

Press Release

Launch of the first European Sector Council on Education Training & Employment In the Textile Clothing and Leather

- **A first sectoral initiative fully in line with the Europe 2020 strategy to bridge the SKILLS gaps and to create more and better jobs in Textile Clothing and Leather industries throughout the EU**
- **High level of involvement: a network steered by the EU Social partners and covering more than 27 countries and with more than 400 entities involved**

On 06th December 2011 in Brussels was launched the first European Sectoral Council on Education Training & Employment in front of International and European Representatives.

In his opening speech Mr Jean-François Lebrun, Head of Unit, DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, stressed *“Today is an important day for the implementation of the EU Commission strategy on sectors skills councils launched on and that fits nicely/completely into the EUROPE 2020 Strategy. We are committed through the “Agenda for new skills and jobs” flagship to support concrete actions that will equip with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow. We as Commission have and will support such approach that is part of the answer to the solving of the important need for skilled people by important and innovative industrial sectors. We do hope and we count on the fact that the social partners and observatories will engage fully in making such tool a success not only for such industries but also for other sectors.”*

The European Council on Education Training and Employment for Textile Clothing Leather (hereafter called “EU TCL Skills Council”) is an initiative from the European Social partners ETUF: TCL (The European Federation of Textile Clothing Leather and Footwear), EURATEX (the European Apparel and Textile Confederation) and COTANCE (The European Confederation of Leather and Tanning), with the financial support of the European Commission- Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs.

Mr. Triangle commented the event underlining that *“The time has come for the European Textile, Clothing and Leather Industries to embrace change in the Labour Market and to have opportunities to demonstrate that these Industries are to turn Europe into a social sustainable driven knowledge-based economy to the service of a competitive based EU industry”.*

Mr. Marchi stressed that *“the presence today of several European industries representatives as well as BusinessEurope and ETUC is the proof that our industries are opening the main avenue to what*

might become the missing link to really foster and support our skills to maintain a competitive industry in the EU across all the Member States” and continued highlighting the fact that “the commitment taken by key players of these industries in France, Belgium, United Kingdom, Italy and Spain, would encourage other Member States to foster similar approaches and would join soon a network that in the end should become self-supporting. The exchange of good practices and the networking effect should unlock the need for our numerous SME’s to find and to help talented workers to improve their skills”.

Based on a networking of several existing national observatories dedicated to Education Training and Employment (FORTHAC (FR), COBOT (BE), IVOC (BE), SKILLSET(UK)) and other key players from these Industries (National sectoral Organisations, Universities, Research centres, companies, Public authorities Trade Unions, Technical institutes...etc.) the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL aims at improving the quality of the European labour force of our Industries, and to assist enterprises to be better prepared in meeting changing competitive demand.

In reaction, Mr. Gonzale highlighted that *“By bringing together corporate executives, owner-operators of smaller firms, employees, union leaders, educators and interested government representatives, the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL aims at addressing a wide range of issues related to technological change, quality standards, planning, and human resource development. Through their participation, the EU social partners pledge to cooperate actively and loyally with the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL and to contribute to its success in a spirit of openness and transparency.”*

Designed to support the networking and the activities of the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL a web portal was also launched to allow exchanges between key players and to provide with a regularly updated collection of pedagogical materials – courses, lesson plans, activities and audiovisual resources that cover both information on the Textile Clothing and Leather Industries and strategies for adapting to and improving the current Labour Market. Visitors will also find web tools (as a TCL wiki tool, web based training seminars, conferences, Web interviews, job searches and offers, news and events; forums of discussion, EU directories...etc.)

Practically, The EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL will mainly aim at identifying and monitoring training needs, communicating on the training needs towards Education and Training entities, promoting of matching activities between identified training needs and market offer, and elaborating and supporting specific projects and initiatives at EU and national levels.

Eventually the overall goal of this EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL is to improve the quality of the European labour force, and to assist enterprises and workers/students to be more flexible in meeting changing competitive demands to sustain the European Textile Clothing and Leather as Industry leaders at international level on Innovation and Creativity.

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