



EULEP

Skills Competitions Report

Deliverable D6.4
Deliverable No 21



**Co-funded by the
European Union**

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Introduction

EULEP brings together 20 organisations from 8 countries, who work together with the following objectives:

- make C-VET more attractive for lifelong learning,
- offer businesses new and tailor-made training modules that correspond to their skills needs in innovation-oriented subjects (artificial intelligence, virtual reality and social innovation),
- establish or reinforce knowledge triangles at regional and national level thanks to the triangulation business - VET provider - European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH),
- embed VET in regional economic development strategies and reinforce its governance, putting it on a sustainable path.

The attractiveness and excellence of VET can be boosted via skills competitions, which foster and empower professional development of learners to take a step further in their career. At the same time, skills competitions serve as a tool for informal education, which complements directly the capacity building activities carried out in the frame of the project.

In the frame of work package 6, and, based on a common methodology (deliverable D6.3/ no 20) the project partners organised skills competitions in their respective countries.

The present report offers an insight into the skills competitions of the participating countries and their outcomes.

It starts with an overview of the thematic areas chosen and types of challenges addressed, prior to depicting the participants' profiles and their prior involvement in EULEP. The practical organisation of the competitions is subsequently described, including venue and equipment and the duration. The report continues with describing the evaluation criteria and the stakeholders involved in the evaluation in a summary manner prior to elaborating on the implementation of the competitions and their outcomes. It finishes with the participants feedback and testimonials of the skills competitions' winners.

1. Competition Overview

In this section, the thematic area(s) of the competitions are stated, as well as the types of challenges addressed.

The common skills competitions methodology offered general guidance for the project partners in terms of thematic areas and types of challenges to be addressed, given that all countries customised the EULEP trainings to fit the needs of their businesses. The main criteria for defining the thematic area and type of challenge were the complementarity of the skills competitions with the EULEP capacity building and that the thematic area had to be linked to one or several of the EULEP subjects (Artificial Intelligence – AI, Virtual Reality – VR, or Social Innovation – SI).

Thematic areas

In all participating countries, the partners chose their thematic areas in line with the common methodology.

Seven countries chose AI as the main subject area for their skills competitions, with five inviting participants to explore VR and four proposing SI. As can be seen in below table, five out of eight countries offered skills competitions in several of the EULEP thematic areas, and Austria, France and Spain offered competitions in all three thematic areas.

Country	Thematic Area
Austria	AI, VR, SI
Belgium	AI
Cyprus	AI, VR
France	AI, VR, SI
Italy	AI
Latvia	VR, SI
Spain	AI, VR, SI
Türkiye	AI

Types of challenges

Concerning the types of challenges that participants had to address, two main categories can be distinguished: real life challenges and fictitious challenges.

In the real-life challenge scenario, participants were asked to solve a problem linked to their business or organisational context, for example by using Generative AI tools for text and visual creation in a professional business environment (AI), by developing a strategic vision of their organisation's current state for 2035 (SI), or by applying advanced digital skills in a business context, with a focus on AI and VR/AR.

In the fictitious challenge scenario, the project partners proposed a fictitious case to participants, that the latter would have to solve thanks to the knowledge acquired via EULEP

and with the guidance of the trainers. Two examples are: 1) Design an AI-based solution that enables SME to automatically handle request for information from the website or other digital channels, and distinguish intelligently between: sales leads (to sales team), generic or curious questions (automatic responses), and young talent interested in internship or job opportunities (identified and "hooked" with targeted responses and initial follow-up); 2) Transform a fictional electric vehicle charging network company into a data-driven technology leader, taking into account three interconnected tasks: Smart vision, Smart solution, Smart promotion.

For solving the challenges, participants could seek inspiration from any of the EULEP modules they had learned during the capacity building phase and demonstrate that they had acquired the corresponding learning outcomes.

Country	Challenge Type	Subject
Austria	Real	Participants were tasked to develop an innovation proposal that demonstrated the practical application of course content.
Belgium	Real	The challenge encouraged participants to identify and automate repetitive or time-consuming professional tasks with the help of AI.
Cyprus	Real	The type of challenge addressed was scenario-based and solution-oriented, requiring participants to develop and present practical use cases.
France	Real	For the AI competition, participants were asked to work on a concrete use case directly linked to their own professional activities, allowing the evaluation of AI-supported content creation in real working conditions. The VR competition focused on the professional use of VR and Augmented Reality (AR). The SI competition aimed to assess participants' understanding and application of social innovation concepts, with a particular focus on managerial practices and leadership postures.
Italy	Fictitious	Participants were called to invent and work out an original solution to a fictitious but concrete problem, proposed by the teacher, using what they learnt during the course.
Latvia	Real	In the SI competition, participants addressed the challenge of organizational sustainability by analysing their current structures and identifying social or environmental gaps. In the VR competition, participants were tasked to analyse real-world issues within their specific industry or organization and propose a realistic, VR-based solution.
Spain	Real	AI: Business Process Optimization for SMEs

		VR: Application of Immersive Technologies in SMEs SI: Digital Transformation Strategy for Organizational Innovation
Türkiye	Fictious	Participants were challenged to transform a fictional electric vehicle charging network company into a data-driven technology leader.

Participants

In total, 160 participants registered across all countries and 149 went through the competitions and submitted their proposals.

The number of participants varied greatly from country to country and the project partners from Belgium had the biggest issues in reaching potential participants. At the same time, the Brussels region is also the smallest region taking part in the project, with less enterprises than the other participating regions. The very high number of participants in France can be explained by the fact that the skills competitions were part of the training courses, while in the other countries they were mainly organised separately.

Country	Number of Participants
Austria	6
Belgium	4
Cyprus	8
France	60
Italy	7
Latvia	28
Spain	8
Türkiye	28

Occupational sectors

The participants came from a wide range of professional sectors, including:

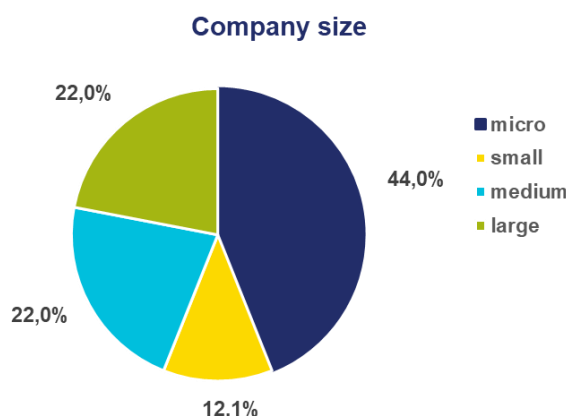
- Freelancers and business owners
- Training and education
- Marketing and business services
- Hospitality and services
- Healthcare and social care
- Construction and industry
- Company managers and corporate executives
- Law

They occupied different functions/roles within their organisations. Most of the respondents, nearly one third (31.5%) were employees. Middle management and the “Other” category –

comprising roles such as trainers and freelancers – each represented 20.7% of respondents, while 19.6% held upper management positions. There were few crafts masters (5.4%) or IT experts (2.2%) among the respondents.

Company information

According to the responses received, micro enterprises prevailed with 44% of participants working for micro companies. In comparison, 22% of respondents worked for medium or large organisations, while 12,1% were employed in small companies.



EULEP training status

Participants were asked if they took part in the EULEP capacity building sessions, and 70% of respondents responded positively to the question. In all participating countries, the project partners offered the learners of the capacity building sessions the possibility to take part in the skills competitions. As the offer was met with varying interest among learners, the Austrian, Belgian, Cypriot and Latvian partners also reached out to the wider business community. In France, Italy, Spain and Türkiye, the skills competitions were integrated into the capacity building phase and were part of the learning process and final evaluation.

Practical organisation

Venue and equipment

In six out of the eight participating countries, the competitions took place online. In Cyprus and France, they took place in person.

The online competitions involved the submission of reports in different formats (ppt or pdf) and presentations or video pitches. No specific equipment was needed for that, and the participants used their own computer soft/hardware and mobile phones to prepare their works.

Cyprus' skills competition was organised at the premises of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), in Nicosia, Cyprus. Participants were provided with the necessary infrastructure and materials to effectively deliver their presentations, including:

- A Smart TV/display screen for presenting their pitches,
- A structured presentation template, aligned with the evaluation criteria, to ensure consistency and clarity across all submissions,
- On-site technical support to facilitate smooth delivery of presentations.

In France, the VR skills competition took place at the FORMED Campus technical platform in La Seyne-sur-Mer, an immersive training centre equipped for VR and AR experimentation. Participants had access to professional immersive equipment, including VR headsets, maritime simulation systems, collaborative touch tables, virtual and augmented reality applications, and interactive immersive walls.

Duration

The duration of the individual skills competitions varied from country to country, depending on the criteria the project partners had defined for their respective competitions.

The overall timeframe for the competitions was the second half of 2025, and all countries complied with it. The Belgian project partners organised a second competition in February 2026 to increase the outcome of the activity, given that the first edition had attracted a very low number of participants.

The below table offers an overview of the timeframe per country and types of submission:

Country	Timeframe	Submission types
Austria	October – November 2025	Submission of report in pdf or ppt
Belgium	October 2025 + February 2026	Technical summary report in pdf and AI assisted video pitch
Cyprus	December 2025	Live presentation
France	November 2025	AI: campaign for a new product/ service or update of existing one VR: use cases group discussion + quiz SI: group-based activities + quiz
Italy	July – September 2025	Submission of documents in ppt and video pitch
Latvia	November 2025	Submission of audiovisual materials, reports (pdf/word) and presentations (ppt/canva)
Spain	November 2025	Submission of report in pdf, presentations in slides or video format
Türkiye	September 2025	24 hours online hackathon; live online pitch

Evaluation

In line with the common methodology, evaluation committees were appointed in all participating countries for the evaluation of the skills competitions' submissions.

The following table provides an overview of the different stakeholders involved in each country:

Stakeholder type	AT	BE	CY	FR	IT	LV	ES	TR
VET trainer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Higher Education representative					X			X
EDIH representative			X		X	X	X	X
Public authorities		X			X	X	X	X
Company representatives	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
External experts	X	X	X		X	X		

As can be seen, there were at least 3 different stakeholders involved in the evaluation processes and a short description of the evaluation processes in the countries is described hereafter.

Austria: A two-stage evaluation process was followed during which participants first submitted their written proposals –report– via email and the top five submissions were invited to deliver a 5-minute online pitch, followed by a Q&A session with the jury.

The competition was evaluated by four judges (incl. 1 female), two of whom had prior involvement with the EULEP project, who not only had expertise in the thematic areas but also represented key stakeholders of the project.

Summary evaluation grid:

Stage 1 – Report (max. 70 points)	Stage 2 – Online Pitch (Top 5 participants, max. 30 points)
Relevance and Innovation (21)	Innovation and Creativity (15) – Originality and practical relevance in the pitch
Feasibility and Implementation (17.5)	Communication and Presentation (15)
Impact and Sustainability (14)	Total: 100 points (70 + 30) Bonus for early submission: +5%
Communication Plan (10.5)	
Compliance with Guidelines (7)	

Belgium: Participants submitted their proposals consisting of a report and an AI-assisted video pitch via email.

Four jury members independently reviewed the submissions and assigned scores within the agreed grid to ensure an unbiased initial appraisal. In a second step, they held a final deliberation session via Microsoft Teams to reach consensus on their evaluation and determine the winners.

Summary evaluation grid:

Task relevance: 20%
Ambition of objectives: 20%
Originality and quality of the solution: 30%
Report clarity and video creativity: 30%

Cyprus: The evaluation process was conducted live during the in-person event, during which participants delivered a 10-minute pitch. The Cypriot partners opted for a hybrid evaluation approach: 70% weighting by the jury, 30% weighting by the audience.

Each presentation was qualitatively assessed by the evaluation committee (jury) based on six key evaluation criteria. The final score was calculated as the sum of the individual scores, multiplied by the respective weighting of each criterion.

Summary evaluation grid:

Clarity and Relevance of the Challenge 20%
Quality and Appropriateness of the Solution (AI/VR) 25%
Feasibility and Realism of the Implementation Plan 20%
Expected Benefits and Measurable Results 20%
Innovation and Creativity 10%
Quality of Presentation 5%

France: The submissions on AI were done via email, while participants of the VR and SI competitions engaged in a series of group-based activities and individual quizzes during the in-person capacity building workshops.

For AI, all submitted works were evaluated based on predefined qualitative criteria.

In the case of VR, participants were evaluated through a combination of practical activities, reflective work and knowledge assessment. Winners were selected based on quiz results, quality of the SWOT analysis and level of engagement throughout the activities.

For SI, the evaluation process consisted of two distinct but complementary components. The first evaluation was based on an online questionnaire developed specifically for the workshop. In a second evaluation, participants' leadership posture during the interactive activities was analysed. The laureates were selected based on the highest combined score obtained across both evaluation components.

Summary evaluation grid:

AI	VR	SI
Relevance and alignment with the initial instructions	Quiz results	Questionnaire results
Quality and professionalism of the final output	Quality of the SWOT analysis	Participants' leadership posture during the interactive activities
Effectiveness and demonstrated time-saving potential through the use of AI tools	Level of engagement throughout the activities	
Inclusion of a creative element		

Italy: Participants were asked to submit their proposals (scripts as slides/ document/ video pitch) via a shared online folder.

A 6-member strong jury (the course trainer, one representative of each Italian partner and the Coordinator of the I-Nest EDIH, who signed the MoU with Unioncamere) evaluated the proposals according to commonly agreed assessment criteria. The jury members worked independently, examining all correctly received works. The aggregated scores were calculated, then presented and discussed during an online consensus meeting.

Summary evaluation grid:

Originality of the solution and ability to address the competition goals - 30 points
Architecture from the solution - 20 points
Demonstrative prototype (if present, to be presented with a video clip) - 15 points
Possible subsequent evolutions enabled by the proposed solution - 15 points
Quality of presentation material - 20 points

Latvia: For SI, participants were tasked with developing a dual-profile portrait that compares their organization's current state ("Today") with a projected vision for "2035". The assessment focused on the trajectory of development and the viability of the proposed social innovation models according to predefined evaluation criteria.

For VR, participants were required to articulate a comprehensive business case for VR integration. For the evaluation, a structured evaluation rubric was used, comprising a 4-point scale across six key metrics. It allowed the jury members to assess the strategic implementation concepts.

In both cases, the jury members determined the winners based on the aggregated evaluation results and a common discussion.

Summary evaluation grid:

VR - 4-point scale (1–4)	SI
Problem Description	Current Situation Analysis
Situation Analysis	Future Vision
Solution Description	Digital Development Vision
Implementation Plan	Social Innovation Solutions
Resources and Risks	Presentation Quality
Presentation Quality	

Spain: Participants submitted their proposals via Moodle.

After submission, a two-step evaluation process was carried out to ensure transparency and quality. An initial screening phase reduced the total number of projects from fifteen to eight shortlisted proposals. The shortlisted projects were evaluated by a multidisciplinary jury composed of two representatives from each partner of the Catalan node (six jury members in total), based on predefined and transparent assessment criteria including relevance, innovation, feasibility and impact potential. Jury members were selected for their expertise in the subject areas, in Higher Education, VET and Adult training contexts.

Summary evaluation grid:

AI & VR	SI
Relevance of the Challenge 20 points	Innovation and creativity 20

Innovation and creativity 20	Feasibility and implementation plan 30
Feasibility and implementation plan 20	Business Impact and Sustainability 30
Business Impact and Sustainability 20	Communication and Presentation 10
Communication and Presentation 10	Integration of EULEP learning outcomes 10
Integration of EULEP learning outcomes 10	

Türkiye: The evaluation was organised through a live online pitching session at the end of the 24-hour hackathon. Each team presented their "AI Transformation Roadmap" to the jury panel, followed by a Q&A session.

The jury panel evaluated the proposals based on a specific scoring rubric totalling 100 points and counting 6 assessment criteria: strategic analysis and vision, validity of technical solution, creativity and impact of promotion, coherence and consistency, presentation skills and teamwork, and use of generative AI tools.

Summary evaluation grid:

Strategic Analysis and Vision 20 points
Validity of Technical Solution 20 points
Creativity and Impact of Promotion 20 points
Coherence and Consistency 15 points
Presentation Skills and Teamwork 15 points
Use of Generative AI Tools 10 points

Outputs produced

As stated in the previous sections of the report, the large majority of outputs of the skills competitions were reports in different formats, presentations and videos.

For the “real life” cases, participants were sometimes reluctant for their outputs to be shared widely. Consequently, a limited selection of outputs is mentioned hereafter.

Austria: One of the winning entries proposed an advanced AI-driven pricing system focused on dynamic pricing to reduce food waste while maintaining fair returns for producers. The system analyses pricing and sales data alongside market trends to identify optimal price points, thereby contributing directly to both sustainability and the economic efficiency of regional value chains.

France: One of the winning projects was submitted by a micro enterprise. Thanks to the EULEP AI courses, the winner was in the position to integrate AI as a structuring lever in the company’s service offer, affecting positively the way that the company interacts with customers and allowing it to extend its services portfolio.

Italy: An “AI-Driven Customer & Talent Engagement” project scored highest among the Italian skills competition participants. The project is designed to transform the company’s primary digital contact point from a reactive cost centre into a proactive driver of growth and

competitive advantage. The proposed solution is the development of a 'Proprietary Intelligence Engine': an advanced system that transforms raw data (emails, web enquiries, applications) into predictive insights. The aim is to evolve the business model, enabling the company to anticipate customer needs and respond with a speed and precision that competitors cannot match, thus leading to enhanced collaboration and smarter interactions.

After presenting the strategic vision and value proposition of the project, the formal planning is described, stating the technical aspects in terms of technology to be used as well as the financial aspects. An adoption strategy and change management help navigate the implementation and human resources aspects of the digital transition process.

Spain: One of the winners' proposals focused on AI implementation for workshop and spare parts management in their organisation. The aim was to improve daily workshop operations and parts management, including: interpreting parts requests by voice/text in natural language, AI-assisted diagnosis from spoken symptom descriptions, predictive needs for parts and maintenance, smarter workshop planning/prioritization, and automated reports and alerts. It is designed to be implemented progressively in phases with clear success metrics such as reducing repair/diagnosis time, reducing errors in parts ordering, and lowering urgent procurement due to stock issues.

Türkiye: In a fictitious setting, the winning project developed an AI system called "SmartLocateAI" that would assist with optimising the usage of electric vehicles charging stations, maximizing return on investment and user satisfaction.

The project started with the basis assumption that the selection of incorrect locations for electric charging station sites led to queues at some stations while others remained underutilized.

The AI system analyzes historical station data and environmental factors to recommend the most suitable locations for new charging stations. It collects a large range of data (occupancy rates of existing stations, traffic density, the number of stations, location types...) and then issues performance predictions and assigns scores to stations (high, medium, or low efficiency).

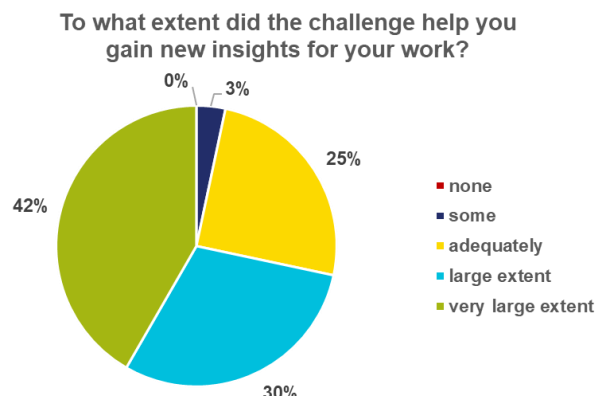
The tangible benefits expected from implementing the SmartLocateAI system include faster achievement of optimal occupancy rates through more accurate location selection, prevention of resource waste by avoiding low-performing areas, and improved user experience by distributing demand more effectively.

Besides being celebrated at national/regional level, the skills competitions winners were invited to the final project conference in Brussels and a good number took an active part in the panel discussions and Q&A sessions during the day.

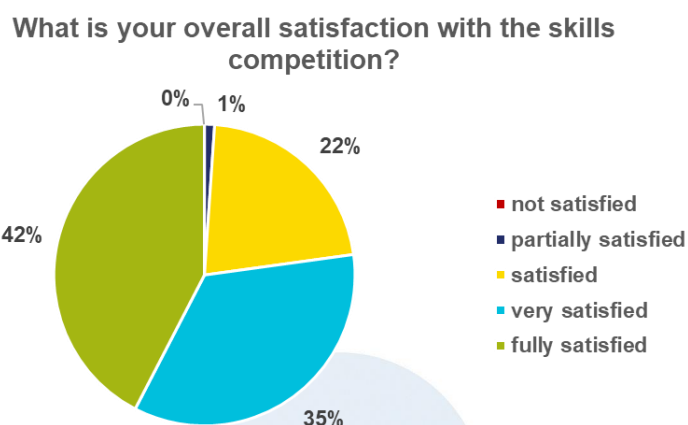
2. Feedback

The project partners gathered feedback from the skills competitions participants and taking into account the responses received, the activity was considered to be a positive experience for the participants.

When asked to what extent the challenge helped the contestants gain new insights for their work, nearly three quarters of respondents stated that it helped them to a large or very large extent.



A similar level of participants expressed a high satisfaction level with the activity, stating that they are either very satisfied or fully satisfied.



The participants also shared what they found most useful about the competitions and a summary of the main comments can be found hereafter:

- The opportunity to gain new perspectives, reflect critically on one's work, and engage with practical tasks.
- Application of tools learned in EULEP modules.
- Exposure to realistic professional situations without safety risks.
- Peer exchange and collective learning.
- Guidance and support.
- The opportunity to apply newly acquired knowledge in a real-world business scenario.
- The transition from theoretical learning to practical implementation allowed participants to consolidate their understanding of artificial intelligence and to critically assess its actual potential and limitations within an organizational context.
- Learning about the tools, functionality and their business application.

3. Skills competitions winners' testimonials

With the objective of continuing the promotion of VET and the skills competitions, the consortium decided to gather skills competitions winners' testimonials and disseminate those further until the project finishes.

A variety of testimonials was received, and all show the individuals' appreciation of the competition or what they learned from it.

The testimonials are also available on the EULEP project website in the results section: <https://eulep.eu/results/>.

SKILLS COMPETITION



GUNTRAM BECHTOLD
Product Developer, Stara Media, AT



The real competition wasn't against others — it was against our own assumptions about what AI can do for a small business. Once we stopped thinking about AI as a topic to study and started treating it as a tool to solve a specific problem, everything clicked."



AI is a small word covering a huge world of possibilities. The goal for the human is then to find how workers and companies can innovate the most efficient way."



SKILLS COMPETITION



SÉVERINE MOUTON
Consultant, Altapika BE

SKILLS COMPETITION



THIERRY PÂRIS
Founder, OO-Drones, BE



What did I appreciate most? The balance between a solid understanding of AI's benefits and a realistic awareness of its limits and risks."





AI does not replace us; it reveals how much better we can become."



SKILLS COMPETITION



SKILLS COMPETITION



Innovation becomes valuable when it solves a real daily problem. This competition showed me that AI is most useful not when it replaces people, but when it helps teams work faster, communicate better, and stay consistent."



SKILLS COMPETITION



The feedback from mentors and judges helped me simplify the story and tighten the risk controls (human in the loop). Success comes from action, not perfect plans."



SKILLS COMPETITION



AI does not replace humans; it gives them a structure to unleash their expertise. Innovation begins where the fear of the unknown ends. This competition taught me that technological agility is a key skill for the support of tomorrow."

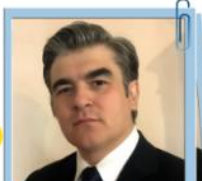




Educating oneself on new technologies is the true “artificial intelligence”.


SKILLS COMPETITION


MATTIA GENTILI
 Italian Chartered Building Surveyor,
 Studio Tecnico Geniale, IT

SKILLS COMPETITION


PAOLO VEZZALI
 Independent Business Advisor, IT



Artificial intelligence creates value only when it is effectively integrated into business processes and aligned with human and organizational capabilities; innovation is not about technology alone, but about how responsibly and strategically it is applied.”



Through the competition, I discovered AI tools I didn't know before and realized how easily they could be adapted to our company's reality.”


SKILLS COMPETITION


SIMONA POLLORSI
 Administrative Manager, LAURINE
 OFFICINE MECCANICHE SRL, IT

SKILLS COMPETITION


DAVID ENRICH
 Software Engineer, BonViva, ES



From an employer perspective, we are constantly looking for continuous training in AI, but it is often difficult to find programmes that are both high quality and truly applicable to real business needs. What I appreciated about EULEP is that it is designed to bridge exactly that gap between learning and implementation.”





This competition was not just a technological experience for me; it was a process of discovering my own limits. The AI tools I mastered acted as a 'second brain,' enabling us to truly function as a cohesive team empowering us to bridge gaps in data sets, make rapid decisions, and finalize a professional presentation within minutes."

SKILLS COMPETITION**SKILLS COMPETITION**

True innovation is not just about using new tools; it is about discovering how to reinvent yourself through them. That night — when time was limited and resources were scarce — I realized that when the right technology meets the right vision, "impossible" becomes nothing more than a word."



4. Conclusion

The skills competitions under EULEP revealed themselves as useful tools for the promotion of C-VET in the participating countries and the participants were very satisfied with the outcomes.

Participants were in the position to use the acquired EULEP learning in real life scenario settings, even those who submitted a project for a fictitious business, and were able to see the usefulness of the training for their work.

The project partners chose different implementation modes for the competitions, taking into account the particularities of their respective territories in terms of companies' interest in the EULEP subjects and their availability.

For potential future editions of this kind of skills competitions involving businesses, one sentence should be kept in mind: Keep it short, pragmatic and reality bound. Time is money for businesses, and they will need to see a return on investment.



EUROCHAMBRES



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