

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL INSURANCE

Action Plan for the European Year of Skills: «Modern Professional Development for green and digital transitions»

1. Introduction

Taking into account the aims of the European Year of Skills, as reflected in the relevant working papers of the European Commission, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, in cooperation with the National Coordinator of the Year, has shaped the present Action Plan. The Action Plan focuses on three key pillars:

- A. Development of a modern professional culture
- B. Provision of a socially targeted professional training
- C. Promotion of professional specialization and certification

The above pillars will be supported by wider actions of promotion and publicity

A. Development of a modern professional culture

Target groups

- Employees
- Unemployed
- Pupils/Students
- Soldiers/Contract Soldiers

Aim and general approach:

The aim of the actions under this pillar is the short-term training of the target groups in the key aspects of professional culture which are: 1) green development/environment 2) digital skills 3) health and safety at work and 4) quality of work.

The training will have an innovative nature and self-diagnostic tools and practices will be utilized so that participants reflect on every aspect of professional culture. The ultimate aim is to raise awareness so that the participants will seek further specialized training for the development of their skills in the said sectors and the training institutions and academic institutions will be activated to satisfy the interest which is going to arise. This approach will apply for all forms of training which will be offered, as described in the following paragraph.

Indicative subjects of each aspect for further reflection:

Green development/environment: restriction of waste of resources, re-cycling, re-use, reduction of harmful emissions

Digital skills: Office applications, Social Media, Communication applications, internet security, artificial intelligence applications

Health and safety: electricity risks, chemical and biological factors, carcinogenic and mutagenic factors, natural factors, such as noise, lighting, internal air quality, thermal strain, ergonomic factors, such as the manual lifting and moving of loads, vibrations, repetitive work, the pace of execution of work, psychosocial factors, electromagnetic fields, artificial optical radiation etc.

Quality: total quality, focus on the needs of the customer, involvement of interested parties, co-operations, group work, cost of bad quality, continuous improvement, preventive and corrective actions, problem-solving tools.

Quantitative targets:

The target of the Action Plan is the training in the aspects of professional culture of 100.000 persons (employees, unemployed, students, pupils, soldiers, Contract soldiers) until the end of 2024. It is an ambitious target which demands the provision of training opportunities in various forms.

Opportunities/ forms of training

The following training opportunities will be offered:

- Distance learning courses (webinars) of a 2-hour duration per aspect of professional culture open to all citizens through one of the most widespread platforms, such as Zoom, Webex, Teams. The webinars will be offered on a daily basis except Sundays and at specific convenient time (e.g. 6-8 pm daily and 10.00 - 12.00 on Saturday morning) in order to facilitate the participation of the interested parties and to reach the quantitative aim of training 35.000 persons through webinars.
- 5-hour in person training courses for all four (4) aspects of professional culture. For the provision of in person training courses, all over Cyprus, a number of premises will be utilized, such as those of the Cyprus Productivity Centre, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA), schools, military camps, trade union and employers' organizations, and local authorities (municipalities and community councils). Courses can also be implemented as in-house company courses for large businesses or in premises where there is a concentration of businesses (industrial areas). The in person training courses will be offered on a daily basis at specific times, so as to reach the quantitative aim of training 10,500 persons through these courses
- Presentations (conferences) on a wider scale (2-3 hours) on a monthly basis with an aim of training 750 persons
- Digital training material (asynchronous /time-flexible/ - learning) for each one of the four (4) key aspects of professional culture, accessible to all citizens, including

persons with disabilities, through the electronic learning (e-learning) platform of the Cyprus Productivity Centre. The aim is for a total of 50.000 persons to attend the time-flexible courses

- «Train the trainers» training courses which will be aimed at large businesses, organizations, organized bodies and other institutions with the aim of them undertaking in-house training of the executives of their organization. The target is to train 100 trainers from an equal number of businesses and the training of 50 employees by each one of them.
- Short duration training videos to be posted on Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok etc.)

Lecturers/ Trainers

The courses will be implemented through the utilization of external trainers – associates from the private sector, with whom the Cyprus Productivity Centre will sign a relevant agreement, similar to the one already used for the digital skills courses which are already being implemented within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Plan. The associates are chosen through a specific procedure after the submission of an application and an evaluation.

Networking

In addition to the utilization of the Mass Media and the Social Media within the framework of promotion and publicity actions in order to attract participants into the training activities, networking with employers' and trade union organizations, professional associations, Local Authorities, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration and very large business will also play a significant role with the aim of these organizations acting as multipliers of the information and contributing in the incitement of employees to participate in the training activities.

Incentives for the enhancement of participation in the training courses

Rewarding of the three (3) businesses/organizations which will present the highest percentage of participation of their employees in the training courses. The rewarding will receive significant exposure.

In addition, and with an aim of inciting participation in the training courses, competitions will be conducted on a regular basis (monthly or weekly) with prizes being awarded through draws.

Assessment of the Training Courses

The assessment of the results of the project will be carried out through the systematic monitoring of the following indices:

- Achievement Index 1: Number of trainees per month

- Achievement Index 2: Percentage of trainees who at the end of the course state will seek further training in one or more aspects of professional culture
- Performance Index: Percentage of trainees who receive additional training within 6 months

Timeline

The initial tasks (planning of courses, development/securing of self-evaluation tools, video production, lecturers' selection, booking of venues, networking) will be carried out in the period May – July 2023 and the implementation of the courses will begin in September 2023.

B. Provision of socially targeted professional training

Current actions

- Training courses in digital skills for persons over 55

The action is included in the Recovery and Resilience Plan with a budget of €1 million and a target of training at least 1.150 persons until the end of 2024 and 2.550 persons until the end of 2025. The implementing body is the Cyprus Productivity Centre.

- Training courses for young persons aged 15-29 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

The action is included in the Cohesion Policy Programme ΘΑΛΕΙΑ (Thalia) with a budget of €5 million and a target of training 2.800 persons until the end of 2027. The implementing body is the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (AvAD) (AnAD).

New actions

- Training of persons with disabilities (ΑμεΑ) within the framework of enhancing social entrepreneurship

The action involves the training of persons with disabilities with the aim of facilitating their employment in a social business or the creation of a social business by persons with disabilities. Within the framework of a study currently conducted by the Department of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (TKEAA) and after having conducted an extensive consultation with associations of persons with disabilities, 15 professional sectors have been identified in which persons with disabilities may be employed, after developing the required skills by attending three-month training courses of around 300 hours. Within the framework of the same study, by July 2023, educational courses will be developed based on standards of professional qualifications for the development of the required skills for each profession. At the same time, a six-month course of around 600 hours for the development of entrepreneurship skills will be developed.

Quantitative target:

Organization of three specialization courses of 300 hours for specific professions with the participation of 5-10 persons with disabilities in each course and organization of a course for entrepreneurship with the participation of 10-20 persons.

C. Promotion of professional specialization and certification

a) Training courses in line with the Professional Qualification Standards

The organization of appropriate training courses will be promoted for the Professional Qualification Standards which are presented in the table below for which there is a need in the labour market aiming at the participation, examination and certification of around 650 persons

		Quantitative target (number of participants)
1.	Installation and maintenance of photovoltaic systems Technician. Level 5.	50
2.	Builder. Level 4.	150
3.	Hybrid and electrical vehicles Technician. Level 4.	50
4.	Central heating systems Technician. Level 4.	50
5.	Air-conditioning and refrigerator installations Technician. Level 4.	50
6.	Retail salesperson. Level 4.	100
7.	Computer applications Programmer. Level 5.	50
8.	Waiter. Level 4.	150

The training courses are expected to begin in September 2023 and conclude by the end of 2024. There will be an activation of the Vocational Training Centres (KEK) and the Centres for the Evaluation of Professional Qualifications (ΚΑΕΠ). The cost for the organization of the training courses, the examination and certification of the persons as well as the promotion and publicity to attract individuals and businesses will be covered by the budget of the Human Resource Development Authority - AvΔΔ (AnAD).

In addition, during 2023 a procedure to update the Professional Qualifications Standards (ΠΕΠ) will be implemented for the first time, and will continue to be implemented on an annual basis, with the direct involvement of representatives of the competent services of the public sector, the employers' and trade union organizations, the professional associations and other competent bodies, as well as professional and other experts.

b) Training in Health and Safety Issues for employees in the constructions sector

Based on the Agreement which will be signed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance and the Federation of Associations of Building Contractors of Cyprus (ΟΣΕΟΚ), the training of at least 5.000 employees in the constructions sector will be promoted on Health and Safety issues, as a precondition in the form of a safe-pass, for working in this sector.

To this end, the state will promote the provision of two 6-hour training courses, one for the Scientific and Technical Staff and one for the Workforce.

At the same time, the dialogue will continue with the aim of the finalization of the future settings which will apply for the employees in the constructions sector regarding training in Health and Safety issues as a pre-condition to work in the sector.

D. Promotion and publicity Actions

In cooperation with the Press and Information Office, a comprehensive promotion and publicity campaign will be drawn up which will include:

- «creating» an identity for the Year of Skills through the creation of a logo, suitable slogans and graphics and through the utilization of the communication toolkit which has been developed by the European Commission for the Year of Skills
- Production of short educational videos
- Posts on Mass Media, Social Media, and popular communication platforms, targeted to specific groups of the population
- Targeted Info days for direct briefing of businesses, organizations and organized entities
- Direct briefing of very large businesses (through telephone or written communication) regarding the entire attempt of developing and promoting Professional Culture and means for achieving this aim

The achievement of the aim for the participation of 100.000 persons in the training activities will depend to a great extent on the promotion and publicity actions.

Budget

The total budget for the actions which are analyzed above amounts to €1,4 million and is analyzed in Appendix 1 where the quantitative targets for each action are also presented.

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