

USWE: Social partners in the Maritime Technology sector hail the European project as a success and work towards the next step in upskilling European workers

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Following the end of the USWE project, a two year skills project involving workshops, surveys, shipyard visits and a high level event in the European Parliament, the social partners [SEA Europe](#) and [industriAll Europe](#) note the success of the project and plan to continue their crucial work in the field.

The USWE project (Upskilling Shipbuilding Workforce in Europe) was co-financed by Erasmus+ and demonstrated extraordinary stakeholder engagement with **70 organisations** from shipyards, suppliers and industrial associations to trade unions, technical universities and education providers from across Europe taking part.

USWE build on the previous work of the EU social dialogue committee and in particular sought to further **identify the main skills gaps in relation to key megatrends, notably decarbonisation and digitalisation.**

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General of SEA Europe, said:

“The Maritime technology sector in Europe faces tough global competition, which has worsened with Covid-19. At the same time, the sector is confronted with important challenges, such as the twin green/digital transition, which also offer interesting opportunities. The industry is committed to continue to make the most innovative, high-tech and greenest products on the global market to meet the European Green Deal targets. The maritime technology industry is a strategic sector for Europe and its strategic autonomy. Therefore, it is essential that we have a highly-skilled workforce who can produce these innovate, high-tech and greenest products.”

The project launched by the social partners, co-ordinated by Tknika the **Basque VET Applied Research Centre** with expert input from **Turku University of Applied Sciences**, was a truly European project. Not only via the background of project partners but also via direct input from all major Member States active in the sector. Furthermore, the onsite visits, including a shipbuilding school, ensured that the project was much more than simply a remote desk project. The project partners were able to really get into the subject and set out concrete recommendations backed by sector experts.

The project's [final reports](#) set out its findings and concrete recommendations such as the creation of a **Skills Analytics Framework plus an observatory** in order to have clear oversight, increased coordination between key stakeholders, support for regional stakeholders to develop and/or reinforce their regional skills management systems and the creation of a **EU Pact for Skills** for the sector.

Jude Kirton Darling, Deputy General Secretary of industriAll Europe, said:

“Europe has a proud history of shipbuilding and today’s advanced Maritime Technology sector is world class. Workers are at the heart of the industrial process and the need to upskill and reskill workers throughout their working life is crucial. The USWE project clearly listened to the voices of workers and

industry, the key partners in the sector, and we need to continue to work on skills to ensure that we have the best skilled workers in the world.”

Just like lifelong learning, the work on skills is never over and already the social partners have used the success of the USWE project to build a strong Pact for Skills for the shipbuilding and maritime technology sector.

Background Note:

SEA Europe and IndustriAll Europe represent close to 100% of the European shipbuilding and maritime equipment industry and its workers in 16 nations, encompassing the production, maintenance, repair and conversion of all types of ships and floating structures, commercial as well as naval, including the full supply chain with the various producers of maritime systems, equipment material, and services.

In November 2018 the EU Social Partners of the Shipbuilding and Maritime Equipment sector, [SEA Europe](#) and [industriAll Europe](#), together with [Tknika](#), the Basque VET Applied Research Centre, and [Turku University of Applied Science](#), launched a joint project for Upskilling Shipbuilding Workforce in Europe (USWE).

The social partners were mandated to undertake this important project by their national members of the EU Social Dialogue Committee for Shipbuilding. The aim of the project was to continue the important work and recommendations of the previous joint EU social dialogue skills projects. In particular, the project sought to **further identify the main skills gaps in the sector in relation to the adaptation to industry 4.0 and green technologies and the further digitalisation of the workplace.**

The USWE project has delivered an innovative methodology for managing sectoral skills and profiles in the shipbuilding industry. It identified the main skills and occupational needs, both now and in the next 5 and 10 years and analysed the impact of 4.0 technologies on existing occupations and skills while identifying new ones that will be in high demand in the future. Moreover, the USWE Project has renewed 25 VET professional profiles identifying technical, green, digital, and transversal skills for the further elaboration of new curricula. This information has been submitted to the ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) Secretariat in order to be included in the European database.

Given that one of the main challenges is the scarcity of sectoral skills and workers, increasing the need to attract new workers, the partners of USWE project has also delivered a booklet to promote career opportunities in the sector to young people.

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