



Press Release

Launch of the TCLF Pact for Skills: putting people at the heart of the industry's competitiveness.

Brussels, 16 December 2021 – 118 organisations have signed the TCLF¹ Pact for Skills, an initiative promoted by the European Commission and promoted by EURATEX, COTANCE and CEC, the umbrella organisations of the textile, leather and footwear industries in Europe. The signatories acknowledge the skills challenge in the textiles-leather ecosystem, and commit to invest in reskilling and upskilling workers, integrating green and digital skills and improving the attractiveness of the sector. Signatories of the Pact will benefit from networking, guidance and resources offered by the EC to implement the targets which are proposed in the Pact.

The Pact for Skills is part of the EU Industrial Strategy, addressing the competitiveness of 14 critical ecosystems, including the one on textiles, leather and footwear. The main aim of the Pact is maximising the impact of investments in improving existing skills (upskilling) and training in new skills (reskilling). To reach such an ambitious goal, the Pact gathers various actors in the TCLF sectors: industry, employers, social partners, national and regional authorities, education and training providers. These actors should work together and invest in large-scale skills partnerships, guarantee exchange of best practices and increase the attractiveness of the sector.

Specifically, the TCLF Pact for Skills focuses on 5 objectives and for each of them, the signatories identified a certain number of target actions:

1. Promoting a culture of **lifelong learning** for all: one of the actions is to design and roll out courses promoting 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 to build regional and cross-sectoral partnerships between industry, education providers and authorities, which 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.

¹ TCLF = Textiles, Clothing, Leather and Footwear. The initiative covers the entire ecosystem, including the fashion and retail segment of the industry.

5. Raising **awareness & attractiveness** on the TCLF industries, i.a. through dedicated information campaigns, showcasing the opportunities in the sector and promoting mobility for young workers.

As of early 2022, the European Commission will offer signatories of the Pact for Skills to benefit from collaboration at EU, national and regional levels and in particular gain access to networking, knowledge and guidance & resource hubs.

“COTANCE is very pleased with this initiative” says Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano, COTANCE Secretary General. “Teaming up with our partners in the eco-system allows to generate the critical mass which will help the individual companies in our sector maintaining and increasing the skills that make their competitiveness on global markets. We look forward to seeing more companies and entities joining the Pact in the future”.

About COTANCE

As the voice of the European leather industry, COTANCE works to achieve a favourable environment within the European Union for design, development, manufacture and marketing of European leather and supports its manufactures.

The European Leather industry, with around 1600 tanneries employing some 34.000 workers, is an key sector of the circular economy across many EU regions, as it recovers a residue of the food industry and transforms it into a beautiful and durable material. With a turnover of some € 7 billion and a positive trade balance, the industry is an economic asset for the EU and a global player successfully commercialising high added value leather on growing markets around the world.

Working together with EU institutions and other European and international stakeholders, COTANCE focuses on clear priorities: an ambitious industrial policy, effective research, innovation and skills development, free and fair trade, and sustainable supply chains.

Contact

To know more about this press release, please contact Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano, cotance@euroleather.com