green and digital transitions. Responding to the skills gap will be crucial for Europe's future. In particular, it has increased the attractiveness of vocational education and training and stimulated reskilling and upskilling efforts. It has also intensified reflection on how to adapt skills provision to the ever-changing needs of the labour market. The European Year of Skills also highlighted the need for continued cooperation between stakeholders across Europe to develop innovative solutions to address skills gaps and promote a culture of lifelong learning.

2. What are the future needs and expectations following the European Year of Skills?

The European Year of Skills served as a significant milestone in highlighting the imperative need to address skills shortages and invest in skills development for navigating the green and digital transition and maintaining competitiveness in the EU. It is clear, however, that these challenges cannot be solved within one year. A continuous effort is needed because businesses will continue struggling to fill vacancies with qualified candidates. The EU must continue to prioritize policies and reforms aimed at mitigating labour market shortages. This requires a workforce that is equipped with a range of transversal skills, a capacity to adapt and an entrepreneurial attitude. This includes further investing in training and adult education, enhancing financial incentives for employment, reducing barriers to labour market entry and implementing strategies to attract skilled workers from abroad to fill in-demand positions. Moreover, education and training policy must be developed and delivered in close cooperation with the business community and focus more on competences than qualifications. These concerted efforts are essential for fostering economic resilience and sustaining Europe's competitive edge.

3. How do chambers contribute to the advancement of skills?

Chambers of commerce and industry actively contribute to training and upskilling initiatives across the EU, representing businesses and the “users” of these skills, while also developing and delivering VET policies. In a typical year, over 2.5 million people receive training from chambers of commerce. Additionally, chambers play a significant role in supporting the labour market integration of migrant and refugee groups by offering skills assessments, professional training, and assistance to companies in navigating administrative procedures and fostering employment opportunities.

Eurochambres will continue speaking at the European level for its members and foster business friendly skills policies that will allow European companies to navigate the green and digital transitions.

Martha Schultz

Eurochambres Skills Committee Chair



Further information: Ms. Kerstin Hubmer, Tel. +32 2 282 08 89, hubmer@eurochambres.eu

Press contact: Ms. Agatha Latorre, Tel. +32 2 282 08 62, latorre@eurochambres.eu