



The European Commission's Union of Skills Initiative

INTRODUCTION

A strong economy is the basis for growth, employment, and investment, including in the skills needed to respond to, and maximise the potential of, the green and digital transitions as well as the development of transversal skills. European competitiveness depends on future-oriented, labour market relevant skills. Fostering participation in job-relevant training as part of the up-skilling and re-skilling agenda and improved jobs and skills intelligence at EU level should contribute to these goals. BusinessEurope welcomes and broadly supports the European Commission's Union of Skills initiative and outlines the following key messages, which are substantiated in our [full position paper](#).

KEY MESSAGES

- 1** BusinessEurope welcomes the Union of Skills initiative's focus on strengthening vocational education and training (VET) as a crucial tool to close skills gaps and enhance Europe's competitiveness.
- 2** BusinessEurope fully supports the initiative's emphasis on the urgency of up-skilling and re-skilling Europe's workforce, relative to employers' skills needs. To address persistent labour and skills shortages, it is essential to support employer-led training approaches that are responsive to labour market needs, flexible, and inclusive of emerging trends such as green and digital transitions.
- 3** There is an urgent need to address declining basic skills in Europe, which pose a serious threat to Europe's competitiveness and productivity. While many employers step in to fill basic skills gaps, this responsibility lies primarily with public education systems and should be addressed during compulsory schooling.
- 4** BusinessEurope strongly supports efforts to foster the attainment of STEM skills and welcomes the related targets that have been proposed. Attracting and retaining more people, especially women, in STEM careers requires coordinated long-term efforts, including public campaigns, mentorships, and inclusive workplace environments.
- 5** Efforts to support worker mobility through a future initiative on skills portability, including efforts to improve transparency, simplify and speed up the process of recognising qualifications, both within the EU and from third countries, is very welcome. For non-regulated professions, a trust-based approach to recognition is preferred. As concerns regulated professions, the EU should further explore voluntary common training principles to support labour mobility.