

Appendix Stuttgart Brief

Bringing together human approach and technological changes in the automotive ecosystem Stuttgart Conference, September 2022

As a result of the workshops which took place during the first annual conference of the Automotive Skills Alliance, several recommendations have been drawn based on the inputs of the workshop participants, representing various perspectives of industrial partners, education and training providers, European organizations as well as several European regions. To complement the “Stuttgart brief” with its ten most important conclusions, following addition was extracted from the workshops, grouped in a number of areas important for the up- and reskilling actions at all levels, including the strategy, learning experience, teaching, content creation, quality assurance and recognition, learning technology, funding and regional perspective, which involves recommendations on cooperation, communication and accessibility of learning opportunities.

Strategy

Technological changes in the industry require substantial efforts in area of up skilling and reskilling. There is a shift from traditional ways of learning to more agile forms of education. To achieve the objective of Life-long learning, there is a need for change of mindset in terms of motivation to learn. E.g., “What would be needed for the future prosperity of individuals at the job market using natural talent”. The learning opportunities are already today among the top reasons to decide for concrete job. These are the reasons why there is the need for clear strategy, defined and communicated in manageable sets of actions.

Effective and up-to-date strategy requires regular data collection and data analysis especially in unemployment trends, identification of skills gaps and effectiveness of different types of courses and training methods to create flexible forecasting system of skills needs and feedback collection.



Learning experience

No “one-size fits all” approach can be applied when it comes to learning process. Experiences show that there is a need to change from content focused learning to student focused learning. The focus should be on developing of skills rather than a theory or job description. The training should be granular and modular, organized in bundles of micro courses, where possible the modules or micro courses should be available across different skill sets. The ability to clearly deliver the content to the students in understandable way is more important for reskilling then advanced degree of expertise.

Training content creation and delivery

To make the content more engaging and to achieve higher completion rates, it is necessary to create the right mixture of theory and hands-on trainings in a project-based courses while creating and rewarding effective innovative approaches. The learning methods should have inclusive approach of hard-to educate groups, regions’ and companies’ needs. That would allow for creating suitable job opportunities for these groups to prevent social exclusion.

The training courses should encompass granular content modules, that can re-used in multiple educational tracks. It should include data analysis to identify and target the real industry needs. Consideration should be given to the fact, that different skill families have different difficulty levels and different groups of learners have different ability to grasp the subject. There should be a shift towards student-focused approach. Reskilling and upskilling strategies with regards to the training content and the supply of training courses should be set into the wider context of requirements including corporate culture, learning culture, leadership, communication and making reskilling and upskilling activities part of the corporate strategy. This would ensure overall strategic approach for the reskilling and upskilling.

Quality Assurance and Recognition

Standards should be created by the training providers’ associations in cooperation with the industry. Instead of one central authority deciding on the quality assurance there should be competition created among different providers. Minimum standards should be defined by the industry and associations to guarantee recognition of certificates, preferably valid across EU. A cooperation among companies, R&D centers, creating feedback loop, is strongly recommended.



Learning Technology

The use of technology should be appropriately adapted to the learning style of the students. Video materials and virtual reality can be used for emotional engagement, stimulating motivation or practical demonstrations. In person meetings on the other hand are better suited for problem solving exercises. Technology is very useful for detecting weak areas of students' learning process and to allow for obtaining knowledge in a visual and understandable way. Gamification of the trainings can be used where relevant to increase student engagement and learning success. Championship learning schemes at EU level can be included in the learning frameworks.

Funding

A sufficient and addressed funding is essential for the up- and reskilling efforts at all levels. This involves precise identification of areas where funding is needed and matching with relevant public and private sources to achieve the right mix for up- and re-skilling projects. Employers should be involved in designing of funding tools. Diversity of resources should be explored in financing possibilities as well as innovative solutions and their combination.

External support mechanisms are especially important for the SMEs in order to have timely information and budget for the strategic approach for up- and reskilling, therefore a dedicated support service should include a wide range of offers: one to one consulting, events, information via studies, guidelines, working tools, networking with other companies.

Regional Aspects

Cooperation Platform

Building multi-stakeholder cooperation platform among partners to share regional plans and strategies is essential. Feedback from regions undergoing green and digital transitions of their automotive ecosystems on public services, career guidance tools, training offers, and many other aspects of the regional cooperation should be used as a base for drafting European policies, for regions to get up to speed with the pace of the transition in terms of up- and reskilling actions.

The regional projects should be based on monitoring and analysis of unemployment trends, training offer and its key drivers to allow workers transition between domains depending on region's priorities based on the skill set they already have.



Communication

There is a strong need for the right communication approach when it comes to up and reskilling activities to bring the visibility and attractiveness of job roles and profiles in the automotive-mobility ecosystem. This would help to further promote informal education and change of mindset leading to creation of “pride”. Based on the regional workshop recommendations, two main approaches should be used for raising awareness and attracting new workers in the sector: (1) focus on children and their parents stimulating youth involvement and (2) focus on retaining employees using smart allocation of resources.

Accessibility

Regions should play a role in ensuring and easy access to up and reskilling programs, by focusing on elimination of bureaucracy and inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Regional platforms for training courses with localized content will require significant number of courses in local language. Regions should consider help with accessibility of the jobs by considering the transportation strategy in the region especially in regard of expected electrification objectives by the 2030. This includes rethinking of energy strategy, smart devices development, new insurance service models, increase in use of technology and new transport concepts (mobility as a service) as well as up-skilling and re-skilling actions linked to smart cities objectives, beyond the automotive sector.

