



European Cleaning and
Facility Services Industry

EFCI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S SKILLS PORTABILITY INITIATIVE

26 February 2026

The European Federation of Cleaning Industries (EFCI) recommends that consideration be given to the introduction of a European Cleaning Skills Card — a formal, industry-wide initiative aimed at raising standards and ensuring consistency in training across the cleaning sector.

1 What is the European Cleaning Skills Card?

This card would serve as a recognised indicator that an operative has completed a minimum level of accredited training in core cleaning competencies. It would be similar to a Safe Pass card used in the Construction Industry. Competencies could include:

- Manual Handling
- Electrical Safety
- Chemical Competence
- General Health & Safety
- Colour Coding
- How to Damp Wipe Surfaces
- How to Vacuum How to Clean a Floor with a Manual Mop
- How to Clean a Bathroom
- How to Clean a Business Break Area/Kitchen

It is envisaged that Social Partners such as Uni Europa would be key collaborators in delivering this solution, ensuring alignment with labour standards and supporting the professionalisation of the cleaning workforce across Europe.

2 Key Benefits of the European Cleaning Skills Card

- **Standardised Training Across the Industry** – Ensures all cleaning operatives receive consistent, accredited training, levelling the playing field across public and private procurement.
- **Formal Accreditation and Recognition** – Training is validated through a formal accreditation process, enhancing credibility and professionalism within the sector.
- **Improved Service Quality and Industry Standards** – Raise the overall standard of cleaning services delivered, contributing to better outcomes for clients and end-users.
- **Enhanced Staff Development and Career Opportunities** – Provides operatives with a recognised qualification, boosting morale, employability, and career progression within the industry.
- **Fairer Competition in Tendering Processes** – Creates a limited barrier to entry for companies that do not invest in training, helping ensure that those who do are not unfairly undercut on price.
- **Alignment with Other Safety-Critical Industries** – Positions the Cleaning Skills Card as equivalent in importance to the Safe Pass in construction, reinforcing its role in health, safety, and compliance.
- **Support for Professionalisation of the Sector** – Encourages a shift from low-skilled perceptions to a recognised, skilled profession, attracting higher-quality entrants and investment.
- **Procurement Confidence and Transparency** – Gives procurement bodies assurance that all staff meet a minimum standard, simplifying compliance checks and reducing risk.

3 Implementation Steps for the European Cleaning Skills Card

1. **Stakeholder Engagement and Consensus Building** – Engage with national cleaning associations, training bodies, procurement authorities, and Social Partners in a workshop to build support.
2. **A recognised conversion framework** should be developed to pre-qualify existing accredited training that meets the standards.

3. **Define Core Competencies and Training Standards** – Finalise the list of essential skills and align training content with existing national standards. Develop Accreditation Framework – Partner with recognised training and certification bodies to accredit training programmes.
 4. **Pilot Programme** – Launch a pilot in selected member states to test the card system and refine processes.
 5. **Digital Infrastructure and Card Issuance** – Develop a secure digital platform for card registration, verification, and renewal.
 6. **Integration with Procurement and Compliance Systems** – Work with procurement bodies to include the card as a requirement or scoring criterion in tenders. The ultimate goal is for the European Cleaning Skills Card to be compulsory to work as a cleaning operative.
 7. **Awareness and Advocacy Campaign** – Launch a Europe-wide campaign to raise awareness among employers, clients, and operatives.
 8. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement** – Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and regular updates to competencies.
-

4 Recognition of Existing National Training Accreditations

To avoid added expenses for member companies and recognise the efforts of good employers, it is essential to utilise existing training accreditations in each country. A recognised conversion framework should be developed to pre-qualify existing accredited training that meets the standards to be set. This approach allows national training programmes to be built upon and elevated to European status, making qualifications transferable across employers, companies, and countries.

5 Phase 2: Modular Expansion and Digitalisation

Phase 2 of the European Cleaning Skills Card could introduce a modular structure comprising specific cleaning tasks. Companies could draw down relevant modules on an as-needed basis, ensuring staff are trained only in tasks they are likely to perform. This targeted approach

increases efficiency and reduces unnecessary training costs.

Digitalisation is transforming the cleaning industry, with evolving roles such as Robot Supervisors and Supervisors requiring Data Analyst skills. The European Cleaning Skills Card could eventually include multiple levels such as Entry, Proficient, Expert, Management, and Digital Expert, reflecting the diverse competencies required in modern cleaning operations.

6 Collaborative Approach: A Win-Win for All Stakeholders

Working collectively across multiple stakeholders—including member associations, training bodies, employers, procurement authorities, and Social Partners—creates a win-win situation. It ensures that training is relevant, recognised, and cost-effective, while raising industry standards and improving service delivery. Collaboration fosters innovation, supports workforce development, and strengthens the reputation and competitiveness of the European cleaning industry.
