

# FASHION WORLD'S CHALLENGE:

Looking for Qualifications, Occupations...and the right skills in the TCLF sectors

NEWS N. 2 – MARCH 2019

*“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.”*

SIMON COTTON, CEO OF JOHNSTONS OF ELGIN, SCOTTISH KNITWEAR MANUFACTURER



## S4TCLF FIRST PUBLIC EVENTS, PORTUGAL

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 on 22<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Porto region.

Both seminars brought together, national and international experts and industry stakeholders to discuss the future of the workforce in Fashion industries. 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

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*Public event at CITEVE, 22<sup>th</sup> January*

diminishing...and the TCLF sectors have still not found sustainable solutions for this complex situation.

As speakers clearly explained in these two events, “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).



*Public event at CTCP, 23<sup>th</sup> January*

## TCLF INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT AS FIRST ASSET OF OUR PROJECT

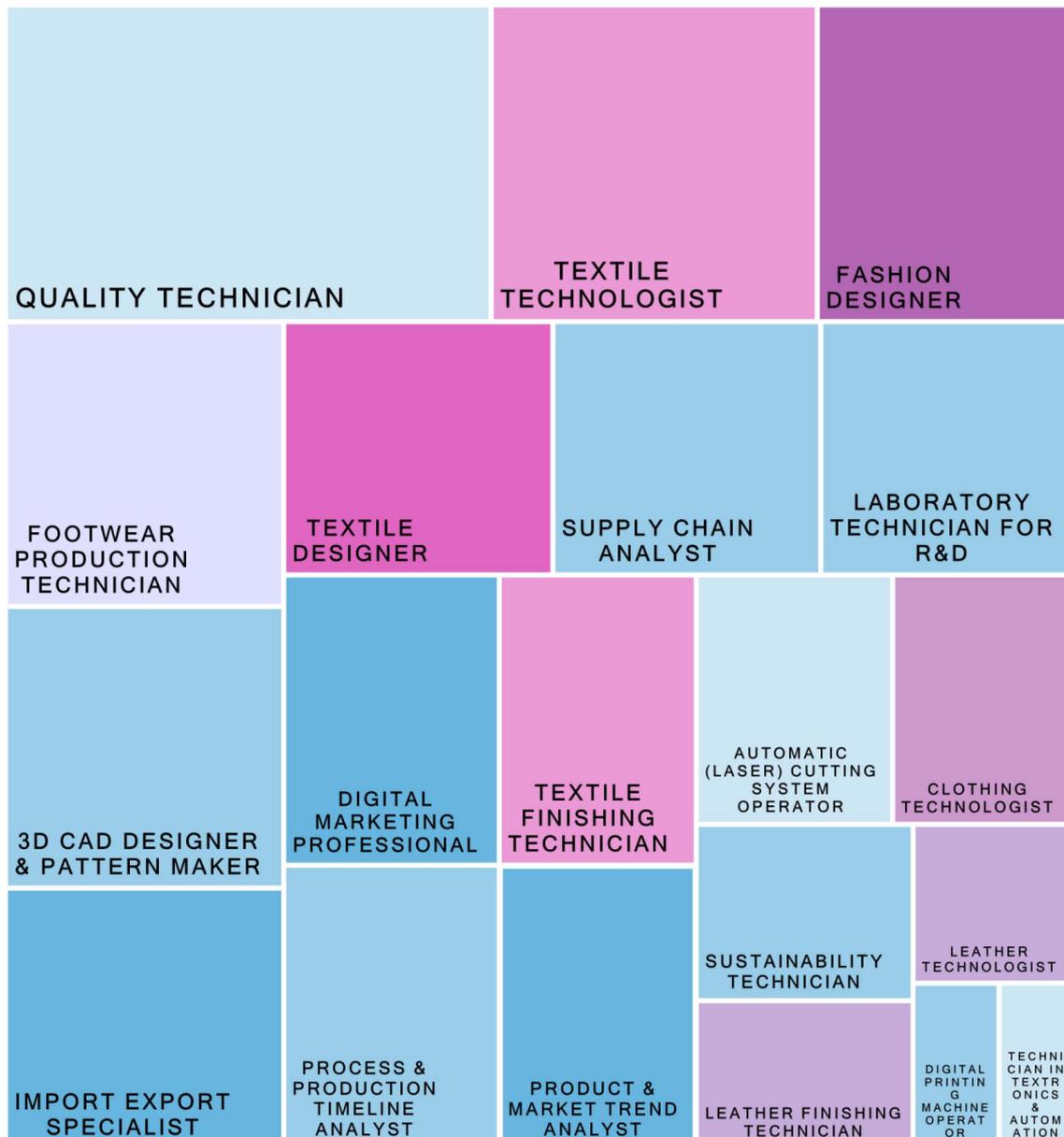
Experience, outlook and active engagement of companies of the European TCLF sectors serve as the most important quality parameter for our Blueprint S4TCLF - as our intention is to base our actions and activities on evidences from the field.

These key stakeholders will be consulted at various moments within this four-year project and actively involved in focus groups, analyses, development of strategies, learning resources, training updating and pilots. Last Autumn 2018 we started the collaboration by conducting an **in-depth interview to a total of 225 companies of the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sectors in the 9 partners countries.**

The survey provided a wealth of information about all aspects of business operations (production organisation, employment prospects, divergent innovative practices, threats and opportunities, ...) and focused on current and future changes in TCLF occupations and skills needs. Moreover, the different approaches of TCLF companies in dealing with the skills gap issue (training, recruitment, job rotations, ...) received our full attention.

The analysis of the results is now in full swing, but we can already present the various occupations that we have discussed with TCLF employers. On the basis of our partnership insights, expertise and daily experiences on the

*Representation of the changing occupations in the employment in the 225 surveyed companies.*  
The total employment of these TCLF companies represents over 3% of total TCLF employment in the EU .



field, we identified a list of 20 occupations which are (and will be) most influenced by drivers of change. Those 20 jobs profiles are reported in the Table on p. 3 in different colours corresponding to the sub-sector or to the transversality of the occupations. The size of the blocks identifies the current amount of employees carrying out that specific occupation in the interviewed TCLF companies. Moreover, taking into account a broad list of drivers of change, ranging from technological, economic and environmental factors to demographic and cultural developments, we questioned which specific factor(s) affect(s) mainly the development of occupations and skills demand.

Not surprisingly and completely in line with what we all already know for a long time, TCLF companies asserted that the difficulty of attracting young people for TCLF jobs is the number one problem for the entire industry. A specific part of our project is therefore entirely dedicated to this problem (WP6), yet should become also a top priority for the decision- and policy makers.

Our findings will be published systematically, thematically and through different channels. So keep an eye on this newsletter, our website, social media and our dissemination activities!

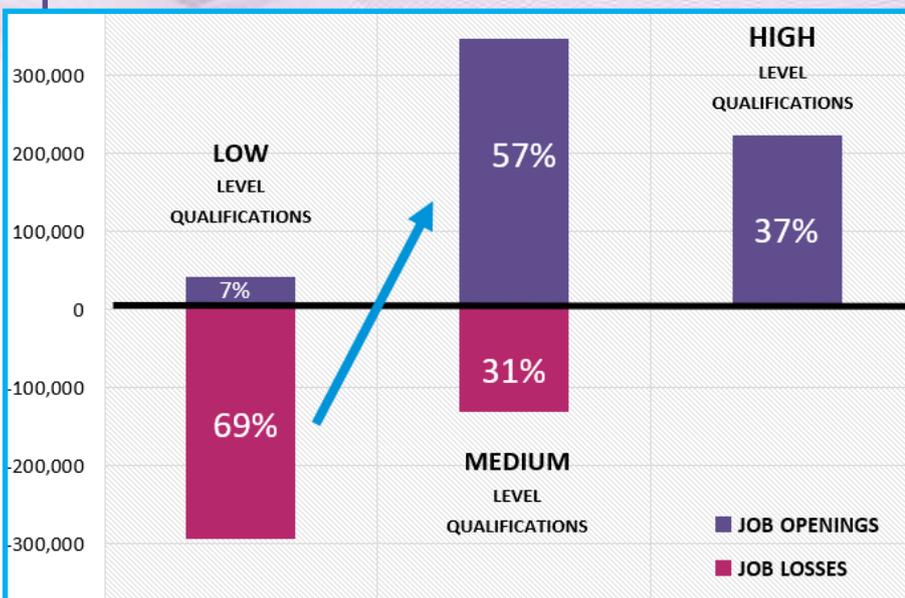


### UPSKILLING AND SKILLS NEEDS: WHAT? WHY? HOW?

A few years ago, CEDEFOP triggered the upskilling idea with a forecast of the employment evolution in the European Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear sectors from 2013 to 2025. The current state of art is - fortunately - not as bad as the CEDEFOP's scenario, which predicted a loss of about 426.000 jobs. However, we share the essential CEDEFOP's assumptions on skills needs which foresees a delicate situation with respect to the lower qualified

employees (machine operators, sewers,...). According to the graph below, the job losses are almost equal to the replacement needs. The forecast on medium qualification level provides a better picture, we clearly see important job openings and therefore possible new opportunities. At the higher-skilled level, the expectation of even new jobs is being met today.

The S4TCLF Blueprint project focuses on the lower qualified employees. Setting up effective



*TCLF Employment Forecast 2013-2025*

*Share of 426,000 job losses and 611,000 job openings according to qualification level of the employees (CEDEFOP, 2014)*

up- and reskilling programmes to equip our employees with the qualifications that allow them to be dedicated on a higher qualification level, is one of the main objectives of our ambitious project.

The survey carried out in 2018 by the partnership confirms that the necessity of upskilling the TCLF workforce is today a reality and recognises as such by the industry. In fact, the share of employers looking for solutions on skills needs within the company (extra training, job rotation,...) is twice as large as the group of those looking for solutions outside the company (recruitment)!

Does this shift of vocational training from schools to the workplace mean that the role of school is fading out? No, on the contrary! Schools that switch to professional systems of apprenticeship and dual learning show how an educational centre can tailor its offer to the needs of the industry. The Blueprint project would be meaningless if we ignore the opportunities of our industry for future generations of employees. More than 300 VET and training stakeholders have now registered for possible collaboration.

*Consult the list on our project website!*

### PREPARING THE GROUND FOR 8 NEW CURRICULA: AN ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT EU RESOURCES

One of the main challenges in the TCLF sectors is the lack of a clear overview of what is existing in terms of education and training programmes in Europe. This brings often to a consequent loss and under-exploitation of results, replication of already implemented activities, lack of knowledge-sharing and best practices promotion.

Based on this assumption, one of the tasks foreseen in the first year of the project, was a mapping study of the relevant projects, initiatives and reports at European level in TCLF skills and education. We selected a total of 41 projects and reports, and thanks to a methodology developed by CIAPE, we analysed them through following steps: a study of the most important drivers of change and their impact on the occupations, an in-depth examination of the “new occupations” mentioned, a study of the additional knowledge and skills relevant for already existing occupations and, finally, a presentation of already existing relevant training, curricula and any other relevant additional products.

We discovered that the drivers of change impacting mostly the TCLF industry as a whole are “technological change” and “values and identity”, while “norms and regulations” is not considered very relevant although affecting different occupations. More than 20 “new job profiles” have been mentioned within the resources identified. However, not all of them are to be considered as “new occupations”, some can be seen as an integration of occupations already existing in ESCO, the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. Moreover, 15 of these projects provide already innovative and



updated training materials which might be used for the development of 8 new curricula for the S4TCLF project. Partners in charge of building the content for the MOOCs will take into account the already existing available material, as well as the results of the survey to TCLF companies and market analysis.

The mapping of EU projects and reports in skills and education will also contribute to the formulation of a strategic structured roadmap to establish future partnerships, where past or current successful joint initiatives might be replicated, adapted, extended to another sub-sector and/or to other geographical areas.

**LAUNCH OF WPVII: IDENTIFICATION OF THE FIRST TWO OCCUPATIONS**

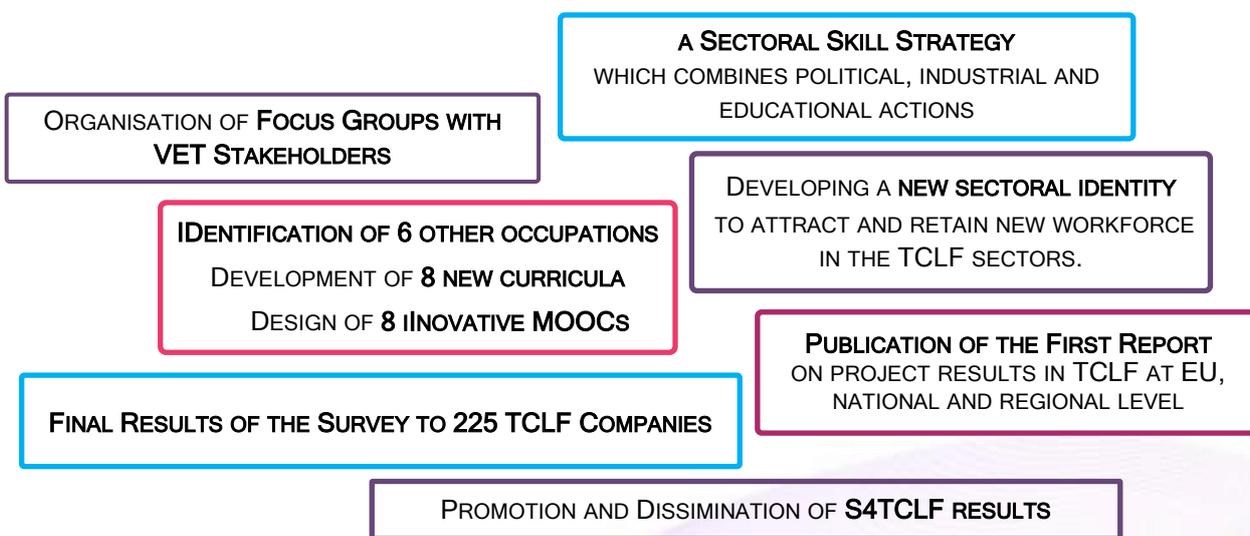
The job profiles “Sustainability technician” and “Supply chain analyst” prevailed. As a result of an intense and lively debate during the third Technical meeting, which took place in conjunction with the public events in Porto, the S4TCLF partnership approved to start working on the development of the curricula for these two occupations. The next working steps are the following: definition of the occupations, analysis of their role in each sub-sector, identification of their tasks, competences and skill-set, validation

**1. SUSTAINABILITY TECHNICIAN**

**2. SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYST**

and matching with the qualification standards and classification (NQF). Only then start the S4TCLF partners to transform professional competences from qualification profiles into Unit of Learning Outcomes.

**S4TCLF PROJECT: WHAT'S NEXT?**



**CONSORTIUM PARTNERS & CONTACTS:**



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Erasmus +  
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 Sectoral Skills Alliance for implementing a new strategic approach “Blueprint” to sectoral cooperation on skills (Key Action 2, Lot 3)  
 Project number: 591986-EPP-1-2017-1-BE-EPPKA2-SSA-B.

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