



## PRESS RELEASE

### Reskilling initiative R4E gathers in Porto to map out a busy year of expansion



**Porto, 8 February 2023:** Today and tomorrow, human resources, training, public affairs and communications experts from across Europe meet in Porto – all involved in the Reskilling 4 Employment (R4E) programme – for a meeting hosted by Portuguese conglomerate Sonae.

As the race to decarbonise our economies intensifies, European companies are getting to grips with the urgent need to accelerate the digital & green transitions. With these changes driving the adoption of new technologies and processes, the issue of reskilling is becoming ever-more pertinent. The R4E programme advances an inclusive response that can also improve the competitiveness of Europe’s workforce.

**José María Álvarez-Pallete, Chair of the ERT Committee on Jobs, Skills & Impact and Chairman & CEO of Telefónica** said *“Digital education and skills are the backbone of Europe’s future prosperity. Through R4E, we are actively building a vehicle that can mobilise a massive effort to address the current skills gap in Europe. This is about providing European citizens at various stages of their career with opportunities to reskill and secure current and future capabilities.”*

He added *“On the back of early successes in Portugal, Spain and Sweden, we continue to scale-up in these countries. But there is still a lot more to do. The skills gap is a timebomb and if we are going to diffuse it, we have to build a culture that normalises reskilling across Europe – for companies and for individuals. That’s why we are working to engage more companies and are currently building towards the announcement of six additional European countries joining the R4E effort over the course of this year.”*

#### Companies involved

At present, the companies championing the programme in the three active countries include **AstraZeneca, Iberdrola, Nestlé, SAP, Sonae, Telefónica** and **Volvo Group**.

R4E accommodates each active country-initiative with a dedicated website – complete with translations into the national language – connecting unemployed and at-risk workers with opportunities to acquire new skills and change career path. Its stated goal is to stimulate the reskilling of 5 million people by 2030.

This week’s in-person meeting in Porto brings together relevant experts from a range of major European companies, as well as representatives from employment agencies, the ERT Secretariat and McKinsey & Co, the lead knowledge partner of the programme.

Initially launched in May 2021 under the leadership of Paulo Azevedo, Chairman of Sonae, R4E has been developed by the European Round Table for Industry (ERT). In doing so, the high level forum of 60 CEOs & Chairs of European companies seeks to facilitate the creation of reskilling partnerships with the goal of connecting reskilling providers, employers and jobseekers.

The R4E website is at: <https://reskilling4employment.eu/>. Watch the video [here](#).

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### **Note to Editors:**

José María Álvarez-Pallete's comments on reskilling at last month's World Economic Forum at Davos can be viewed [here](#).

A full list of the Membership of ERT is accessible [here](#).

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### **About the European Round Table for Industry (ERT)**

The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) is a forum that brings together around 60 Chief Executives and Chairs of leading multinational companies of European parentage, covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT strives for a strong, open and competitive Europe, with the EU and its Single Market as a driver for inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity. Companies of ERT Members have combined revenues exceeding €2 trillion, providing direct jobs to around 5 million people worldwide – of which half are in Europe – and sustaining millions of indirect jobs. They invest more than €60 billion annually in R&D, largely in Europe.

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