



## PRESS RELEASE

### Reskilling initiative R4E: gaining traction in the European Years of Skills



**Brussels, 9 June 2023:** As human resources experts and policymakers gather in Brussels for the *Making Skills Count* conference marking the onset of the European Year of Skills, ERT's initiative Reskilling 4 Employment (R4E) is celebrating its second anniversary.

The R4E initiative is a corporate-led response to Europe's growing skills challenge resulting from the digital and green transition. These changes are driving a major evolution in technologies and processes at European companies and infrastructures – at the same time as increasing competitive pressure from global peers. All of which is driving renewed investment in people and the workforce of future, with the skills gap now a top concern for European business leaders, as revealed in the latest ERT CEO Confidence Survey (available [here](#)).

With R4E, European corporates set out to mobilise companies, public agencies, governments and training providers to counter the skills challenge by providing ways for unemployed and those at risk of unemployment to reskill into more in-demand professions. R4E's ambition is trigger a joint effort that will lead to the reskilling of 5 million people by 2030.

**Margaritis Schinas, European Commission Vice-President for the European Way of Life** commented *“At such a time of step-change, it's vital that people are encouraged and empowered to up- and reskill in order to futureproof their qualifications. Providing equal opportunities for Europe's labour force and bridging the skills gaps in the digital and green transitions are essential to ensuring an inclusive, competitive, and prosperous future for our people and businesses. It's heartening to see how a proactive approach to skills is climbing up the agenda of so many corporate leaders, as showcased by the R4E programme, developed at the initiative of ERT. It shows that we all can and should be creative in tackling the skills challenge, including by forging new public-private collaborations.*

*The European Year of Skills offers a unique opportunity to bring skills' development to the spotlight. Because it is not enough to talk about skills, to showcase skills shortages or to praise the importance of upskilling and reskilling. We need to move from words to action. We need to connect the skillset of our workforce to the needs of the labour market. We need to make skills count.”*

**José María Álvarez-Pallete, Chair of the ERT Committee on Jobs, Skills & Impact and Chairman & CEO of Telefónica** said *“Reskilling is one the most important challenges we are facing, so it is great to see it getting so much more visibility through the European Year of Skills. There are a growing number of initiatives in this area and through Reskilling 4 Employment (R4E) we aim to build a network effect through partnerships, creating a more positive culture around reskilling and addressing the fundamental need to reskill a huge number of European citizens. This is about reducing inequality, promoting inclusion and sustaining the competitiveness of Europe’s economy.”*

### **Companies involved**

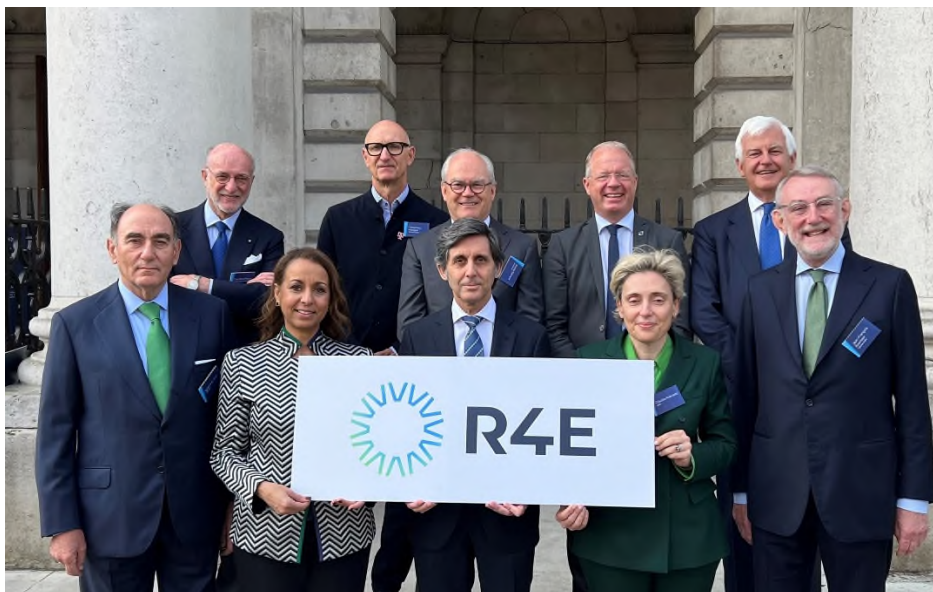
The companies championing the programme are AstraZeneca, Deutsche Telekom, Iberdrola, Leonardo, Nestlé, Nokia, SAP, Sonae, Solvay, Techint, Telefonica, Titan Cement, Vodafone Group and Volvo Group.

R4E is firmly established in 3 countries: Portugal, Spain and Sweden – each with a national website – complete with translations into the national language – connecting unemployed and at-risk workers with opportunities to acquire new skills and change career paths.

Work on R4E programmes in Germany, Greece, Italy, Finland and France is advancing as well, additional programmes are envisaged in other EU Member States.

The project is supported by McKinsey & Co as a lead knowledge partner.  
The R4E website is at: <https://reskilling4employment.eu> Watch the video [here](#).

\*\*\*\*\*



(Back L to R: Gianfelice Rocca (Techint Group of Companies) Timotheus Höttges (Deutsche Telekom), Michel Demaré (AstraZeneca), Martin Lundstedt (Volvo Group), Alessandro Profumo (formerly of Leonardo).

(Front L to R - front: Ignacio Galán (Iberdrola), Dr Ilham Kadri (Solvay), José-María Álvarez-Pallete (Telefónica), Claudia Azevedo (Sonae), Jean-François van Boxmeer (Vodafone and ERT Chair).

### **Note to Editors:**

José María Alvarez-Pallete’s comments on reskilling at the World Economic Forum in Davos can be viewed [here](#).

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

**CONTACT:** Robert O’Meara, Communications Director, ERT  
Tel + 32 2 543 10 51 - E-mail: [robert.omeara@ert.eu](mailto:robert.omeara@ert.eu)  
[www.ert.eu](http://www.ert.eu) - Twitter: @ert\_eu

### **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.

[www.ert.eu](http://www.ert.eu)