



EAfa

European
Commission

Webinar

Journey to sustainability: the role of Apprenticeships in supporting tourism and hospitality

19 April 2024



On 19 April 2024, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfa) hosted a webinar to discuss how apprenticeships can contribute to – and accelerate – sustainability in the tourism and hospitality sector. The webinar was part of the [European Year of Skills](#), and represented an opportunity for EAfa members to share inspiring practices related to apprenticeships and work-based learning.

Welcome by the European Commission (DG EMPL) and Thematic Introduction by Cedefop

Ana Carrero, Deputy Head of Unit - Vocational Education and Training (VET) at DG EMPL, European Commission, welcomed the audience, highlighting the importance of the tourism and hospitality sector. With its significant contribution of over 10% to the European GDP and employment opportunities for more than 20 million individuals, this sector stands as a cornerstone of the European economy. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector faces several challenges including workforce shortages, a lower level of education and training compared to the EU average, as well as the green transition. Initiatives such as the [European year of skills](#) and the [Action plan on labour and skills shortages](#) seek to address these challenges and encourage stakeholders to work together to meet skills demands and promote continuous learning. In this context, apprenticeships can be a key instrument to boost the upskilling and reskilling required for labour shortages, and to align the workforce towards sustainability goals.



Apprenticeships are not just about getting a job; it is a journey that helps people grow and learn essential skills."

Dylan Werner,
President of the National Section of Best Apprentices of France (SnMAF)

Setting the scene for the webinar, **Jiri Branka**, Expert in the Department for VET and Skills (Cedefop), introduced the audience to the results of the [Cedefop forecast](#), which estimates that by 2035 there will be over 7 million job vacancies in the EU within the tourism and hospitality sector. Data on the trends in this sector indicate that only 14% of workers report significant upskilling needs, while 55% express a need for social skills development. More than a third (37%) of workers believe they have an education level higher than their job requires, implying that their competences are not being fully utilised. Jiri stressed that access to training within the tourism and hospitality sector will demand attention from policymakers, calling for policy to improve training infrastructure and ensure equitable access for all workers.

Presentation of inspiring practices

Kicking off the first part of the panel discussion, **Lina Tsaltampasi**, CEO, OECON Group of companies, Greece, introduced the audience to the GreenHost project. This innovative initiative aims to engage stakeholders across the EU to assess the needs and gaps concerning green skills and sustainability within the tourism and hospitality sector. Through a VET curriculum specifically designed to equip industry personnel with essential skills, GreenHost aims to support the transition to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious industry, fostering green practices and promoting green careers. GreenHost aims to foster enduring employment in the sector by establishing apprenticeships and transnational mobility schemes, facilitated by an online transnational cooperation platform.

Employment,
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A virtual group photo of the speakers. From the top left: Ana Carrero, Jiri Branka, Lina Tsaltampasi, Virginie Demoucron, Lajos Borocz and Dylan Werner.

The next panellist, **Virginie Demoucron**, Tourism Sector Secretary Political Secretary at the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Union (EFFAT), shared with the audience the work and initiatives of EFFAT to promote apprenticeships in the hospitality sector. Virginie introduced the [EFFAT-HOTREC Joint Declaration on How to Overcome Labour and Skills Shortages in the Hospitality Sector](#), launched in March 2024. This initiative promotes dialogue between social partners as integral part of the solution to address labour and skill shortages in the hospitality industry. It advocates for enhancing employment conditions, fostering education and training opportunities, and establishing a supportive framework for the mobility of migrant workers.

Lajos Borocz, Secretary General of VIMOSZ, Hungary, provided an overview of two impactful initiatives: the Next Tourism Generation Skills Alliance; and PANTOUR. These initiatives aim to understand the skills demand in the EU labour market. Additionally, he introduced the Skills Intelligence Monitor (SSIM), which serves as a skills matrix for monitoring skills gaps, needs, job profiles, best practices and training requirements within the sector. Lajos concluded by highlighting the importance of implementing apprenticeships in the hospitality sector to fight current challenges such as demographic changes, lack of administrative capacity and the lack of attractiveness of the sector.

Lastly, **Dylan Werner**, President of the National Section of Best Apprentices of France (SnMAF), shared insights from his personal journey as an apprentice. Starting at the age of 15 in the culinary world, he is now working as an apprentice at the three-Michelin-starred restaurant Plénitude in Paris. Dylan emphasised the significance of apprenticeships, highlighting the invaluable opportunities they offer to young people in gaining both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Discussion on challenges and take-away messages

In the final part of the webinar, the panellists were invited to elaborate on the most common challenges for apprenticeships in the tourism and hospitality sector. **Lina** emphasised the critical importance of ensuring that apprentices are not viewed as cheap labour, underscoring the need for the sector to educate employers and create an environment where apprentices feel valued and motivated, with sufficient support for learning and growth. **Virginie** further stressed the importance of enhancing the image of apprenticeships working in the sector through changes such as increasing pay and mainstreaming green skills to make professions more attractive in the eyes of young people. Lastly, **Lajos** highlighted that there is no single solution to overcome challenges faced by the hospitality sector, and stressed that strategies for upskilling and reskilling are necessary to meet long-term needs.

Conclusion

This webinar explored the vital role that apprenticeships can play in making the European tourism and hospitality sector more sustainable. Panellists showcased a range of initiatives at both EU and national level, underscoring the significance of apprenticeships in addressing existing labour and skills shortages, and in preparing workers for a green labour market. Panellists called for improving the image and attractiveness of the apprenticeships in the sector, and for high-quality apprenticeships that meet the evolving demands of the tourism and hospitality industry. Towards the end of the webinar, the audience, comprised of VET providers, training centres and companies and other stakeholders, were cordially invited to [make an EAfA pledge](#) to promote apprenticeships in tourism and hospitality sector, and to continue the conversation in the [EAfA LinkedIn group](#).

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