SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY
THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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13% of employees are aged under 25 (tourism is one of the main entry points to the labour market and a concrete answer to youth unemployment)

Tourism is also the largest employer of migrant workers, part-time and seasonal workers, as well as female workers (58% of people employed in this industry are women) and it provides large job opportunities also to workers re-entering the job market
GAPS AND SHORTAGES TO BE FILLED (I)

- Tourism businesses, especially MSMEs, struggle to find, attract and retain skilled employees, because:
  - negative perception of job quality (low average salary level, seasonality, night or weekend work shifts, limited career prospects)
  - human capital working in the tourism sector generally less skilled than the EU average working population (around 25% of the workforce has low-level qualifications)
GAPS AND SHORTAGES TO BE FILLED (II)

- Other major problems:
  - Over 90% of tourism enterprises employ less than 10 people and the training for employees is often left behind.
  - Difficulty for many entrepreneurs to keep up with the rapid changes of digitization.
  - Limited understanding of employers’ needs and travellers’ expectations by education and training providers.
GAPS AND SHORTAGES TO BE FILLED (III)

• Thus, in such a highly seasonal sector, often involving short-term contracts, two main goals for EU tourism companies are currently:

  ✓ becoming more attractive, especially towards the new generations;
  ✓ continuously identifying skills needs, working together with public authorities and education and training providers to bridge gaps
According to research «Realizing 2030: The next era of human-machine partnerships», carried out by the Institute for the future:

- 85% of the jobs in 2030 have not yet been invented
- the ability to acquire new skills throughout a working life will be more valuable than knowledge itself
These estimates indicate a clear trend towards disruptive changes in the coming years, when:

✓ the relationship between man and machine will become even deeper and more immersive

✓ every company, even and especially in the tourism sector, will have to become a digital company in order to survive
EUROPEAN COMMISSION’S RESPONSE MEASURES

**Sector Skills Alliances**

(businesses, education and training providers, professional associations, chambers of commerce, and other relevant stakeholders) in the **14 leading industrial ecosystems (including tourism)** with the task of developing a **Blueprint** (a targeted strategy and action plan to close the skills gaps in each mean economic sector)

**Pact for Skills**

promoting joint action to maximise the impact of investing in **upskilling** (improving existing skills) and **reskilling** (training in new skills): it calls on social partners, public authorities, employment agencies, education and training providers to **work together and make a clear commitment to invest in training** for all working age people across EU
Basic priorities underlying the NTG and PANTOUR projects:

- To maintain and consolidate the primacy of the EU as the leading tourist destination worldwide, making it an ever greener, digital and tourist-friendly area.
- To ensure that, in the next decades, tourism continues to be a "capital saving and labour intensive" sector.
- To support the dual transition and the resilience of the tourism industry.
On the basis of these strategic goals, the two Blueprint projects:

1. built a **Skills Intelligence System** to continuously identify existing skills gaps and anticipate future skills needs
2. improved the **relationship between tourism enterprises, education system and governments**
3. provided employers, employees, trainers and students with a set of **tools and training modules**
PACT FOR SKILLS IN TOURISM (I)

- NTG and PANTOUR partnerships actively support the EC in the implementation of the PfST, which is a shared engagement model for skills development in Europe starting from the awareness that:
  - Businesses need skilled people to innovate and grow
  - Skills are critical to recovery from the pandemic crisis and for mastering the digital and green transitions
  - Skills gaps are increasing (while a lot of people are at risk of unemployment)
While in other key industrial ecosystems there are large companies able to provide significant references for skills development policies, tourism is a sector marked by the prevalence of small and micro enterprises.

It’s hard to aggregate a significant number of industrial partners able to inspire and support initiatives aimed at improving the human capital employed in this sector.
PACT FOR SKILLS IN TOURISM (III)

- The system needs therefore to be based on a "dual-track model", in which the indications provided at the continental level within the PfST are then declined and implemented at the local level by a network of National and Regional Skills Partnerships.

- The working methodology that enables NRSPs to operate most effectively is the Collaborative Governance Framework, developed during the NTG project.
CURRENT SKILLS INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY

- People's ability not only to find work, but also to keep it for as long as possible, or even to change it (thus improving their **professional value on the labour market**).
The demand for digital skills is growing 6 times faster than any other skills.

A recent Europe-wide survey found out which skills are considered **most lacking from a future perspective** in the tourism industry.

The top 5 skills with the biggest gaps to be bridged are all digital:

1. Artificial Intelligence and Robotics skills
2. Skills related to Metaverse, VR, AR, Brain-Computer Interface
3. Data Analytics, Business Intelligence, Big Data skills
4. Website Development skills
5. Computer Programming skills
This impressive acceleration (which in part also derives from the new needs caused by COVID-19) is producing the following results:

- decision-making processes more and more data-driven
- possibility of delivering increasingly personalized tourism experiences
- strong impact of ICT in all stages of the customer journey
- since it’s impossible to train human resources in the use of all systems and all upcoming changes, self-learning capacities are key
However, as tourism sector is and will remain a service sector (where the human component of performance is and will remain central), it’s possible to predict that the future of work will revolve mainly around those skills, abilities and capacities that are unique to the human brain and more difficult to automate (social intelligence, originality, creativity)
SOCIAL SKILLS

- Soft, relational and transversal ("skills to develop skills"), often innate, difficult to be taught (as opposed to hard skills) but considered essential by companies to work successfully in this sector:
  - ✓ listen and communicate effectively
  - ✓ show understanding and empathy towards clients and their needs
  - ✓ solve problems in real time, work in a team, manage stress, dealing with emotions/conflicts, adapt to new needs

«High Tech with a Human Touch»
GREEN SKILLS

- Shift from "Nice-to-have" to "Need-to-have."
- All tourism employees involved, not just those in an "environmentally oriented role."

- Fostering environmental sustainability
- Working with local supply chains
- Apply the principles of the circular economy
- Use in restaurants of zero-km food products
- Reuse of the organic waste
- Reduction of water consumption

- Use of recycled water
- Use of biodegradable detergents
- Systematic use of renewable energy sources
- Participation in climate change mitigation programs (such as carbon offsetting or low energy systems)
- Support for the protection and management of biodiversity and local landscapes
In Europe, the business associations call for more collaboration between tourism industry and education system, asking for learning programs more focused on the specific needs of the sector, but they have to change cultural approach for such structured cooperation, also because the vast majority of European tourism businesses are small and micro (big players representing less than 10%)
NEW CHALLENGES FOR EMPLOYERS (II)

- **Sustainable employability**: as a result of an aging population, extended working careers, increased participation rate, caring for career prospects, health and well-being of the workforce.

- **Lifelong learning**: fostering a "growth mindset" among staff, in which learning new skills (both hard and soft) is a permanent activity.

- **Employer branding**: ‘war for talent’, about specialized workers not easily available on the labour market, competing in the search for talent.
THANK YOU!

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