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# Joint Press Release

## The Pact for Skills – Launch of a Skills Partnership for the Agri-food Ecosystem

**The agri-food chain is one of the largest segments of the European economy, employing over 20 million people from 10 million farms, 22,000 agri-food co-operatives, and 289,000 food and drink processing sites. The agri-food system is by far the biggest employment sector in Europe, and it has a significant impact on both rural and urban communities, and is comprised of more than 99% small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).**

Last year, the agri-food ecosystem in Europe took its first steps in the development of the Pact for Skills partnership. In April 2021, the European Commission requested the Brussels associations Copa-Cogeca (agriculture) and FoodDrinkEurope (food industry) coordinate the partnership along the agri-food value chain.

Working together, the European Commission and the association co-ordinators have secured the involvement of other industry associations, Member States, SMEs and larger companies, universities, and training providers, as well as the co-operation from EU projects already working on upskilling and reskilling the workforce.

In October, the partnership presented their ambitions and workplan. The partnership focused on upskilling and reskilling the agri-food workforce with a particular aim to increase the attractiveness of the industry to young people. Together, we wanted to build a food chain that can provide life-long learning opportunities in a stable and viable career.

With today's event, featuring presentations from the Commission services (DG GROW, DG AGRI, DG EMPL), that are actively supporting this initiative, Copa-Cogeca and FoodDrinkEurope and including concluding remarks from FoodDrinkEurope's Director General Dirk Jacobs, the Pact for Skills partnership in the agri-food sector is officially launched, growing in membership, and gaining momentum. Its main task will be the setting of a joint strategy to design and implement a sectoral upskilling and reskilling framework, maximising competitiveness of all the actors involved, enhancing job retention and job attractiveness of the agri-food ecosystem within the frame of the Pact for Skills.

We are dedicated to getting the whole industry on-board and to equip the workers of today with the skills for tomorrow.

**-END-**

Translation in DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, and RO will soon be available on the Copa-Cogeca website.

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