



The EU Pact for Skills –Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem

All over Europe, the Tourism sector also suffers since severe challenges. Irrespective of national or regional differences, experts and stakeholders are increasingly finding that skill gaps and shortages are becoming widespread. Mostly reported are such skills deficiencies as language, interpersonal skills and ICT skills rather than job/tourism-specific skills. More and more there is unanimity among stakeholders that re-skilling and up-skilling of existing employees is necessary to respond to the emerging and persisting new trends in the sector, such as provision of services to targeted groups of visitors (for example, elderly or with disabilities; visitors seeking specific experiences such as sustainable/green tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism etc.).

Facing the increasing importance of the tourism industry in Europe and the upcoming challenges the EU Commission has launched an update of the **Pact for Skills in Tourism**.¹ Following we publish part of the main document which proves that the aims of the *Includmi* are fully in line with the EU-Strategy target to the tourism industry.

„The **Pact for Skills** initiative brings together all types and sizes of businesses, EU umbrella organisations, social partners, vocational and education training providers, and regional/municipal authorities to speak with a unified voice in supporting specific commitments to reskilling and upskilling the European tourism workforce in an effort to meet the objectives of the twin green and digital transition and bolster the resilience of the tourism ecosystem in the medium to long-term. This partnership promotes joint action through the establishment and implementation of large-scale skills partnerships at national, regional, and local levels, which shall build on existing national

¹ Online available:

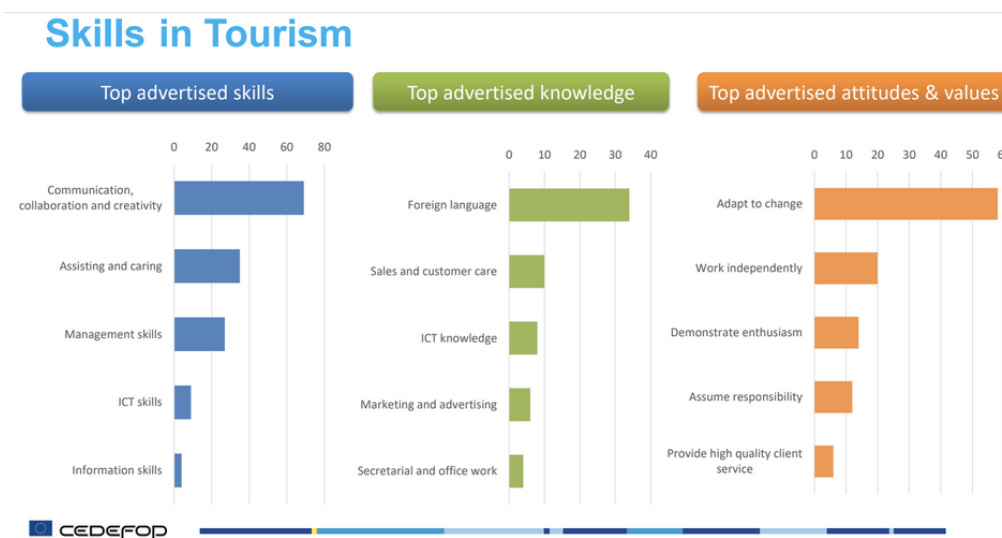
<https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/Pact%20for%20Skills%20Tourism%20Baseline%20-%20update%202023%2020230302.pdf>

structures fulfilling Pact for Skills criteria, in order to meet the skills needs of the entire workforce of the European tourism ecosystem, ensuring that any new skills are embedded in the overall policy and curricula for vocational education and training.

The challenge for the tourism sector

The European tourism industry was severely impacted by the COVID crisis and is only now starting to show signs of recovery. The near collapse of global tourism during the COVID pandemic (loss of 80% in 2020) affected around two-thirds of direct tourism jobs, whilst the entire tourism ecosystem struggles to attract and recruit qualified people for specific jobs. The pandemic has shown there will only be a future for tourism when more sustainable practices are incorporated in the consumption, production, and development of tourism. The tourism workforce is generally less qualified than the EU working population, with up to 25% possessing low-level qualifications. Changing skills needs and bridging skills gaps in a highly seasonal sector, often involving short-

term contracts in a fragmented industry is a major challenge for tourism businesses, education providers and public bodies. Over 90% of tourism enterprises employ less than 10 people—skills training for employees in these small enterprises, especially in ‘nano-enterprises’, must not be left behind. To remain competitive globally, to meet their economic and social responsibilities, and to meet the challenges of the twin transition, the



The results of a recently published analysis of job advertisements in the tourism sector are summarised in this chart. Among the advertised knowledge, foreign language knowledge takes first place by far.

Source: Branka, Jiri, Tourism at a crossroad

European tourism industry needs to invest significantly in the up/reskilling of its professional workforce, particularly in digital, green and social skills. While working on essential future skills for tourism, efforts aimed at closing skills gaps and future solutions should be grounded in a solid understanding of the European industry’s skills base today that also addresses short-and mid-term needs.

The needs

The Pact for Skills has a strategic mid-and long-term approach. However, a quick implementation of its collaborative concept involving all stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem will also allow addressing the urgent short-term needs as outlined above.

- Immediate action should focus on recovering the lost workforce, with re-and up-skilling both current and lost workforce in core new skills that are in demand as an important factor. This requires quick, non-bureaucratic and flexible public-private (PPP) cooperation between the public sector, education systems and the tourism eco-system (especially industry and trade unions) as first practical step of the Pact for skills.
- Long-term, the disruption in skills demand and priorities together with a foreseeable shift in the composition of the workforce presents an opportunity to reset the tourism sector, making it fit for the future through Skills Intelligence (the early detection of skills gaps, new occupational profiles), changes in training methodologies, and profound changes in the formal and informal education system as regards flexibility, quick uptake of new needs and opening up to lifelong training. This requires close and constructive cooperation between authorities that are responsible for legislation, teaching and training (HE / VET) entities and the private sector (industry and workforce).

Out of the box

Survey almost finished

The world of work is subject to continuous change. This truth has always been right everywhere, but currently we are experiencing an acceleration of these changes due to a number of changes. Demographic change, the demands of an ecological economy and digitalisation are just some of these driving factors. The tourism industry is by no means exempt from this evolution; on the contrary, it is experiencing the change intensely.

Therefore, vocational training for the different activities in the tourism industry experience equally strong challenges and consequently the need for adaptations in content and form. These demands are also felt in language training, which must also be up to date to current challenges with the aim to preserve and strengthen the quality. Quality in language training means, above all, training that is relevant to practice and that takes the rapid changes in the

working conditions of the various activities in the tourism sector and the target groups as its guiding principle.

The **Includmi** project has set itself the goal of developing a brochure entitled **Methodological Guide for Training Organizations and Employers of Migrants**. This text aims to strengthen the cooperation between the tourism sector and the English language training institutions in order to promote and support the most practice-relevant English teaching possible. One of the ways to stimulate the practical relevance of teaching is through so-called immersion stays of teachers in companies of the tourism sector, i.e. hotels and restaurants, doing job shadowing. In order for the planned brochure to really address the existing needs, it is necessary to know the current challenges in the tourism sector regarding English language training. Therefore, during the last Transnational Project Meeting the **Includmi** project partner had agreed to conduct a survey targeted to three main groups in their local or regional environment. These groups are a) language training institutions, b) teaching staff and c) employer in the tourism sector.

The survey almost has come to its end and the Spanish project partner is now evaluating and analysing the data with the aim to obtain a beneficial input for the future project results. Following the timeline of the **Includmi** project the brochure **Methodological Guide for Training Organizations and Employers of Migrants** will be published in five languages, English, German, French, Maltese, Spanish and Turkish, and goes online in March 2024.

News from partners **Gesellschaft für Inklusion und Soziale Arbeit - ISA**

Kick-off for state-wide survey on participation opportunities for refugees

The statistics report approx. 60300 refugees living in the State of Brandenburg (31 March 2023). The majority of them are accommodated in refugee shelters. Self-determined life from the very beginning, since arriving in Germany - that is the mission and goal of migration social work targeted to refugees. In Brandenburg, this was even preserved in the legal framework, established in 2016. An essential component of this is the refugees' opportunities for participation and co-determination in the accommodation and their host locality.

But what does it look like in practice? So far, there have been no studies on this. ISA wants to change this unclear and untenable situation and starts a state-wide online survey. The research aims to know whether and which

participation structures exist in the refugee's accommodation centres in Brandenburg and to what extent the participation of the residents is possible at all under the current framework conditions.

Izmit İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü - IIMEM

Turkish *Includmi* project team is continuing data collection



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tourism sector regarding English language training. The project partners therefore agreed to conduct interviews with persons from three target groups in the local or regional environment of the partners: Language schools, teaching staff members and enterprises in the tourism industry.

Introducing the *Includmi* project to the direction staff of **Izmit Teachers' House and Evening Art School**

Framed by that goal of *Includmi* on 20th July, the Turkish *Includmi* project team visited ***Izmit Teachers' House and Evening Art School*** which offers accommodation with a lot of facilities for national and international visitors of Izmit. The Turkish

project team have introduced the project and expressed our thanks to the administration for their support applying the surveys.

IFPRA Normandie

The IFPRA Normandie welcomed its European partners

The last months were filled with international encounters for the IFPRA Normandie. It is especially within the framework of its strategic European partnerships that the IFPRA Normandie welcomed the Spanish, Italian, Lithuanian, English, and Turkish teams of the STELA project.



STELA is a European project aiming to develop the use of storytelling and digital tools in language teaching methods. To achieve this, a collection of scenarios has been created to provide language teachers and trainers with a ready-to-use tool for integrating storytelling into their classes. Storytelling can be defined as the art of

telling a story to captivate an audience: an effective method to motivate learners to study languages, and one that continues to gain attention.

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