

Welcome message from Ms Virginia Raggi – Mayor of the metropolitan City of Rome (EN)

Dear Colleagues,

The dissemination of high-quality work-based learning is at the basis of one of the pillars of Europe 2020's strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and at the heart of one of the most recent recommendations of the European Commission with regard to education and training.

With these premises, the Commission has promoted the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA); an initiative that brings together governments and key stakeholders with the aim of strengthening the quality, offer and overall image of apprenticeships and technical training in Europe.

The **Metropolitan City of Rome**, as part of EAfA, has launched the European Network of Cities for Apprenticeships initiative with the aim of promoting and strengthening the presence and commitment of cities and metropolitan authorities in reaching the objective of the Alliance. At this stage, it is crucial to invest in training as the main driver of sustainable and inclusive innovation and development.

As the first to join the Alliance, the Metropolitan City of Rome has developed the **programme SI, VALE! – Integrated Systems to Valorise Apprenticeship, Work-based Learning and Experience Abroad** promoting and supporting high-standard apprenticeships at metropolitan level.

The key role played by cities in terms of challenges and opportunities for Europe as a whole, has been at the centre of discussions and exchanges for quite a while now. Over 70% of the European population lives in cities, and the figure is expected to reach 80% by 2050. Cities are where the greatest opportunities of growth and employment are found, as 2/3 of the EU GDP is produced in these areas, providing over 70% of the jobs available.

Cities are also where the worst environmental and social issues (housing deprivation, difficulty to access services, physical and social degradation) manifest themselves. The sustainable development promoted, from both an environmental and social point of view, by Europe 2020 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is an established model that has been having an increasing influence on European policy-making and its tools of intervention.

Employment and competencies for local economies are included in Goal 8 "Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth".

Reaching full and productive employment and decent work for all, by 2030.

Considerably reducing the percentage of unemployed young people not enrolled in educational programmes or taking part in training courses by 2020; and in Goal 9, "Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation".

"Cities and metropolitan authorities play a key role in the sustainable development of local communities" They are capable of building on local strengths while contributing with strong partnerships. They have the potential to be a key success element for apprenticeships, from development to implementation, increasing their scale, breath, and quality.

This is why we would like to encourage **businesses to start apprenticeship programmes in key local sectors, strengthen the capacity of professional training bodies, promote information and career guidance for young people, support the participation of the most vulnerable groups in apprenticeship programmes and use public procurement as a tool to increase the offer of quality apprenticeships.**

This year, in early January, before the world came to a grinding halt due to the pandemic, the European Commission defined the methods with which social policy can respond to today's challenges and

opportunities, proposing EU-level measures for the next months and asking for a commitment on additional interventions at all levels in the employment and social rights sectors.

All countries have worked to achieve a “socially strong Europe for a fair transition”.

The pandemic, which hit Italy particularly hard, not only had severe social and economic effects but it also prevented many strategic events from going ahead-

Today, we celebrate the event scheduled to take place in Rome to launch the European Network of Cities for Apprenticeship, in the format dictated by the health emergency, which nevertheless allows us to share and develop.

The main challenge is to give a tangible form to apprenticeship and technical, professional and higher training opportunities as a tool capable of making an operational impact, within strategic metropolitan projects, on bringing together the three pillars of sustainable development – economy, society and environment – and developing a new generation of policies able to turn the training and professional development of our citizens into a transversal approach to local government.

This workshop, organised in collaboration with the European Commission, marks the launch of the European Network of Cities for Apprenticeship initiative, and will be an important opportunity for the European cities to reflect on challenges such as the transition to an economy with zero impact on climate and digitalization. We want to invest on the opportunities that apprenticeship programmes offer, with the aim of defining and strengthening the **connection between active labour market policies and the sustainable development of local communities** within the policies and interventions of metropolitan cities. This is why we want to define and strengthen the **connection between active labour market policies and the sustainable development of local communities** within the policies and interventions of metropolitan cities by anchoring them to strategic sectors of the economy. For example, in Rome, tourism and the advanced tertiary sector and new sectors such as digital innovation and circular economy; **get different stakeholders involved** in innovative and/or high social impact initiatives; develop and create **re-skilling** programmes capable of responding to what are often very rapid changes in view of improving social and working life and to use training as a driver towards sustainable and inclusive urban innovation and development.

We would like this opportunity to share ideas and experiences to translate into tangible proposals that can be shared with the **European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, fuelling the consultative process to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, with the ambition of making an impact on the new 2021-2027 cycle of European policy-making”**.

The main challenge is to give a tangible form to the opportunity of apprenticeship, vocational education and training and higher technical education as a tool capable of making an operational impact, within strategic metropolitan projects, on integrating the three pillars of sustainable development: economy, society and environment. The work programme will allow us all to learn more about the good practices in European cities, discuss new models and measures that adopt an holistic and integrated approach and promote the collaboration between local bodies, businesses, civil society and other stakeholders and finally reflect on tangible actions to propose to the European Commission and European Parliament, in view of implementing the European Pillar of social rights through apprenticeship.

We wish to thank you for taking part in this webinar, we hope all proposals are shared fruitfully, and we look forward to coordinating positive strategic work for our citizens.

Rome, 11 June, 2020