



On the 20th of June 2022, Brussels (Belgium)

## **Blueprint' Skills4Smart TCLF 2030' Final Conference: "Knitting together the future for the Textile Ecosystem"**

*After four years and a half, the Blueprint Project "Skills4Smart TCLF 2030" which aimed to enhance the modernisation and competitiveness of the European TCLF sectors by developing a sustainable upskilling and reskilling strategy, has finally concluded. The Final Conference that took place last Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, at the Renaissance Brussels Hotel and also streamed online, presented the outcomes of this ambitious project, highlighting the Sectoral Skills Strategy for the Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear released on the same week.*

In the 'Skills 4 Smart TCLF Industries 2030' project, funded by the European Union's ERASMUS+ programme under the Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills, the 22 project partners jointly conducted an in-depth analysis of the current situation in terms of employment and skills of TCLF sectors in the EU. As a result, the authors established a situational analysis of the current industry's needs and challenges in terms of employment and skills and developed future scenarios and forecasts at the horizon of 2030. The result is a framework for building a solid Sectoral Skills Strategy grounded in facts and data and a simple step-by-step guide on how to move from analysis to action.

The Final Conference of the Skills4Smart TCLF project was attended by around 180 participants (out of which more than 120 followed it on streaming), including national and European industry stakeholders, including industry and policy representatives, partners of the project, as well as other important players in the area of skills and training and the TCLF sectors.

Dirk Vantghem, Director General of the European Apparel and Textile Confederation (EURATEX), opened the session by reemphasising the commitment of the three umbrella organisations to pursue the work on skills development for the industry and highlighting EURATEX's commitment to coordinate the implementation of the ambitious [Pact for Skills for the TCLF sectors](#), in close cooperation with the European Commission.

Carmen Arias Castellano, Secretary-General of the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC), gave her testimonial on how imperative this project was in developing a vast collaborative network of stakeholders, together with the creation of two successful initiatives: the European Network of VET providers and the European Network of Regions, which will play a key role in the upcoming steps of the Pact for Skills implementation.

Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano, Secretary-General of the Confederation of National Associations of Tanners and Dressers of the European Community (COTANCE), reiterated the importance of the Skills4Smart TCLF project as a "precursor for what will be done in the future" regarding the skills and training in the Textile Ecosystem and briefly introduced the outcomes of the project that would be presented during the event.

A representative from the European Commission, Julie Fionda, Deputy Head of Unit from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, started her presentation by introducing the Erasmus+ Blueprint initiative, highlighting the fact that the Skills4Smart TCLF Blueprint project, one of the pioneers in the first wave of this initiative, is a "model, that inspired the European Pact for Skills". A project that supported and built a platform for stakeholders to work across the value chain to develop and implement strategies and address the skills gaps.

Iratxe Garcia, Senior Project Officer at EURATEX and Coordinator of the Skills4Smart TCLF project, joined the stage to introduce the project itself, the main challenges for the TCLF industries at the moment, such as the need to engage young workers to restore and retain the skills left by the ageing workforce, and the mismatch between the needs of the industry and the existing skills supply by the education system. During her presentation, Ms Garcia introduced the main objectives of the project and briefly presented its key outcomes, explaining how the results of the Skills4SmartTCLF project will contribute to the address the skills challenges of the TCLF sectors in Europe.

Aura Mihai, a Professor at Universitatea Tehnica Gheorghe Asachi Iasi and consortium partner, described one of the essential outcomes developed within this Blueprint project: eight training courses available for free in the virtual learning platform [iversity](#), based on eight job profiles previously identified and developed. These courses mainly focus on VET providers that can use them as a teaching and learning tool complementing their training programme. Likewise, these can also serve TCLF companies that want to use them as an upskilling or reskilling tool for their employees.

The second outcome of the project addressed during the conference was presented by Federico Brugnoli, the CEO of SPIN360: The [European Fashion Campus](#), an online platform that serves as a central point of information, knowledge, best practices, and activities and courses related to the Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries.

The 'TCLF Sectoral Skills Strategy' was another of the key results presented. It was described by Katarzyna Sulisz, a Sectoral Skills Strategy Expert who led its development. The Strategy was the outcome of exhaustive research work on the current situation in terms of employment and skills in the four sectors in the EU, which was then used to develop an analysis of current industry needs and challenges but also future scenarios and forecasts, taking into account the "drivers of change". These future scenarios - Renaissance of the Craft, Selective Leadership, A Brave New World, Walled Gardens, and Industrial Sunset - lead to different potential future employment situations in the industry, as well as to diverging occupational profiles and skills needs that will depend on the direction of the industry evolution. The full [EU Sectoral Skills Strategy](#) document is already publicly available on the project website.

According to Ms Sulisz, this framework was also used to engage TCLF stakeholders from policy, industry and education in 9 countries. These national sectoral skills strategies will be later available on the [Skills4SmartTCLF Blueprint project website](#). In order, to reflect and further discuss the application of the European TCLF Sectoral Skills Strategy at the national level, a panel of four experts joined the stage to share their feedback: Alessandro de Rosa, PIN (IT); Rosana Perez, INESCOP (ES); Alexandra Cardoso, CITEVE (PT) and Aura Mihai, TUIASI (RO).

After a very fruitful debate regarding how these Strategies could ultimately increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the TCLF companies for higher quality employment and career opportunities, the panel agreed that regardless of how the TCLF industries will look like in the future, "resilience can only be strengthened through joint efforts between all groups of stakeholders".

To conclude the Final Conference, Marie-Hélène Pradines (Head of Unit at DG GROW, European Commission) spoke about the importance of the skills development as a vital component of the new

Textile Strategy, which is reflected in the strong relevance given to the Pact for Skills on this document, and she on the words of the first speakers: "The S4TCLF project is just the beginning".

For more information about the Project:

- Check out and download the leaflet and the factsheet (available in EN, FR, SP, IT, PT, BG, RO, EL) at <http://www.s4tclfbblueprint.eu/2018/06/project-factsheet-and-leaflet/>
- Visit the project website at <http://www.s4tclfbblueprint.eu>
- Write to [info@s4tclfbblueprint.eu](mailto:info@s4tclfbblueprint.eu)

### **Project Details:**

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

**Project duration:**

The 01st of January 2018 – the 30th of June 2022

**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. HCIA - Hellenic Clothing Industry 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. UNITEX Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, 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. Virtual Campus, Portugal
22. Universitat de Lleida, Spain

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