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Day of the Liberal Professions 2023

The 2nd of May, CEPLIS participated at the “*Day of the Liberal Professions 2023*” organised within the premises of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). This year’s focus was put on the fostering of skills and the delivering of the Green Deal.

The event was opened and concluded by our President of Honor, and Vice-President of Group 3 of the EESC, Rudolf Kolbe, who is also the Chair of our Austrian interprofessional member BUKO. Several experts addressed and exchanged with the participants throughout four different panels.

President of CEPLIS, Gaetano Stella, was among the speakers of the event. Mr. Stella focused on the ways to overcome the challenges of green and digital transition: *“The contribution of the Liberal Professions to the economic development of a country is crucial. Thanks to their skills & capacity to renew themselves constantly, they represent a real impetus for the ecological & digital transition.”* President Stella said, before underlining the need for a new partnership between universities and professional bodies in order to efficiently face the challenge of new skills adapted to a digital and sustainable world.



Prof. Theodoros Koutroubas Director General CEPLIS, Rudolf Kolbe President of Honour CEPLIS / Vice-President of GROUP 3 EESC, Klaus Thürriedl Member of the Executive Board CEPLIS / President of ECEC, Benjamin Rizzo Vice-President of CEPLIS, member of EESC (MFPA)

Following Gaetano Stella's intervention, **our colleague and Vice-President of the Council of the European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE), Sarah Sherlock, presented CLGE's First STEP Programme.**

The last panel was moderated by our Vice-President and member of the EESC, **Benjamin Rizzo (MFPA)**, who animated the discussion on transition tools. In this context, Ilkka Penttinen Fouto, Project and Policy Officer at Eurocadres underlined: *"The right-to-training addresses the skills gap, one of the main barrier to a successful green transition. Without the universal right to paid training, during working hours, there will be no access to the skills of the future."*

You may find more information about this [here](#)

The European Commission calls for massive boost in enabling digital education and providing digital skills

The 18th of April, the European Commission adopted two proposals for a Council Recommendation in the context of the European Year of Skills, with the aim to support Member States and the education and training sector in providing high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education and training to develop the digital skills of European citizens.

The proposals address the two main common challenges jointly identified by the Commission and EU Member States: **1) the lack of a whole-of-government approach to digital education and training, and 2) difficulties in equipping people with the necessary digital skills.**



Despite progress and some excellent examples of innovation, combined efforts have so far not resulted in systemic digital transformation in education and training. **Member States still struggle to attain sufficient levels of investment in digital education and training infrastructure, equipment and digital education content, digital training (up-skilling) of teachers and staff, and monitoring and evaluation of digital education and training policies.**

The proposal for a “Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training” **calls on all Member States to ensure universal access to inclusive and high-quality digital education and training, to address the digital divide, which has become even more apparent in the light of the COVID-19 crisis.**

The second common challenge identified relates **to the varying levels of digital skills within different segments of the population, and the ability of national education and training systems to address these differences.** The proposal for a “Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training” tackles each level of education and training. It calls on Member States to start early by providing digital skills in a coherent way through all levels of education and training. This can be ensured by establishing incremental objectives and setting up targeted interventions for specific ‘priority or hard-to-reach groups’. The proposal calls on Member States to support high quality informatics in schools, to mainstream the development of digital skills for adults, and to address shortages in information technology professions by adopting inclusive strategies.

A key action by the European Commission shall be facilitating the recognition of certification of digital skills. **To this end, the Commission will run a pilot project of the European Digital Skills Certificate together with several Member States.** The certificate aims to

enhance the trust in and acceptance of digital skills certification across the EU. This will help people have their digital skills recognised widely, quickly and easily by employers, training providers and more.

You may find more information about the two proposals [here](#).

The European Commission proposes new rules on Intellectual property

The 27th of April, the **European Commission has proposed new rules to help intellectual property – related SMEs that make the most of their inventions, leverage new technologies, and contribute to the EU's competitiveness and technological sovereignty.**

The proposed **Regulations on standard essential patents, compulsory licensing of patents in crisis situations, and revision of the legislation on supplementary protection certificates** will create a more transparent, effective and futureproof intellectual property rights framework.

Intangible assets like brands, designs, patents and data are increasingly important in today's knowledge economy. Intellectual property (IP) is a key driver for economic growth as it helps companies gain value from their intangible assets. IP-intensive industries account for almost half of all GDP and over 90% of all EU exports. In the period 2017–2019, nearly 76% of intra-EU trade was generated by patent-intensive industries.

The proposals will complement the **Unitary Patent system**, which is be **operational as of 1 June**. Their respective starting points are existing provisions and principles of international and EU IP law, but they each aim to make the patents system more effective by further eliminating Single Market fragmentation, reducing red tape, and enhancing efficiency. This patent framework shall empower economic operators and competent authorities to better protect innovation while ensuring fair access, including during emergency situations.

These **patent initiatives tackle the Standard essential patents (SEPs), patents that protect technology that has been declared essential for the implementation of a technical standard adopted by a standard developing organisation (SDO), and compulsory licensing, which allows a government to authorise the use of a patented invention without the consent of the patent holder.**

To further support innovation, concurrently with the proposal, **the 2023 SME Fund will now also make available new vouchers services concerning, for the first time, European patents and new plant varieties. These new services will allow SMEs to save up to €1,500 on their patent registration costs and €225 on the registration of new plant varieties per application.**

You may find more information [here](#).

The European Parliament adopts a resolution to strengthen social dialogue

The **1st of June**, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a **Resolution on strengthening social dialogue**.

The text voted by the MEPs underlines the fact that social dialogue, including collective bargaining, is a **crucial and beneficial tool for a well-functioning social market economy, and that it contributes to economic and social resilience, competitiveness, stability, sustainable and inclusive growth, and development**. MEPs further highlight that social dialogue is in addition a key aspect of democracy in the design and implementation of policies and laws affecting those they represent, namely workers and employers.



In this context, the Parliament reiterates that **social dialogue must be protected in order for social partners to regulate themselves autonomously**, ensuring total legitimacy and strong progress on collective agreement coverage, and points out that social dialogue at national and Union level needs to be further supported and that **more efforts are needed to support and promote collective bargaining coverage** and prevent social partners' membership and organisational density from decreasing as well as to ensure that workplaces are well adapted to changes in the world of work in order to safeguard quality jobs.

In addition, **the EP calls on the European Commission to ensure that the obligation to consult the social partners is respected, when provided by EU legislation, including by considering enforcement instruments such as infringement procedures**. The institution also urges the Member States to take note of the fact that both mutual recognition of social partners and the statutory recognition of trade unions and employers' organisations by the authorities of each Member State, in accordance with national laws and practices, are among the key elements contributing to a successful collective bargaining framework, provided employers and workers are able to choose freely which organisation will represent them.

The resolution further calls for the **EU industrial strategy and the SME strategy to promote the role of social partners and ensure that the jobs of tomorrow are both green and decent and recalls that SMEs are the backbone of social cohesion in the EU**.

You may find the full resolution [here](#).

News from Members

Gaetano Stella in talks with the Italian government

The 30th of May, Mr. **Gaetano Stella** in his capacity as **President of Confprofessioni**, has **participated at meeting between the Italian government and the country's social partners** in order to discuss reforms, tax, and wages.

President Stella expressed the satisfaction of Confprofessioni with the government's decision to give priority to supporting medium-low salaries, continuing along the road of cutting the tax wedge, whilst underlining that *"we could also intervene on contract renewals, through tax relief and decontribution of salary increases agreed by the most representative social partners,"*. He also stressed



that *"in terms of contractual arrangements, the government should promote a social pact to redefine a new model of labour relations that leaves room for productivity and welfare, updating those principles that still govern industrial relations and that date back to an economic and social season that is now outdated"*.

Gaetano Stella then recalled that regarding taxation: *"the main objective must be to rebalance the relationship between the tax administration and the taxpayer. The most important step in the reform is the idea of making the taxpayer's statute a 'general tax law': certainly a step forward, but still not enough to guarantee the full force of the taxpayer's rights. It is therefore necessary to elevate the taxpayer's statute to constitutional status"*

You might find more information on this meeting [here](#).