DRAFT AGENDA

SKILLS LAB NETWORK OF EXPERTS: FROM SKILLS ANTICIPATION TO POLICY ACTION

25 - 26 MARCH 2026

VENUE: THE SOCIAL HUB BELFIORE, FLORENCE, ITALY

CONCEPT

Governments all over the world face a common challenge: ensuring agile and responsive skills development systems to meet rapidly evolving demands of labour markets in the context of disrupting changes. This led in recent years to substantial investments in skills anticipation studies, as well as more innovative advances such as forward-looking foresight and anticipatory approaches in skills anticipation methodologies. Thanks to the recent developments in natural language processing, skills anticipation studies now can also automatically analyse online information sources from job vacancies to patents, research databases or education curricula.

There is now a larger toolkit for skills anticipation combining both traditional and innovative methods, which contribute to yield valuable information on the evolution of jobs and emerging skills needs. However, analysing skill needs is not free from hurdles due to data limitations, inconsistent methodologies and results, inadequate funding, limited technical capacity, coordination problems, or biased/ unrepresentative data. Yet, translating evidence into a concrete policy action has proved to be even more challenging. Despite the wealth of available labour market information and data, their strategic use in the formulation of employment and skills policies remain limited.

Drawing on its long-standing work on Skills demands analysis, the European Training Foundation (ETF) witnesses that producing high-quality analysis does not automatically lead to evidence-informed policies. The key challenge lies in the disconnection between 'science' and 'policy', and the gap between evidence providers (researchers) and evidence users (policymakers). Factors that limit a meaningful dialogue between researchers and policymakers are time constraints, different priorities and timelines, lacking common language, non-practical and often conflicting findings.

The need to develop and institutionalise effective dialogue mechanisms between research institutions and policy authorities and to systematically embed evidence into the policy cycle is getting urgent. A first step in this direction is turning labour market data and information into 'skills intelligence' by

synthesising them from multiple resources, creating 'strategic intelligence' through interpreting and adjusting the results to the needs of targeted users. So, evidence is transformed into intelligence and feasible operational actions to 'assist in decision-making', instead of long recommendations that are out of policy touch.

Among the factors that increase policy ownership of evidence are prioritising policy-oriented research responding to real-world problems, combining different methodologies to find answers, engaging key stakeholders from the outset in structured dialogue mechanisms, allocating enough time to turn evidence into concrete skills intelligence, distilling clear and realistic policy messages, using diverse formats for dissemination, and investing in policy advocacy.

Therefore, creating a strong bridge between skills anticipation research and policy action requires more than producing high-quality evidence. It demands continuous dialogue, strategic communication, interinstitutional cooperation, and shared capacities on both sides. By focusing on these enabling factors, the gap between scientific knowledge and policy design can be significantly reduced and the capacity for effective policy making can be increased —ultimately contributing to more responsive and effective education, training and employment policies.

Within this context, this fourth edition of the ETF's Skill Lab Network of Experts live event focuses on both the research and the policy action dimensions of skills anticipation and matching. While producing high-quality evidence on current and future skill needs is extremely important and must be excelled, their wider use in policy making must be encouraged at many levels. Not using the available evidence for effective and concrete policy actions would be an enormous waste of resources.

The objectives of this event are to:

- Exchange knowledge and experience on skills anticipation methodologies and tools, labour supply and demand analyses, and on how they are used in different countries;

- Exchange and discuss on translating research findings into concrete policy actions in the field of skills anticipation, including main challenges faced and common practices implemented;

- Discuss key success factors and good practices that support a meaningful dialogue and enhanced collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

This Skills Lab Network live event is organised with the support of the European University Institute (EUI) and will be held at The Social Hub Belfiore in Florence, Italy.

The event language will be English.

The agenda of the event is designed to provide a balance between learning, networking, exchange and co-creation. Participants of the event will be invited to explore and discuss the links between skills anticipation research and policy action.

Day 1 will be devoted to frame the discussion topics and explore innovative approaches and methodologies in skills anticipation and matching.

Day 2 will focus on the use of evidence in skills development and employment policy formulation. Participants will also have the opportunity to visit the Historical Archives of the European Union hosted at Villa Salviati.

Day 1, Wednesday, 25 March 2026

Time	Agenda Item	Owner
08.30 – 09.00	Registration	
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome and opening remarks	*Dr Pilvi Torsti, Director, European Training Foundation (ETF)* *H.E. Armando Barucco, Secretary General, European University Institute (EUI)*
09.30 – 09.45	Introduction to the agenda and objectives of the day	*Cristiana Burzio, ETF*
09.45 – 10.45	**Keynote speeches:** • **The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the labour markets** • **Preserving human agency in the age of AI and the role of education** Questions and answers	*Keynote speakers:* • *Ummuhan Bardak, ETF* • *Prof. Vladimir Sucha, EUI*
10.45 – 11.15	Networking break	
11.15 – 13.00	**What are the main skills anticipation and matching methodologies used by countries?** • **Introductory review of international practices** • **Experiences from ETF's partner countries** Discussion with the audience	*Facilitator: Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (FGB)* • *Prof Terence Hogarth, University of Warwick* • *ETF's Skills Lab Network members*
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch	
14.30 – 15.00	Where are we? The Social Hub Belfiore and the Talent Foundation	*tbc*
15.00 – 16.30	**Panel 1: Skills anticipation and matching practices and the social impact of policy interventions** The aim of this panel is to bring in international perspectives on skills anticipation and matching and move towards policy interventions to ensure higher returns to social investment. While Cedefop and Eurofound provide example(s) on their research initiatives for skills demand, labour market monitoring and quality of living and working conditions, the EUI's presentation focuses on the importance of life-course investments in human capital development. Discussion with the audience	*Facilitator: Cristina Mereuta, ETF* • *Stelina Chatzichristou, Cedefop* • *Massimiliano Mascherini, Eurofound* • *Prof Anton Hemerijck, EUI*
16.30 – 16.45	Wrap-up from day 1	*Cristiana Burzio, ETF*
19.30	Official dinner	

Day 2, Thursday, 26 March 2026

Time	Agenda Item	Owner
09.00 – 09.15	Recap from day 1 and agenda for day 2	*Cristiana Burzio, ETF*
09.15 – 10.00	**Keynote speech: How to translate evidence into policy action?** Importance of evidence-informed policy making, main success and failure factors, tools Questions and answers	*Anastasia Deligkiaouri, Joint Research Centre (JRC)*
10. 00 – 11.15	**Panel 2: Use of evidence in policy formulation** The aim of this panel is to bring in concrete examples and success factors in connecting researchers and policymakers to use evidence and skills intelligence in policymaking, particularly in the field of skills anticipation and matching. • **The use of evaluation in public policy** • **How can scientific knowledge reach to policymakers?** • **Competence Framework 'Science for Policy' for researchers, and Competence Framework for 'Innovative Policymaking'** • **Role of impact studies to (re)design Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs)** Discussion with the audience	*Facilitator: Ummuhan Bardak, ETF* • *Dr Gaia Taffoni, EUI* • *Prof Dr Christa Larsen, EN RLMM, Goethe University* • *Anastasia Deligkiaouri, JRC* • *Cristina Mereuta, ETF*
11.15 – 11.45	Break	
11.45 – 12.45	**What are the concrete country examples on the use of evidence in skills development and employment policies?** Four Power-talks (one per each ETF region)	*Chair and facilitator: FGB* *Skills Lab Network's regional facilitators*
12.45 – 13.00	Wrap-up and logistics for the afternoon session	*Cristiana Burzio, ETF*
13.00 – 14.00	Networking lunch	
14.00 14.30 – 16.00	Departure to the site visit Visit to the Historical Archives of the European Union	*Venue: Villa Salviati, European University Institute*
16.00 – 17.00	Closing remarks Goodbye aperitivo	*Cristina Mereuta, Head, Knowledge Hub Unit, ETF* *Dieter Schlenker, Director, Historical Archives of the European Union*

Time	Agenda Item	Owner
17.00	Return to the hotel	

SOME BACKGROUND READINGS

CEDEFOP (2024), Next generation skills intelligence for more learning and better matching - Skills anticipation trends, opportunities and challenges in EU Member States https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/9190

CEDEFOP (2021), Understanding technological change and skill needs: skills surveys and skills forecasting https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4197

CEDEFOP (2021), Understanding technological change and skill needs: big data and artificial intelligence methods https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4198

CEDEFOP (2021) Understanding technological change and skill needs: technology and skills foresight https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4199

CEPS (2025), Preparedness in the labour market: a toolkit for anticipating the future of work https://cdn.ceps.eu/2025/09/2025-08-JS-Explainer_future_approaches_formatted-2.pdf

European Commission (2024), How to write an effective and engaging policy brief: https://emotionalcities-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Policy-brief-UHC.pdf

ETF (2025), From skills anticipation to skills action. Collection of articles to understand skills demand in EU neighbouring countries. https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/2025.04684_01_ENN.pdf

ETF (2024), Cross-country reflection paper on the future skill needs in selected sectors, The future of skills in ETF partner countries | ETF (europa.eu)

ETF (2021), Changing skills for a changing world: Understanding skills demand in EU neighbouring countries, www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/changing-skills-changing-world-understanding-skills-demand

JRC (2023), Competence Framework 'Science for Policy' for researchers, Competence Framework 'Science for Policy' for researchers | Knowledge for policy

JRC (2023), Competence Framework for 'Innovative Policymaking', Competence framework for 'innovative policymaking' | Knowledge for policy

JRC (2019), Understanding our Political Nature: How to put knowledge and reason at the heart of political decision-making, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, doi:10.2760/910822.

European Commission (2022), *Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research,* https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/SWD_2022_346_final.PDF

OECD (2020), *Mobilising Evidence for Good Governance: Taking Stock of Principles and Standards for Policy Design, Implementation and Evaluation*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/e0195354-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/e0195354-en

International Center for Policy Advocacy (2017), "An essential guide to writing policy briefs", https://www.icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/icpa/files/downloads/icpa_policy_briefs_essential_guide.pdf

Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto (2021), From Research to Impact: A toolkit for developing effective policy brief: https://socialwork.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Policy-Toolkit-Final-v2- Apr27.pdf