



TORINO SKILLS SUMMIT 2026: GLOBAL SKILLS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT #TSS26

**Skills for people – Skills for business –
Skills for society**

Why this Summit - Why now?

Across Europe and its partner countries, the context for skills policies has changed dramatically. Industrial transformation, demographic pressure, artificial intelligence, the clean transition, war and insecurity, shifting value chains, investment derisking and geopolitical transformation are no longer separate issues. Together they are redefining competitiveness, resilience and social cohesion in Europe and beyond.

In this context, skills are no longer a secondary part of education policy. They are a strategic necessity for prosperity, security, autonomy and sustainable development.

Europe is facing growing competition for talent and skills. Businesses struggle to find the skills they need and investments do not always translate into local value creation. Labour shortages co-exist with unemployment, inactivity and underemployment. Mobility can bring opportunity, but also tension where systems are weak or unprepared. And in fragile and post-conflict contexts, including Ukraine, skills are also part of resilience, recovery and reconstruction.

This is why the European Training Foundation is organising this summit on skills now in 2026.

It will provide a high-level platform to connect policy makers, business leaders, social partners, NGOs, international organisations, researchers and practitioners around a shared question:

How can skills systems help Europe and its partner countries remain competitive, resilient and inclusive in a more uncertain world?

The Summit is shaped by the external dimension of EU policy and in the growing importance of skills and human capital development within Global Europe. It will also speak directly to the Union of Skills, the future European VET strategy, the Pact for Skills, the Global Gateway, EU enlargement, quality jobs and the wider European agenda on competitiveness and resilience.

The focus is practical and strategic. The Summit is about active engagement, stronger partnerships and shared problem-solving. It is designed as a space to connect agendas, test ideas, and shape future cooperation.

Why skills matter now more than ever

Skills systems shape whether major policy priorities can be delivered in practice. They influence whether investment can generate jobs, productivity and innovation. They affect whether smart specialisation strategies succeed and whether clean, digital and defence-related transitions are socially sustainable. They support fair and beneficial mobility. They help determine whether young

people can build viable futures, whether women and underrepresented groups can participate fully, and whether societies can respond to demographic change.

When skills systems are strong and connected:

- investment is more likely to translate into local development and stronger value chains
- businesses can access the talent they need for innovation and growth
- mobility works better for individuals, employers and economies
- transitions create opportunities rather than exclusion
- institutions are better able to respond to change and build public trust

When skills systems are weak, the consequences are equally strategic: stalled investment, labour shortages, lower productivity, unmanaged mobility, fragility, and widening inequality.

The Torino Skills Summit will look at these issues through three connected perspectives.

Skills for people will focus on how education, training and employment policies translate into tangible benefits for individuals. It will examine adult learning, upskilling and reskilling, inclusive labour market policies, Youth Guarantee approaches, equal opportunities, career guidance, qualifications, recognition and skills mobility. The emphasis will be on implementation: how policy frameworks can deliver better pathways into learning, work and participation.

Skills for business will focus on skills as a driver of competitiveness, innovation, investment and economic transformation. It will examine how skills ecosystems can support SMEs, applied research, smart specialisation, key sectors, value chains, Global Gateway investment and AI-driven occupational change. The emphasis will be on how skills systems and businesses can work more closely together to help investment generate local value.

Skills for society will focus on the wider role of skills in social cohesion, democratic participation, governance, recovery and resilience. It will examine the skills continuum across education, work and society, the role of social dialogue and civil society, and the specific importance of skills in fragile, post-conflict and reconstruction contexts, including Ukraine. The emphasis will be on how skills systems can support trust, stability and societal renewal.

Together, the three tracks will show that skills are not only about employability. They are about whether people can progress, businesses can grow and societies can hold together during this period of change.

Objectives of the Summit

The Torino Skills Summit 2026 aims to strengthen the connection between skills, competitiveness, investment and social cohesion.

- **Increase influence** by positioning skills more clearly in debates on competitiveness, resilience, investment, demography, strategic autonomy and Global Europe.
- **Strengthen partnerships** across EU institutions, Member States, EU agencies, partner countries, the private sector, social partners, civil society, research institutions and international organisations.
- **Support future-oriented policy thinking** by creating space for foresight, co-creation and anticipatory approaches that can inform the next phases of policy and cooperation.
- **Connect skills to investment and impact** by showing how skills systems support business development, sectoral transformation, smart specialisation, value chains, mobility, inclusion and broader development outcomes, including the SDGs.

- **Bring the global debate closer to local actors** by involving cities, regions, local actors and public-facing initiatives with examples from Italy, ETF partner countries and wider international cooperation.

Expected outcomes

The Summit will contribute to a clearer shared understanding of the role of skills in a changing geopolitical and economic context. It will help identify where skills systems need to adapt, where cooperation can bring practical value, and how ETF work with partner countries can support European and partner country priorities.

By bringing together EU institutions, partner countries, international organisations, social partners, civil society and business, the Summit will create space for high-level exchange and practical discussion across the skills agenda, with a focus on future action.

DRAFT AGENDA

Monday 23 November

TIME	CONTENT
19.30 – 21.00	Welcome dinner and networking

Tuesday 24 November

TIME	CONTENT
08.30 – 9.00	Registration
09.00 – 10.30	Opening session: Skills, competitiveness and resilience in a changing geopolitical context <i>Welcome remarks and high-level opening</i>
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee
11.00 – 12.30	Plenary session: From skills gaps to strategic action
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch, networking and exhibition
PARALLEL SESSIONS	
14.00– 15.30	Skills for people: <i>Forever a learner: upskilling and reskilling in a changing world</i>
	Skills for business: <i>Skills for a competitive Europe: innovation, SMEs and the green transition</i>
	Skills for society: <i>Trust, alignment, dialogue: building effective skills systems</i>
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee
16.00 – 17.30	Skills for people: <i>Inclusive skills in an enlarged and global Europe: advancing the employability of youth, women and persons with disabilities</i>
	Skills for business: <i>Investing for impact: the role of financial institutions for skills development</i>
	Skills for society: <i>From Ukraine to Palestine*: developing skills to support peace, reconstruction and just transitions</i>
19.00 onwards	“Skills and the City” event showcasing stories from Italy and ETF partner regions

Wednesday 25 November

08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 10.00	Opening day 2 – High-level panel on Global Europe, skills diplomacy and partnerships
PARALLEL SESSIONS	
10.00 – 11.30	Skills for people: <i>Skills portability and migration in the Mediterranean and beyond: making learning visible, comparable and valued</i>
	Skills for business: <i>Artificial intelligence, skills and institutions: managing systemic transformation</i>
	Skills for society: <i>Skills in a Global Education perspective: needs, gaps and opportunities</i>
11.30 – 12.00	Coffee break
12.00 – 13.00	Closing session: What have we learnt and where next?

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the Member States on this issue.