



28 January 2019, Portugal

Fashion World's Challenges - Looking for Qualification, Occupations ...and the right skills in the TCLF sectors

“For many years our first priority was to win customers and to keep our mill busy. Now our first priority is to find (and retain) skilled employees”. This brief quote of Simon Cotton, CEO of Johnstons of Elgin, Scottish knitwear manufacturer sums up superbly the main challenge that European Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear (TCLF) companies are struggling to overcome every day.

The re- and upskilling of the existing TCLF workforce and the difficulty of finding new talents with right skills were the main topics discussed at the two first public events *“Fashion World's Challenges - Looking for Qualifications and Occupations”* organised within the 4-year Erasmus+ project Skills4Smart TCLF 2030 last week in Portugal. Both seminars brought together, national and international experts and industry stakeholders to discuss the future of the workforce in Fashion industries. On 22th January 2019, the first conference, focusing mainly on the Textile and Clothing sectors, took place at CITEVE premises (Portuguese Technological Centre for Textile and Clothing) in Vila Nova de Famalicão, while the next day, CTCP (Portuguese Footwear Technology Centre) hosted in S. João da Madeira the second event involving mainly companies, VET providers and stakeholders of the Leather and Footwear industries.

Both events drove to similar conclusions and highlighted the urgency of taking actions. We are living in an age in which the pace of change is incredibly rising, digitalisation and most advanced technology are affecting the way of working, the retirement wave of experienced workers is intensifying, traditional jobs are destroyed and at the same time replaced and recreated, the number of students in vocational training and educational system is continuously diminishing...and the TCLF sectors have still not found sustainable solutions for this complex situation. As speakers clearly explained in these last days, “Lifelong learning should be promoted in each company. We should make our sector more attractive and explain, above all to the younger generations, the opportunities existing in our sector (Miguel Pedrosa Rodrigues, Pedrosa & Rodrigues). “Robotics, automation, digitalisation are already a reality in our industries – why not using them to attract the youngsters? The technology is extraordinarily helpful in supporting the work of people, it will never replace the workers.” (Ricardo Cunha, ITA). “MOOCs, tutorials and other digital devices are also great teaching materials, but they will never replace training. For example, it is like learning how to drive a car, you will need always somebody showing and explaining you how to drive - you can not learn it directly from a book. People will always be at the core of the training” (Rui Moreira, AMF). Nevertheless, “sectoral vocational education and training needs to be reinforced or redeveloped. The most difficult part is updating the curricula to match the different industry needs. All industry stakeholders,

including trade unions and national associations should actively participate in the process” (Ana Maria Damião, National Agency for Qualification and Education). Indeed, “an intense collaboration among all sectoral stakeholders and exchanges of best practices should be promoted at all levels of governance” (Gonçalo Santos, APIC Secretary General). The Porto area benefits from a robust support by the community and political authorities. Fernando Freire de Sousa, António Leite and Adelaide Dias, respectively from Norte Portugal Regional Coordination and Development Commission, Institute for Employment and Professional Training, and Municipality of Vila Nova de Famalicão reconfirmed their willingness of continuing their programs and schemes related to the TCLF clusters, as for instance: training free of charge for TCLF workers, promotion of the transition from school to work and of the TCLF careers, as well as the active involvement of all parties of the community in the educational and working environment.

This is of course a clear example of best practice in the TCLF sector, and this is where our Skills4Smart project comes in - sharing knowledge and best practices in order to anticipate skills needs, improve the employability and the training of right competences are our main goals. In the coming months, the S4TCLF partnership will be busy at developing a new Sectoral Skill Strategy (WP5), a new attractiveness campaign of TCLF careers (WP6) and 8 new curricula for 8 TCLF occupations (WP7). *So, let us get back to work and stay tuned!*

For more information about the project:

- Visit the project website at <http://www.s4tclfbblueprint.eu>
- Write to info@s4tclfbblueprint.eu
- Follow us on Twitter [@Skills4TCLF](https://twitter.com/Skills4TCLF) and on Facebook [@skills4smartTCLF](https://www.facebook.com/skills4smartTCLF).

Project Details:

Project Title: Skills4Smart TCLF Industries 2030

Project Reference: 591986-EPP-1-2017-1-BE-EPPKA2-SSA-B

Programme: ERASMUS + (Sector Skills Alliances for implementing a new strategic approach to sectoral cooperation on skills (“Blueprint”))

Project duration:

01st January 2018 – 31st December 2021

Project Partners:

1. EURATEX, Belgium – Textiles & Clothing, Project coordinator
2. CEC, Belgium - Footwear
3. COTANCE, Belgium - Leather
4. CIAPE- Centro Italiano per l’Apprendimento Permanente, Italy
5. CITEVE- Centro Tecnológico das Indústrias Têxtil e do Vestuário de Portugal, Portugal
6. CNDIPT- Centrul National de Dezvoltare a Invatamantului Profesional si Tehnic, Romania
7. COBOT, Belgium
8. CTCP, Centro Tecnológico do Calçado de Portugal, Portugal
9. HMA - Hellenic Management Association, Greece
10. FUNDAE - Fundación Estatal para la Formación en el Empleo, Spain
11. IVOC, Belgium
12. INESCOP- Instituto Tecnológico del Calzado y Conexas, Spain
13. OPCALIA, France

14. PIN - Soc. Cons. A r.l. – Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze, Italy
15. Politecnico Calzaturiero, Italy
16. SPIN360, Italy
17. TUIASI- Universitatea Tehnica Gheorghe Asachi din Iasi, Romania
18. Lodz University of Technology, Poland
19. UPC- Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain
20. PIRIN-TEX EOOD, Bulgaria
21. Marzotto, Italy

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union