

# REBRANDING THE TCLF SECTORS: A Promotional Plan for the Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear Industries

NEWS N. 4 – DECEMBER 2019

## BEYOND PRECOCEIVED NOTIONS : A PROMOTIONAL PLAN FOR THE TCLF SECTORS

Misconceptions die hard. This is why the Skills4Smart TCLF 2030 Blueprint team has put together a far-reaching plan to challenge the prevailing negative misconceptions about the TCLF industries. The plan showcases the modern education pathways and the highly rewarding career opportunities that these four sectors offer to students and job seekers.

Communicating the most innovative aspects of the sectors will drive more smart and talented people to join the four sectors and enrich the TCLF talent pool across Europe.

The plan revolves around four main pillars:

- (1) **Image**, through the elaboration of a new branding for the sectors and its communication to a wide audience,
- (2) **Education**, through the development and promotion of updated occupations, curricula and training courses along with modern teaching methodologies,

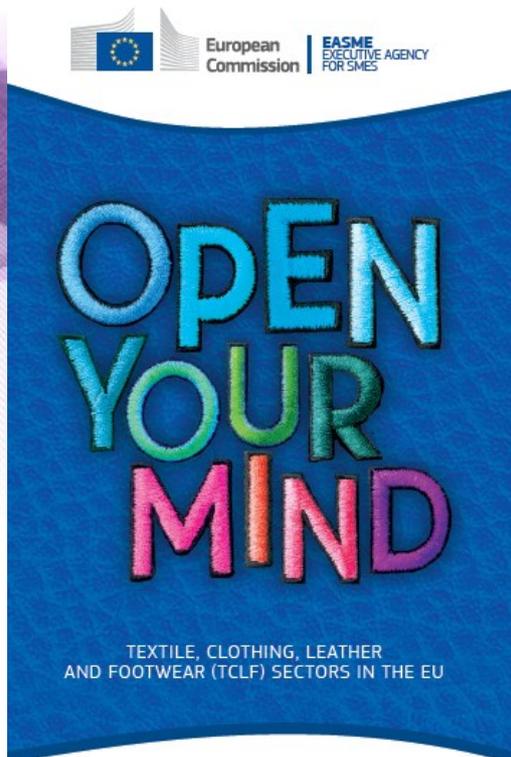


- (3) **Working conditions**, by highlighting and reinforcing the positive working environment that the industries offer today;

- (4) **Regional political support**, through the creation of a network of EU regions pledging to promote skills development and opportunities in the TCLF industries.

## A NEW MOTTO FOR THE TCLF SECTORS

A new communication campaign has been launched in six European countries (Italy, Portugal, Germany, Romania, Poland and Spain). Under the motto “*Open Your Mind*”, the campaign has developed a new, fresh branding for the sectors, accompanied by a set of modern and engaging videos prompting young people to change their views about the sectors. These videos shine a light on what the sectors really look like today: bound by innovation and technology while strongly grounded in centuries-old traditions, the TCLF sectors offer attractive job positions with many opportunities to go up the ladder and set a rewarding career in motion. The TCLF sectors



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design and manufacture high added value products that are not only technical and trendy, but also part of a long tradition of European savoir-faire, giving them a very special place in European culture. Because many of the job positions available in the TCLF sectors are mostly unheard-of, the campaign will also highlight the most demanded occupations offered by the sectors, and illustrate how working in TCLF means being part of a community of people that are passionate about their craft. The communication campaign also includes field visits in companies and VET centres and a best product competition targeting young people.



### STIMULATING AND CUTTING-EDGE TCLF VET EDUCATION

The attractiveness of the sectors does not only stem from the many employment opportunities that they offer. The sectors are attractive because the jobs they offer are stimulating, meaningful and deeply anchored in the 21st century. The Skills4Smart Blueprint team has therefore identified and updated curricula and training courses to propel TCLF VET education into the 21st century and make sure that it is as attractive as the jobs it leads to. Leading-edge technology and present-day topics such as sustainable manufacturing processes or digital marketing are now rubbing elbows with traditional craftsmanship in VET curricula, offering students many orientation paths.



But education is not only about content: modern teaching methods are vital if one wants to promote the best possible education while engaging students. The S4TCLF Blueprint has therefore focused on incorporating on-the-job training and other learning-by-doing approaches

(apprenticeships, dual education, fab-labs, etc.) into TCLF curricula to better fit students' expectations. Additionally, the use of E-learning and digital learning tools in TCLF programmes will make education more fun and more widely available. The plan includes the promotion of these updated training curricula and tools to a large audience across Europe so that potential future students know that learning a trade in the TCLF sectors is as challenging and stimulating as it gets!

### POSITIVE AND MODERN WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

The S4TCLF Blueprint project partners will work with companies to highlight the existing best practices in terms of positive working environments and promote them. Research shows that current workers and employees are more and more compelled by benefits that go beyond the merely financial aspect. TCLF companies now offer competitive advantages such as more flexible working hours that guarantee a healthy work-life balance, more mobility opportunities, more skills development programmes and more training opportunities that support employees' lifelong learning initiatives. The role of the Blueprint Partners is to promote such measures and to ensure that these improvements become widespread in the TCLF sectors.

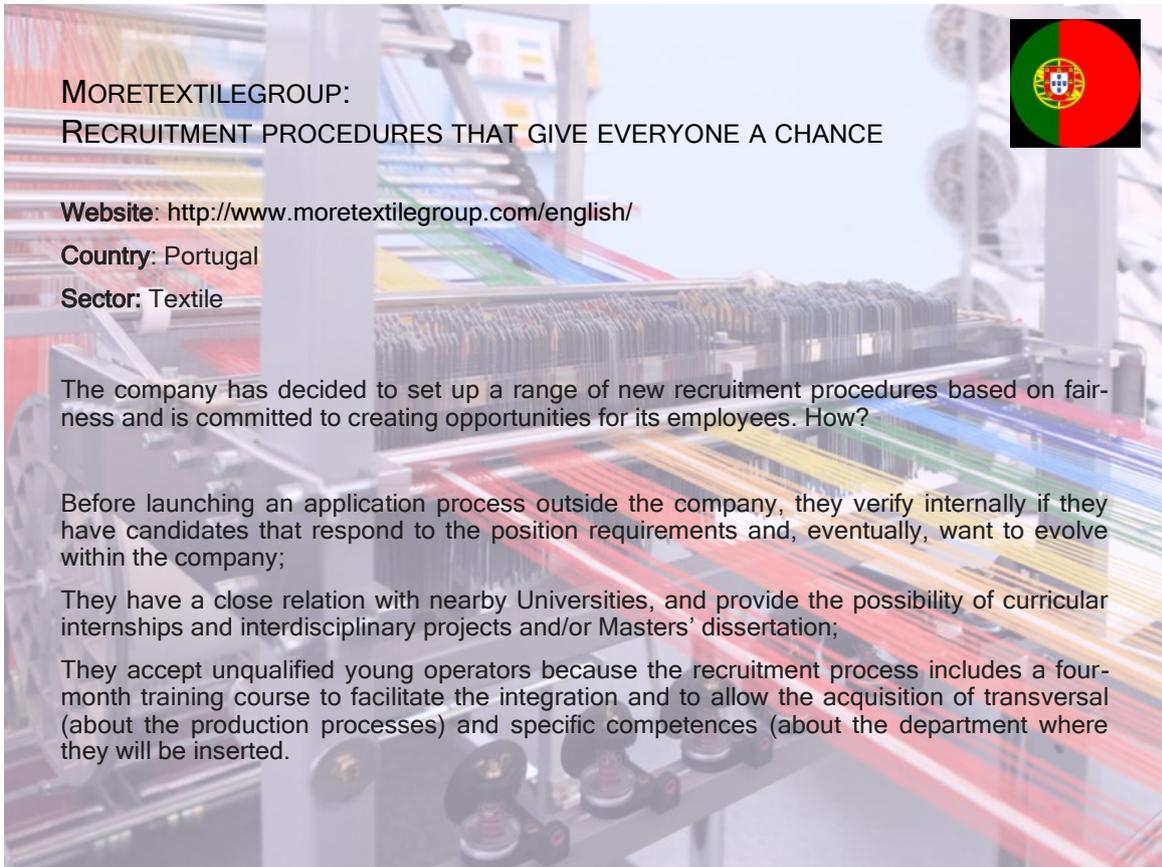
### REGIONAL POLITICAL SUPPORT

The commitment of EU regions holding a specific interest in attracting talent to the TCLF sectors because of the high concentration of TCLF companies within their borders (so-called "clusters") is a vital aspect of the project's promotional plan. Such a commitment will ensure that public-private dialogue and diffusion of highly effective policy measures is encouraged. Relevant regions will then be invited to set up a network around a commonly defined Memorandum of Understanding with well-defined common objectives such as the provision of support programmes, financial/tax incentives for companies' recruitment, training activities, additional investment in regional VET infrastructures and the promotion of sectoral events such as regional Fashion Weeks.

To conclude, this Promotional Plan's approach is to tackle the attractiveness deficit of the sectors through many lenses: it focuses on the perception and on the negative views about the TCLF sectors through a communication campaign; it focuses on the training content and methodologies so that students will be more tempted to join the four sectors; it focuses on working conditions so that people are content with their jobs and decide to continue working in the TCLF industries, and it focuses on political support to increase publicity and ensure that the sectors keep being well-represented after the project ends. It is a comprehensive and ambitious plan and the Blueprint project partners are confident that its implementation throughout this four-year project will bring great, sustainable and long-lasting rewards to the TCLF industries.



**TCLF STAKEHOLDERS COMMIT:**  
**SPOTLIGHT ON TCLF BEST PRACTICES IN RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYEMENT**



**MORETEXTILEGROUP:**  
**RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES THAT GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE**

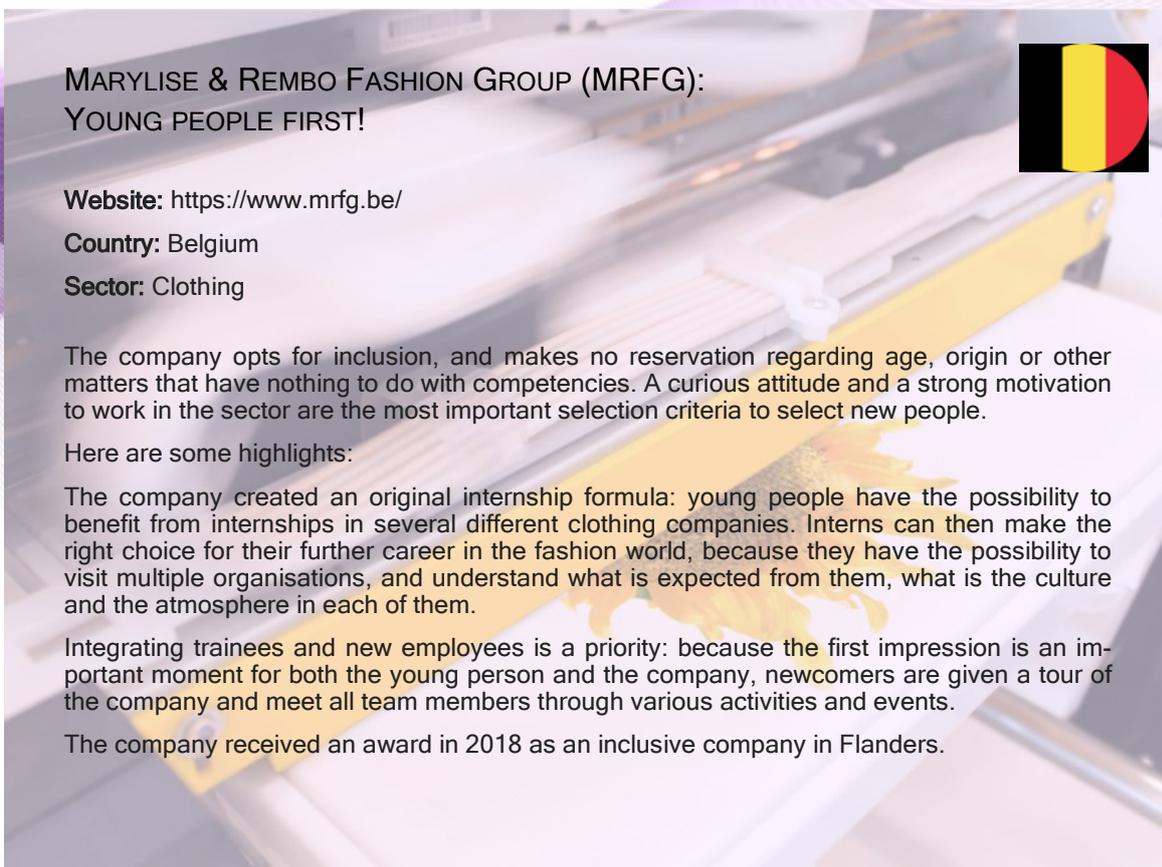
**Website:** <http://www.moretextilegroup.com/english/>  
**Country:** Portugal  
**Sector:** Textile

The company has decided to set up a range of new recruitment procedures based on fairness and is committed to creating opportunities for its employees. How?

Before launching an application process outside the company, they verify internally if they have candidates that respond to the position requirements and, eventually, want to evolve within the company;

They have a close relation with nearby Universities, and provide the possibility of curricular internships and interdisciplinary projects and/or Masters' dissertation;

They accept unqualified young operators because the recruitment process includes a four-month training course to facilitate the integration and to allow the acquisition of transversal (about the production processes) and specific competences (about the department where they will be inserted).



**MARYLISE & REMBO FASHION GROUP (MRFG):**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST!**

**Website:** <https://www.mrfg.be/>  
**Country:** Belgium  
**Sector:** Clothing

The company opts for inclusion, and makes no reservation regarding age, origin or other matters that have nothing to do with competencies. A curious attitude and a strong motivation to work in the sector are the most important selection criteria to select new people.

Here are some highlights:

The company created an original internship formula: young people have the possibility to benefit from internships in several different clothing companies. Interns can then make the right choice for their further career in the fashion world, because they have the possibility to visit multiple organisations, and understand what is expected from them, what is the culture and the atmosphere in each of them.

Integrating trainees and new employees is a priority: because the first impression is an important moment for both the young person and the company, newcomers are given a tour of the company and meet all team members through various activities and events.

The company received an award in 2018 as an inclusive company in Flanders.

IN COOPRATATION WITH: VDL - GERMAN LEATHER FEDERATION,  
FILK - RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF LEATHER AND PLASTIC SHEETING,  
SBG - SAXONY EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AND CHEMISTRY OCCUPATIONS



**Website:**

[www.sbgdd.de](http://www.sbgdd.de)

<https://vdl-web.de/en/>

<http://www.filkfreiberg.de>

**Country:** Germany

**Sector:** Leather

The German Leather Federation (Verband der Deutschen Lederindustrie e.V.) has joined forces with a Leather research institute and an educational association from Saxony to create more recruiting opportunities for young people.

They have created two qualification programmes for Certified Foreman specialised in “Chemistry and Tannery” and “Leather Technician”. The idea of developing these new training programmes emerges from the desire to improve the recruitment opportunities of youngsters who already accomplished their study in leather professional schools. In fact, lots of youngsters decide not to choose the Leather curriculum because of the lack of further training offered after school in Germany and in German.

CARITÉ - CALÇADOS, LDA:  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL!



**Website:** <http://www.carite.pt/pt/>

**Country:** Portugal

**Sector:** Footwear

This Portuguese footwear company is giving employees without any experience a chance to develop their skills and to get to know the footwear professions.

The company recruits new employees without experience and provides in-company training through the foremen/forewomen in the shop floor, who have the responsibility to guide the newcomer through the company footwear manufacturing procedures.

In addition, the company provides extra training in a combined model in order to discover talent, train and certify the newcomer’s skills, and redirect them to the production occupations in which they demonstrate to have more interest. The training combines theoretical and simulation training (about 25% of the total time load) delivered by a VET provider and the work based-learning is provided by in-company tutors, previously prepared.

## S4TCLF SECOND PUBLIC EVENT (IAȘI, ROMANIA):

ALL TOGETHER TO REVITALISE SKILLS & JOBS IN THE TCLF SECTORS

"The university is traditionally the place to educate students and develop knowledge, but today it serves as a hub for connecting people: students with companies, teachers with public authorities, a place where all sectoral stakeholders come together." This was the opening message of IDBM dean Mariana Ursache at the second Public event of the Skills4Smart TCLF 2030 project (S4TCLF) held at the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași (Romania) on 15th November 2019. This event, focusing on "Digitalisation & Sustainability - A Blueprint to revitalise skills and jobs in Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries" gathered around 100 participants: current students and faculty members from the host university, companies and public authorities of the North-East region of Romania and S4TCLF project partners.



After the inspiring welcoming words of TUIASI staff, the representatives of S4TCLF consortium, Carmen Arias (CEC Secretary General), Rob Senden (IVOC Director) and Lutz Walter (Director of Innovation & Skills at EURATEX) presented various aspects of the S4TCLF project. It has been said that "the core idea of this project is to work on solutions", and indeed the development of new training content, the creation of networks among regions and among vocational education and training (VET) centres across Europe, will help answering to the current challenges that these industries are facing. At the same time, it will also help making them more digitalised and sustainable.

"In the past, the first priority of the companies was to fulfil the requests of their customers, whereas today, the biggest concern for TCLF companies across Europe is the difficulty to attract and retain talented people with the right skills to work in their businesses and make them grow" emphasised L. Walter. According to the S4TCLF estimates, companies in the 4 sectors may have to hire more than new 600,000 employees from now until 2030 in order to fill the replacement demand from retirement or sector exits for other reasons, as well as to address new skill needs. Due to regional peculiarities and sectoral specificities of the 4 branches, there is no appropriate one-size-fits-all Skill Strategy,





hence five different future scenarios have been developed within the project, from which companies, VET providers and public authorities can draw conclusions and use for adopting their own strategies: A Brave New World, Selective Leadership, Renaissance of the Craft, Walled Gardens and Industrial Sunset.

By way of example, Irina Mihai has been invited to present a project of the Romanian Sectorial Committee Association from the Textile and Garments Branch (COMITEX) which aims at developing an alternative public policy in the field of training and qualification for the Romanian textile sector thanks to the involvement of all relevant actors in the sector. She explained that this would be possible only through a strengthened cooperation among all industry stakeholders, a re-branding of the sector and its qualifications, and involvement of the companies in vocational training activities.

The public event carried on with a roundtable moderated by Aura Mihai (TUIASI) together with Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano (General Secretary of COTANCE) focusing more on companies' experiences in terms of digitalisation and sustainability. A former graduate of TUIASI, Caterina Ailiesei explained how her company KATTY FASHION, a leading-edge company which produces beautiful garments with minimal environmental impact in the Iasi area, gained leadership on the market. Respect, excellency, honesty and unity were the founding values. "Only through the cooperation of all stakeholders of the sectors, it will be possible to launch new projects in zero waste and digitalisation to boost our industry and our region".

REDU, represented by S.E.S. Prisecaru, transforms factories' residual process materials of textile and clothing into creative fashion items. "Although a relatively small part of consumers has been already educated to not throw clothes in the garbage, there is still a long way to go all over Europe and all over the world".

"The bond between university and companies is strong nowadays" explained Janina Zarojanu, from GEMINI CAD SYSTEMS, a 15-year old Iasi-based company worldwide known for developing hardware and software solutions for the textile, leather, clothing and other manufacturing sectors. Their efforts in research and innovation have translated into success on the market, but there is more. GEMINI CAD SYSTEMS has entered into a win-win partnership with TUIASI offering state of the art equipment for free to the University, which allows learners to get the necessary skills for a top future in the industry: "Academics train the future specialists of the digital area and we at GEMINI CAD support them by offering licences and support of our software tools to all students free of charge. Nevertheless, in order to fully welcome all the benefits deriving from the digitalisation a change of mindset is necessary for more traditional companies".

The event finished with the presentation of TUIASI's activities in attracting youngsters for careers in the TCLF sectors, considered in Europe as today's main challenge. Not only traditional events such as study visits, open doors and summer schools are organised, but also Fashion contests with more than 40 high schools from across Romania involved and a real Fashion Night with a catwalk organised together with the municipality of Iasi.

Thus, the general message agreed by all panellists at this second Public event within the S4TCLF project is that *"Building a supportive ecosystem of collaboration-driven universities and VET providers, innovation-driven businesses together with like-minded public authorities is fundamental to improve employability by attracting and retaining new workforce, to encourage growth and strengthen regions"*. As the S4TCLF project progresses, it will capture best practices such as these from Iasi and integrate them in the sector skills strategy in the form of a Sustainability Roadmap - for future exploitation of the project's outcomes and as a guiding light for the TCLF industries up to 2030.



# HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON FROM THE SMART GUYS OF THE TEXTILE, CLOTHING, LEATHER AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES



S4TCLF partnership in Iași (Romania),  
14 November 2019



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