



# Manifesto of Diversity

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# Manifesto of Diversity and Inclusion

## GENERAL CONTEXT

In alignment with the [TCLF Pact for Skills](#), this manifesto recognises the necessity of fostering an inclusive workforce that reflects the diverse nature of the European Union. The Pact advocates for broad participation and equal opportunities in upskilling and reskilling initiatives across all levels of the industry, ensuring that every worker, regardless of their background, has access to the necessary training to thrive in an evolving market. Therefore, this Manifesto advocates for diversity and inclusion in the TCLF sectors by promoting the well-being and involvement of all current and future workers in these sectors while introducing environmentally sustainable practices through strategic recommendations.

The TCLF ecosystem constitutes one of the most important pillars of the European economy, involving millions of workers whose structure, composition and workforce qualifications are crucial to shaping the sector's future. Recognising the importance of various demographic aspects, such as gender, age, education level and nationality, the consortium has leveraged extensive data gathered from previous research activities of the METASKILLS4TCLF Project<sup>1</sup>, to define a framework that supports this Manifesto.

The first dimension to consider in this document is related to gender:

***In 2022, around 67% of the total workforce of the TCLF industries were represented by women***

In Textile, Leather, and Footwear, the workforce is nearly evenly split between men and women, with females comprising 58.6% in Leather and Footwear and 52.9% in Textile.

Although the Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear sectors are often considered as a single ecosystem, it's crucial to distinguish between them for a more comprehensive analysis. The TCLF industries fall into two main categories: the capital-intensive industries that produce materials such as Textiles and Leather and labour-intensive sectors that transform these materials into finished articles downstream, such as Clothing and Footwear. In this case, the clothing sector presents a clear dominance of the female workforce (accounting for around 80% of the total in some countries<sup>2</sup>). In contrast, in the leather sector, female personnel now constitute approximately 25% of the workforce in tanneries, as noted in the 2020 Social & Environmental Report of the

<sup>1</sup> Final Report WP 3- *Skills Intelligence for Forecasting and Monitoring TCLF Emerging Skills Needs*.

<sup>2</sup> Euratex, *Facts & Key Figures 2024*, available at: <https://euratex.eu/wp-content/uploads/EURATEX-Facts-Key-Figures-2024.pdf>



European Leather Industry<sup>3</sup>. In some companies, this figure can increase up to 50%, where women fill high-level management positions in marketing, communications and sustainability.

A second aspect to consider is education and training of the workforce, which is one of the fundamental pillars upon which this Blueprint Project is built, there is a positive correlation in Europe between the level of education and the employment rate. According to a recent analysis<sup>4</sup>, 57,2% of individuals with primary or secondary education are employed and this percentage increases to 74,2% for those with post-secondary education (not tertiary education). However, the most significant figure is that

***86% of individuals with a tertiary education<sup>5</sup> are employed***

These numbers attest to the importance of the educational aspect and justify the focused attention it receives in this Manifesto.

Finally, the environmental aspect is also a critical cross-sectional aspect of this Manifesto. The TCLF sectors are recognised as having a significant environmental impact, due to their resource-intensive nature and their extensive global supply chains<sup>6</sup>. The implementation of activities aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of the TCLF sectors, along with the introduction of new EU legislation, will require new sets of skills and knowledge and, consequently, lead to the emergence of new occupations and their related training and educational programmes.

This Manifesto is articulated in four sections:

- I. General recommendations for creating a diverse and inclusive environment.
- II. Activities concerning gender balance in the TCLF sectors.
- III. Actions and recommendations related to the educational sphere.
- IV. Proposals and propositions dedicated to Immigrants and Refugees.

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<sup>3</sup> European Leather Industry - Social and Environmental Report 2020, available at: <https://shorturl.at/r2NXx>

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, *Employment by educational attainment level - annual data*, available at: [https://doi.org/10.2908/LFSI\\_EDUC\\_A](https://doi.org/10.2908/LFSI_EDUC_A).

<sup>5</sup> European Commission "*Organization of education system and of its structure*": Tertiary Education is represented by the following types of institutions: Universities (and equivalent entities), Institutes of the Higher education for Fine Arts and Higher Technological Institutes (technical schools offering programmes corresponding to the EOF levels 5 and 6).

<sup>6</sup> Skills4Smart TCLF 2030, Sectoral Skills Strategy for The EU TCLF Industries



### SECTION I – General Recommendations

The Partnership of this Project believes that:

- I. The concept of Inclusion is fundamental for the development of the TCLF sectors across the EU.
- II. Diversity of the TCLF workforce should be considered an added value and, consequently, it must be defended and fostered.
- III. The sense of inclusiveness should be constructed with a collaborative and interdependent working environment, where the work and capabilities of each person, at any level, are considered important.
- IV. Workers' wellbeing is a fundamental aspect of working life, which contributes to the creation of a feeling of belonging to a specific workplace, as well as to a sector.
- V. Education & Training are a lifelong journey which ought to be guaranteed during the working life and at any managerial or operational level.
- VI. TCLF companies should foster a working environment which promotes diversity and respect for workers, irrespectively to their nationality, culture, religion, and political affiliation.
- VII. It is important to establish internal procedures to monitor and evaluate the environmental impact of production processes.
- VIII. The introduction, whenever possible, of innovative processes, materials or technologies with the capabilities of lowering the environmental impact of the production process should be promoted.
- IX. The collaboration with other actors (i.e. educational centres, sectoral associations, trade unions, municipalities, regional authorities, etc.) in initiatives promoting cultural awareness about sustainability and climate change is important.

### SECTION II – Gender Balance

- I. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the signatories know that social prosperity is not possible without gender equality.
- II. Gender diversity in the TCLF sectors is considered an asset and, consequently, equal treatment and opportunities for men and women at work should be respected.
- III. Promoting gender equality - not only within a single working environment, but in the entire TCLF Ecosystem – ought to take place through individual actions or in collaboration with other actors.





- IV. Instruments for monitoring and tracking improvements in terms of gender balance in each area of work, and at managerial and operational levels should be established.
- V. Equal conditions for men and women to access to managerial positions and to undertake leading roles by establishing fair and common rules and principles should be promoted.
- VI. Gender balance and inclusiveness should be included in each internal business plan (for example by setting dedicated internal goals to be achieved, introducing policies and practices such as anti-discrimination, or flexible work and/or childcare, introducing inclusive language in job ads, etc.).

### SECTION III – Age and Education

The signatories recognize the need:

- I. To boost the attractiveness of the TCLF sectors in order to attract younger people.
- II. To boost digitalization and workers' technological capabilities, and to create appropriate education paths for future employees.
- III. To enhance the collaboration between companies, associations and educational centres in order to create the most appropriate educational paths to better respond to companies' skills needs.
- IV. To promote of courses for upskilling and reskilling of current workforce.
- V. To assure the appropriate assignment of activities to the workers on the basis of their capabilities, knowledge and skills (for example by submitting satisfaction questionnaire to the workers, offering upskilling courses, etc.).
- VI. To provide equal opportunities for each age range to access educational programmes and companies' internal working opportunities.
- VII. To promote educational activities for workers to understand and recognize positive and negative behaviours in terms of environmental protection within the working context.
- VIII. To educate workers at any level in activities to recognize and signal voluntary or involuntary practices of greenwashing.

### SECTION IV – Immigrants and Refugees

The signatories recommend:

- I. To strengthen cooperation among companies, associations, organizations and local and regional networks to foster the inclusion of refugees and immigrants and their local integration activities.
- II. To reinforce the cooperation among companies, associations and trade unions for developing fair and equal recruitment strategies and training programs.

- III. To promote the development of instruments for identifying formal and informal competences of refugees and immigrants in order to speed up and facilitate their employment.
- IV. To promote dedicated courses for education and training for accessing career opportunities in the TCLF sectors.
- V. To establish an inclusive working environment respecting the culture and religion of each employee.
- VI. To develop procedures to identify and report the presence of physical, ideological, or cultural barriers to services or working positions.
- VII. To promote and supervise the employment of third-country immigrants and refugees with special attentions given to equal treatment.
- VIII. To aid the procedures of recognition and validation of skills, qualifications and knowledge of workers coming from abroad.






## Manifesto of Diversity and Inclusion

### PARTNERS SIGNATORIES







**PROJECT NAME** Alliance for  
Cooperation on Digital and  
Circular Economy Skills for the  
TCLF sector across Europe

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METASKILLS4TCLF

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