

Skills4Retail roundtable: Accelerating the Triple Transition in European Retail through skills

Launch event of Skills4Retail — a new EU-funded initiative to future-proof the retail and wholesale sector in Europe

Brussels, 12 September 2023 – embargoed until 10 am

Today, European policymakers and business representatives discussed the retail and wholesale sector's sustainability, digital and skills transformation at a high-profile roundtable event in Brussels, hosted by [Skills4Retail](#).

Skills4Retail is a new Europe-wide training initiative funded by the European Commission Erasmus and Partnerships For Innovation. It is led by an international Consortium of 29 Partners from wide-ranging sectors, including higher education institutions, training providers, retail industry partners, recruitment and digital marketing agencies.

The Skills4Retail project aims to accelerate the 'Triple Transition' — green, digital and resilience — in the retail and wholesale sectors across Europe. It contributes to achieving these goals through a new market and industry-led retail skills strategy and vocational education and training (VET) programme that addresses the growing skills gap in these critical areas.

Post-Covid-19, the skills gap in green, digital and resilience in retail and wholesale has become more profound, and demand cannot be met by existing education and training programmes.

Skills4Retail will train fresh new talent for the sector, through training programmes in VET schools and higher education institutions and reskill the existing and future workforce via work-based learning and short-term modular courses.

The Skills4Retail programme aims to bridge the skills gap and support growth and sustainability in the retail and wholesale sectors, through direct and valuable collaboration between policymakers, businesses, and educators.

Junior Achievement Europe — a member of the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize-nominated JA Worldwide — is coordinating the consortium of Skills4Retail partners, with eight national JA organisations involved in the project.

JA CEO **Salvatore Nigro** said of the initiative:

“There is a tremendous skills gap between what is today offered by the education sector and what is needed by the private sector. Our joint project will accelerate the triple transition for a more digital, green and resilient Europe with a focus on the retail sector.”

Deputy CEO and Chief Development Officer **Diana Filip** added:

“At JA Europe, we're proud to be at the forefront of designing a retail skills strategy and VET training programme that equips the current and future workforce with skills to thrive in the evolving retail industry. Together with our partners, we're forging a sustainable, digitally empowered future for the entire sector.”

Christel Delberghe, Director General of EuroCommerce, the European association representing retailers and wholesalers, highlighted: *“In retail and wholesale, more than 40% of companies see difficulties in finding talent with the right skills as a top barrier to a successful sector transformation. Skills4Retail is a chance to support the future competitiveness of the sector. This project will develop a retail skills strategy and a vocational education training programme with the potential to empower both existing and prospective employees to meet the demands of an ever-changing market.”*

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Roundtable programme

Moderator:

Diana Filip — Deputy CEO, JA Europe

Opening remarks:

Salvatore Nigro — CEO, JA Europe

Panellists:

- Christel Delberghe — EuroCommerce Director General
- Joanna Zawistowska — European Commission Policy Officer, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Food, Retail, Health (GROW F3)
- Felix Rohn — European Commission Policy Officer Skills Agenda, DG Employment
- Lionel Bodin — Managing Director Europe, Accenture Development Partnerships (Consortium Partner)
- Mark Jordan — Chief Strategy Officer, Skillnet Ireland (Consortium Partner)
- Janis Krievans, JA Latvia CEO and Chair of the JA Board of Executives (Consortium Partner)

Closing remarks:

Emilia Venot — Project Officer for Skills4Retail, EACEA

Panellists explored the following key related topics:

The 'Triple Transition': Challenges and opportunities associated with green, digital, and resilience transitions in retail.

Skills gap analysis: Examine gaps in the retail industry, and opportunities for improvement.

Retail skills strategy: Explore the content of the proposed initiatives, and how the programme will address the skills gap.

Training and education: Highlight the role of VET schools, higher education institutions, work-based learning and modular courses in education, retail training and upskilling.

Market and industry demand: Emphasise the importance of adaptable and responsive training programmes that align with market and industry demands.

Long-term growth and sustainability: Explore how the digital and green transformation can boost European retailers' long-term growth, competitiveness, and sustainability, and the role of government policies and private sector initiatives.

The project website is www.skills4retail.eu

The Skills4Retail project vision and partners

The Skills4Retail project is a shared vision between 29 partners in education, industry and national policy, to design a new retail skills strategy and VET training programme to address the urgent skills gap in the key areas of digital, green and resilience.

The programme will support European retailers and help the wider industry achieve long-term growth, competitiveness and sustainability through digital and green transformation.

The project will be market and industry-demand-led at its core, continuously adapting and evolving to address current and future industry needs.

Full partners

[Junior Achievement Europe \(coordinator\)](#): JA Europe is the leading organisation in Europe dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial health.

[Junior Achievement Portugal](#): Junior Achievement Portugal is one of the largest and most impactful NGOs dedicated to inspiring and preparing children and young people for the future, promoting conscious and inclusive entrepreneurship.

[Junior Achievement Malta](#): JAM equips young people with the employment and entrepreneurship skills they need right now, and in the future. The organisation prepares young people for the future of work and teaches them how to think entrepreneurially.

[Junior Achievement Romania](#): Since forming in 1993, Junior Achievement Romania has been implementing programmes that help young people develop skills, attitudes and social roles that are essential in the real market economy.

[Junior Achievement Latvia](#): JA Latvia promotes the development of Latvia's national economy by engaging in youth education, promoting entrepreneurship and building the new generation of entrepreneurs, through practical business education programmes.

[Junior Achievement Czech](#): JA Czech offers young people opportunities to acquire and develop the skills necessary for a successful start in real life and the job market — deepening their economic and business knowledge.

[Junior Achievement Hungary:](#) JA Hungary programmes allow students to experience and understand the essence of business life and managerial competencies, either as entrepreneurs or as employees.

[Junior Achievement Austria:](#) JA Austria promotes basic economic knowledge and social skills, which will make it significantly easier for young people to get a head start in their future professional life.

[Junior Achievement Ireland:](#) JA Ireland inspires and motivates young people to succeed in the changing world of work by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need.

[Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde \(Portugal\):](#) The EPVC is a leading education and training provider, guided by a unique set of principles, attitudes, values, purposes and strategies.

[University of Bucharest \(Romania\):](#) With a prestigious history of over 150 years, the University of Bucharest is an institution of excellence in education and research, characterised by creativity, innovation and pragmatism.

[Scoala Superioara Comerciala N. Kretzulescu \(Romania\):](#) For over a century, Scoala Superioara Comerciala N. Kretzulescu in Bucharest has been one of Romania's leading commercial high schools, with a long list of nationally renowned alumni.

[Vocational Education Competence Centre - Riga Technical College: \(Latvia\):](#) Riga Technical College is a state-founded educational institution that combines higher professional education qualifications with secondary vocational education programmes.

[Szent György Hang- és Filmművészeti Technikum \(Hungary\):](#) Founded in 1988, the Szent György Sound and Film Technical College has more than 1,000 students, a wide range of courses and partnerships with Hungary's leading performance venues, studios and festivals.

[Karlínská Business Academy \(Czechia\):](#) Karlinska is a leading internationally-focused business school that educates young people in the complementary values of entrepreneurship, responsibility and mutual respect.

[DTSL \(Ireland\):](#) DTSL helps organisations scale by investing in the up-skilling, competency enablement and leadership development across all industry sectors.

[ICT Skillnet \(Ireland\)](#): Co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and industry, ICT Skillnet offers specialised, innovative technology training at a fraction of the market cost. The organisation advances Ireland's technology workforce, by building critical technology skills needed for the future of work.

Portuguese [Out of the Box](#) (Portugal): Out of the Box is a Portuguese engagement-based language teaching programme with a focus on practical application and informal learning.

[WKO WF, Austrian Chamber of Commerce](#) (Austria): The WKO is the voice of Austrian business, representing more than 540,000 member companies, and boosting the national economy through comprehensive services.

[Matrix Internet \(Ireland\)](#): Matrix is a full-service digital agency with offices in Dublin and Brussels. Matrix offers web design, development, digital marketing and international growth strategy services.

[Retail Ireland — Skillnet Ireland](#): The Retail Ireland Skillnet team works closely with Retail Ireland to ensure current and future skills needs are addressed through work-based training programmes.

[Schuman Associates \(Belgium\)](#): Schuman is the leading EU business advisory firm in Brussels with over 30 years' experience in European funding and public affairs. The firm serves a broad range of clients, from governments and large multinational corporations to trade associations and NGOs.

[Accenture](#): Accenture is a globally recognised IT and technology consulting services provider, with 740,000 staff, and 9,000 clients in 120 countries worldwide. Accenture specialises in business strategy, change management, digital commerce and more.

[Vállalkozók és Munkáltatók Országos Szövetsége — VOSZ \(Hungary\)](#): Founded in 1988, the National Association of Entrepreneurs represents privately-owned enterprises in Hungary, before national and local decision-making forums.

Associated partners

[University of Szeged \(Hungary\)](#): The University of Szeged is one of Hungary's most prestigious higher education institutions, with 12 faculties and a nationally renowned teacher training centre.

[EuroCommerce](#): EuroCommerce is the European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 27 countries, sector associations and 35 leading players.

[SOCR CR - \(Czechia\)](#): The Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism is the top representative of trade, tourism and services, fight for the predictability, justice and adequacy of legal regulations and the procedure of administrative authorities.

[SPAR Austria](#): Spar Austria is the market leader in the Austrian grocery trade, with over 1,500 stores and sales of €9.05 billion in 2022. Part of the Spar international group of independently owned and operated retailers, with nearly 14,000 stores in 48 countries.

[Jeronimo Martins \(Portugal\)](#): Jeronimo Martins is a Portuguese-based international food distribution group with a rich 230-years history. The group is a supermarket and cash and carry leader in Poland, a retail store leader in Poland, and a sales leader in neighbourhood stores in Colombia.

[Intel](#): For more than 50 years, Intel has created world-changing technology, driving business and society forward by radical innovation in the design and manufacturing of semiconductors.