

Briefing for Commissioner Schmit

Meeting with Matt Brittin, Google's President for EMEA

4 February 2020, 16:00

Scene setter

You will meet Matt Brittin, Google's President for **EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa)**, to discuss the digital priorities of the new **European Commission**, particularly how can Google continue being a trusted partner to **promote and support the Commission's agenda** on digital skills.

Google is a member of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition (which is an initiative under the 2016 Skills Agenda). As a member of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, Google pledged to help one million Europeans to find a job or grow their business and to train two million Europeans in digital skills.

Main objectives:

- Inform about the Commission's intentions on skills (upskilling, digital skills, just transition);
- Gather informal input on Google's commitment regarding the development of skills in general and digital skills in particular.

Line to take

- **Underline the current relevance of digital skills for this Commission.** President von der Leyen has clustered the work of her Commission around six political priorities, one of which is "A Europe fit for the digital age", led by Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager. This priority includes two main strands: 1) legislation on digital services; 2) empowering people through education and skills. In her priorities, President von der Leyen clearly states that "digital literacy has to be a foundation for everyone."
- **Provide an overview of the current and upcoming initiatives from the Commission.** The new Commission is in full swing:
 - In December 2019: **European Green Deal** – with the ambition to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.
 - In January 2020: **Communication on a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions + Just Transition Mechanism** – with the ambition to ensure just transitions for all in an economy facing unprecedented transitions. This communication underlines the importance of digital skills.
 - Planned for March 2020: 1) **new Industrial and SME Strategy** – with the ambition to be a world leader in a digital and circular industrial future; 2) a **reinforced EU Skills Agenda**.

- Planned for June: the update of the **Digital Education Action Plan**, which foresees three priorities, one being the development of digital skills for all citizens.
- **Highlight the initiatives on the development of digital skills within the 2016 Skills Agenda and the upcoming Reinforced Skills Agenda.** The **Skills Agenda**, launched in June 2016, gives digital skills priority at all levels, from basic to high-end and continues implementation efforts on the ground. The **reinforced EU Skills Agenda**, to be launched on 25 March 2020, will continue to help provide all Europeans with adequate digital skills. It will also propose initiatives to address skills to support the green and digital transitions, and to develop skills intelligence using artificial intelligence. We aim to generate **new specific commitments** from business on upskilling and reskilling of the workforce. For this, we wish to develop a **Pact for Skills**, generating partnerships in areas that are crucial for industrial competitiveness and the green economy.
- **Inform about funding schemes, instruments, and initiatives post 2020 for supporting the development of digital skills.** Many of our instruments and initiatives post 2020 will also address the challenges linked to the digitalisation of our society. To give some examples, the European Social Fund+ will support projects such as creating e-schools with digitally trained teachers, training unemployed people for ICT jobs, supporting SMEs in the ICT sector, and providing basic digital skills to citizens so that they can fully participate in society. Regarding advanced digital skills, the Digital Europe Programme will focus on advanced digital skills in specific fields such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and high-performance computing.

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Background

The reinforced Skills Agenda will highlight that the political ambitions for Europe on climate and digital transitions, social fairness, new industrial strategy can only be driven forward by a skilled population. It is currently planned to include several initiatives that have a relevance for digital skills and for the digital transition, for instance:

1. a **Pact for Skills** to mobilise employers and social partners to contribute to the up/reskilling efforts (to be launched during the 2020 Skills week in November). The partnerships facilitated by the Skills Pact would focus on those skills that are key to industrial competitiveness and the new green economy, and would ensure training supply chains for SMEs and their staff.
2. work on **skills intelligence**, in cooperation with Cedefop, based on the use of artificial intelligence and big data: what are the skills sought after and where at regional level; where are gaps/bottlenecks; what are trends on emerging new skills, as well as on skills supply and demand in Europe;
3. **sectoral cooperation on skills** for the digital and green transitions – focusing on innovative sectors, sectors undergoing significant transformations or sectors with a key role in decarbonisation and the circular economy, bringing all key stakeholders together to develop and implement sectoral skills strategies;
4. **Fast Track to Skills Validation and Recognition**, speeding up (and digitalising) the process for people seeking to go through a job transition or cross-border certification for their qualifications and skills.
5. **Digital Skills Labs** – ICT professional intensive training for people who want to take their first steps in a technology career but whose initial training or experience is in another area. ‘Bootcamp’ training and coaching plus guaranteed job interviews with digital champion employers.
6. **Skills for life** – Beyond the labour market, the transition to the green and digital era call for adult education to provide new skills for all, whether active, inactive or retired. Local learning centres, such as libraries, as well as wider civil society have a crucial role to play.

In the course of the first semester of 2020 the Commission will also be working on a proposal to reinforce the **Youth Guarantee**. The Youth Guarantee could be strengthened by calling for basic digital trainings and stronger focus on green skills, more systematic validation of non-formal and informal learning, and better profiling and career guidance.

Matt Brittin – CV

Matt Brittin is a British businessman, President of EMEA Business & Operations for Google. Since 2007, he is lead spokesperson for Google on its announcements in Europe about digital skills and on issues such as controversial content and corporation tax. Matt Brittin graduated from University of Cambridge and from London Business School. Before joining Google, he was Director of Strategy and Digital at Trinity Mirror, and Consultant at McKinsey & Co.

