



**A PLEDGE TO INVEST IN THE INDUSTRIES' GREATEST ASSET – ITS PEOPLE  
118 TCLF ORGANISATIONS JOIN FORCES IN A “PACT FOR SKILLS”**

*Brussels, 16 December 2021 – Today, the three EU umbrella organisation, Euratex, Cotance and CEC, and 115 stakeholders signed the Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear (TCLF) Pact for Skills, an initiative promoted by the European Commission (EC) to maximise the impact of investments in improving existing skills (upskilling) and training in new skills (reskilling) in Europe. The Pact for Skills brings together European TCLF social partners, industry representatives, and education and training providers pledging to work together and invest in large-scale skills partnerships, guarantee the exchange of best practices and increase the attractiveness of the sectors to preserve the heritage and capacity to innovate that characterises the European TCLF industries. Members of the Pact will benefit from networking, guidance and resources offered by the EC to implement the targets which are proposed in the Pact.*

**Skills are crucial for the industries' future**

The EU Footwear industry, as well as Textile, Clothing, and Leather industries, have built their global reputation on their ability to mix tradition with innovation in high added-value distinctive products. But both the heritage and the capacity to innovate are currently at risk and hampered by skills-related challenges. On the one hand, the workforce is aging and companies could lose precious know-how. Young people are deserting the sectors because of long-lasting misconceptions and prejudices. On the other hand, digitalisation and new technologies are rapidly changing manufacturing processes and business models. Making European footwear products more sustainable and performant requires TCLF workers' skills to be regularly updated.

**“Overcoming skills challenges is make-or-break for the competitiveness of European TCLF companies and it is promising to see so many stakeholders joining forces to tackle the problem head-on today,”** underlined Luis Onofre, President of CEC and company owner himself. He further stressed how **“Investing in people's skills is of the utmost necessity to safeguard our industries' competitiveness and preserve its economic value and potential across European regions”**.

**Joining forces to upskill and reskill the European workforce**

Launched by the European Commission in September 2020, the TCLF Pact for Skills focuses on 5 objectives for signatories have formulated commitments.

1. Promoting a culture of **lifelong learning** for all: one of the actions is to design and roll out courses promoting the latest technologies and digital tools such as VR and AI (digital skills) and promoting durability, repair, and waste management activities (green skills), in particular circular design skills.
2. Building a strong **skills partnership** with relevant stakeholders: signatories foresee building regional and cross-sectoral partnerships between industry, education providers, and authorities that are adapted to their specific needs.



3. **Monitoring** skills supply/demand and anticipating skills needs: to reach it, industry, policy, and education stakeholders will establish the TCLF Skills Observatory.
4. Working against **discrimination** and for gender equality and equal opportunities: signatories will launch a TCLF manifesto of diversity and a supporting initiative to improve the gender balance and ensure equal opportunities for all.
5. Raising **awareness & attractiveness** on the TCLF industries, i.e., through dedicated information campaigns, showcasing the opportunities in the sector, and promoting mobility for young workers.

As of early 2022, the European Commission will support the TCLF Pact for Skills signatories on their collaboration at EU, national and regional levels, in particular by gaining access to networking, knowledge, and guidance & resource hubs.