



European Cleaning and
Facility Services Industry

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

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As the European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry (EFCE), the recognised employers' organisation and Social Partner for the cleaning industry sector, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the upcoming European Strategy for Vocational Education and Training (VET). In line with the objectives of the Union of Skills and the ambition to increase the number of workers holding relevant professional qualifications, the EFCE strongly support initiatives that enhance professionalisation and alignment with technological developments.

1 Establishment of a European Cleaning Skills Card

Across Member States, and in some cases across regions within Member States, qualification systems remain fragmented, with differing criteria, procedures and recognition mechanisms. This fragmentation creates barriers to labour mobility, reduces transparency, and weakens the professional value of qualifications. Therefore, the EFCE calls for the creation of a harmonised and broader European qualification framework capable of overcoming regional fragmentation and ensuring mutual recognition across Member States. This objective could be operationalised through the establishment of a **European Cleaning Skills Card** as an EU-wide benchmark for minimum training standards, while recognising and elevating existing national accreditations to ensure cost-effective implementation.

2 Ensuring consistent and credible qualification procedures

Qualification requirements and procedures currently vary widely. Some systems require formal examinations, while others rely solely on the assessment of documentation. This inconsistency weakens the credibility, professional value and comparability of qualifications. **Common and consistent requirements should therefore be defined for obtaining professional qualifications**, including compulsory training and exam-based certification procedures, in order to strengthen the quality and reliability of the system.

3 Expanding accessible and structured training pathways

Across several Member States, advanced and structured training programmes linked to sector-specific qualifications are scarce or absent. While companies may develop internal academies, these require significant investment and remain unevenly accessible, particularly for SMEs, which dominate the sector. **VET funding instruments should support SMEs to ensure equitable access to qualification pathways.** Accredited training providers, and, where appropriate, companies themselves, should be encouraged and incentivised to offer standardised preparation courses aligned with sector needs.

In addition, the European cleaning industry should **benefit from sector-tailored training delivered through the AI Skills Academy.**

4 Updating competency framework in line with technological change

Competency frameworks associated with existing qualifications are often outdated, inconsistently defined, or insufficiently aligned with technological and organisational developments. **Structured and periodic updates of competency frameworks should be introduced,** involving social partners in a process comparable to university advisory boards. Regular stakeholder consultation would ensure that qualifications remain aligned with technological innovation and market needs.

Digital skills training, including cobot supervision, data literacy and AI awareness, **should be embedded into relevant VET frameworks.** Furthermore, stakeholders in the cleaning industry should be included as users when connecting developers and users to promote AI uptake in the robotics sector, alongside funding for AI-powered robotics acceleration pipelines.