

INTERGRAF - UNI EUROPA GRAPHICAL JOINT STATEMENT SKILLS and TRAINING in the GRAPHICAL INDUSTRY

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The European graphical industry comprises 113,000 companies, employing some 620,000 people in the different Member States and generating an annual turnover of 80 billion EUR. The industry is mainly composed of small companies, with 90% of companies employing fewer than 10 staff.

The graphical industry has been going through a far-reaching structural change for the past decade which was accelerated by the economic crisis in 2008.

A number of fundamental challenges exist that require urgent attention and action if the industry is to survive in a healthy and sustainable manner moving forward. In addition, the European Commission has set a goal of 20% industry contribution to EU GDP by 2020 – this will only be achieved if industry has the required pool of skills. New as well as traditional skills need to be fostered and VET (vocational education and training) needs to be of a high quality and continue to be an attractive career path.

The immediate and particular challenges that the European graphical industry faces are the following:

1. An aging workforce and a lack of skilled workers;
2. Difficulty in attracting young workers as the industry is mistakenly not perceived as a modern and future-oriented;
3. Decreasing availability of training courses in many countries as educational institutes and organisations have reduced the courses on offer.

UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf wholeheartedly support the initiative #Industry4Europe in its focus on maintaining a solid European industrial base and critical role for skills and training in pursuing that objective. UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf therefore urge the European Commission to:

- Continue to **support and develop a training and skills system** across Europe that ensures Europe has the skill base that it requires;
- **Ensure the recognition and the attractiveness of VET education** as a career choice;
- **Ensure that VET provides a clear route from entry level to higher** education for those who wish to continue their education;
- **Benchmark national skills policies**, with a focus on helping Member States to learn from each other;
- Work on **future skills anticipation** and ensure national implementation;
- Support **Erasmus+**;
- **Emphasise STEM** (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) skills in further European Commission initiatives. In the recently released New Skills Agenda for Europe, the emphasis on STEM skills is lacking;
- Facilitate the adaptation of the workforce to new business models and working conditions through a **support for active social dialogue**;
- **Support life-long learning tools**, as up-skilling, programming and coding skills will be increasingly in high demand in many industrial jobs;
- **Support and facilitate re-training** for older workers;

- **Support all capacity building exercises** social dialogue and CSR projects where appropriate as tools to achieve the above goals;
- Support the graphic industry with guidelines and tools on **how to attract the younger generation**;

UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf also call on Member States to:

- Ensure the **availability of training and apprenticeship programmes** that will produce the skill base needed for the graphical industries;
- **Benchmark national skills policies**, with a focus on learning from other Member States;
- Act on the on-going change of professional profiles and the demands for new skills in the industrial sectors as a result of digitisation;
- Ensure availability of teachers;
- **Design skills policies** achieving a better use of available resources through clustering and creating more synergies to improve learning outcomes, thereby contributing to labour productivity growth;
- **Increase the adaptation speed** at which education and training curricula are taking on board changing skills demands on the labour market, including in vocational education and training; the strong presence of technical and practical skills in educational programs will need to be adapted in order to accommodate contents to the new digital era;
- **Develop new and flexible curricula** for a number of new jobs and tasks in industry that are constantly changing and developing. New industrial developments are demanding new technical skills; more engineers will be needed, in particular in fields like automation, robotics, cyber security, and software and hardware integration. Member States must in particular:
 - **Ensure the presence of digitisation** across all parts of professional life, across the general and vocational education curricula in the EU languages, to be made available for national authorities since digitisation is important and will be the key “enabler” for “consumers” as well as “users”;
 - **Teach teachers and trainers** and provide them with the necessary equipment through cooperation with public and private actors;
 - **Foster interaction between public and private actors** in educational centres and industrial sectors as a solution which has the potential to improve the match between companies’ skills needs and the outputs of education and training.
- In order to facilitate the uptake of new skills and to upgrade technical education it is recommended to **make internships and apprenticeships more attractive to companies**;
- **Promote professionals capable of systemic thinking and an entrepreneurial mind-set** by integrating technical, analytical and soft skills training in the current education and training systems.

Furthermore, UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf request Public Authorities at all levels to:

- **Support the social dialogue on skills and education** at European, national and company levels and to connect the various levels, with a view to promoting the exchange of information and good practices;
- Support the setting up of **European, national, regional and local partnerships on skills and education**, involving all stakeholders, such as schools, training providers, printing companies, employers, trade unions, and suppliers. These partnerships should then carry out concrete cooperation projects aimed at improving the capacity of companies in the sector to

meet these skills needs, for example by identifying skills needs, developing new vocational training curricula, setting up school-business gateways, etc.

From their side, UNI Europa Graphical & Packaging and Intergraf commit themselves to promote strong social dialogue structures which are essential for effective training and skills development. They also commit to maintain the skills and training issue as a priority for their European social dialogue agenda with a view to:

- Continue to analyse the technological changes in their industry and the new skills needed;
- Find ways to change and promote a positive image of the industry and to attract young and skilled workers;
- Identify and promote good practices in terms of skills and training;
- Develop guidelines on specific training and skills issues (such as individual development plans, internships and apprenticeship schemes, etc.) which will be addressed to all stakeholders, including national and company social partners in order for them to develop their social dialogue on training and skills.

Further information about the role of the European social partners in promoting training and skills development in the graphical sector is given in the Social Dialogue Committee for the Graphical Sector Work Programme 2019-2021.