



European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry

The EFCI presents the results of the project SK-Clean¹: training key for a successful digital transition for the European industrial cleaning sector

Brussels, 7 April 2022 – Last Friday, 1 of April, the EFCI presented the results of the project SK-Clean before an audience of experts, members and representatives of the EU Institutions. The project studied how training in the cleaning sector is organised and how digitalisation is affecting it across 15 jurisdictions. The project reports will be available in various European languages in EFCI's website.

The EFCI presented on 1 April, during a hybrid conference from the Professional Building Cleaning Academy (*Gebäudereinigungsakademie*) of the Viennese cleaning industry guild from the *Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* (WKO), the two reports resulting from the implementation of the EU-Funded project SK-Clean.

Despite the complicated timing of the project, that was launched in February 2020, just before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (which implied constant adaptations in timing and meetings due to the impossibility to organise in-person meetings), the project team succeeded to identify the main changes that digitalisation will imply for the sector, as well as in mapping the main characteristics of training in the sector across 15 European jurisdictions. The project reunited, during nearly 2 years, experts in training from various EFCI members around the topics of training and digitalisation. On 14 January 2022, one of their meetings included a virtual tour of the Maison des Métiers de la Propreté, the academy of Institut National de l'Hygiène et du Nettoyage Industriel (INHNI) in Bruz, Rennes.

A high-level conference that underlined the relevance of the sector

The Conference was inaugurated by Ursula Simacek, Master of the Federal Guild BIG, and Juan Díez de los Ríos, President of the EFCI. Further, the Member of the European Parliament Sylvie Brunet highlighted the relevant role of the sector for Europe's economy and wellbeing and underlined the challenges and opportunities that the green and digital transitions will bring to the sector. Joerg Tagger, Head of Unit for Social Dialogue at DG EMPL of the European Commission, underlined the relevance of the training and skills, completely in line with the Commission's work programme and agenda. The presentation of the reports was followed by a fruitful exchange between Mark Bergfeld, Director Property Services and UNICARE (UNI Europa), Rosa Ferrando (Brócoli Facility Services, Spain) and members of SK-Clean's Expert Group: Cécile Bonnay (FEP) and Anna Heather (ICCA), after the presentation of the Pact for Skills by Andrei Bunis from DG Grow.

¹ SK-Clean is co-funded by the European Commission under its programme Support for Social Dialogue of DG EMPL.



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Two reports at the service of the industry

The work developed by the SK-Clean team and experts has resulted in the two reports that will be published by the EFCI in different European languages: one that portrays how training is provided and recognised in our sector across Europe (*“Training systems in the European Industrial Cleaning Sector: an overview”*), and one that tackles specifically the impact of digitalisation and the challenges ahead to enable a successful digital transition for the sector (*“The impact of digitalisation on training and skills in the European Industrial Cleaning Sector”*). The reports, drafted on the basis of questionnaires and interviews, identify a few good practices which may have a positive impact on the provision of VET in the European cleaning sector in the future.

- The first report underlines the relevance of tools such as “qualifications biography” to document skills acquisition, the establishment of training centres by industry associations or the provision of E-learning modules which are collected in an electronic qualifications database, as well as the establishment of skills development plan. The conclusion of the mapping exercise through 15 jurisdictions is that in general, training in our sector is established through ‘dual systems’, which combine theoretical learning at a vocational school with practical work experience in companies (apprenticeships). The best practices and description of how training is conducted in different jurisdictions include specific aspects that can be taken over by other jurisdictions. The experts also concluded on the relevance of establishing quality control or references to ensure high-quality standards in training.
- The second report, *“The Impact of Digitalisation on Training and Skills in the European Industrial Cleaning Sector”* explains that the sector is facing ever changing requirements and demands by clients and that the digital transformation is impacting the entire industry, with an increasing drive towards a sustainable, green and circular economy. The results of the survey clearly show that the industrial cleaning sector is aware of and fully recognises the importance and significance of vocational education and trainings, as well as its own responsibility for it, but that efforts and challenges lay ahead in order to ensure the preparedness of our workforce to fully embrace the digital transition.

Working to support the recognition of training as a quality value for the sector

Juan Díez de los Ríos, EFCI’s President, said during the opening of the conference in Vienna: “Skills and vocational education and training are at the centre of European social policies, and they are also key for the recognition and advancement of our sector. While we strive to highlight the well-deserved recognition that our sector has received during Covid-19, the pandemic has underlined how training and skilling of cleaning agents is central to the provision of quality cleaning services and high social standards. The consequences of an increased recognition of training in the sector show across its value



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chain: the steady growth of the sector over the last 30 years is, without doubt, is closely linked to its professionalisation, for which training is central.”

The results of the project will support EFCI’s work to increase awareness towards its stakeholders on the needs and crucial role of training for the sector, and provides the industry with a tool to ensure a successful digital transition through training initiatives, programmes and activities.

Background

The **EFCI** is the voice of the European cleaning and facility services industry in Europe, bringing together associations representing the industry at national level. The cleaning and facility services sector is one of the major services industries in Europe, representing more than 290,000 companies employing 4 million people. To know more, visit [EFCI’s website](#) and consult [EFCI’s political priorities](#).

For further information, please contact:

Isabel Yglesias | +32 470 78 29 72 | isabel.yglesias@efci.eu

Sergi Queralt | +32 471 74 14 33 | sergi.queralt@efci.eu

[Images of the Conference](#) (further images available upon request)





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