



Editorial

While Europe is gradually returning to growth, the TCL industry confirms an expansion of its activity during the First quarter 2014.

However, the recovery is volatile with employment figures showing weak results and industrial's confidence

remaining uncertain end June.

This is one additional reason for strengthening confidence in the excellence of our training opportunities, development and transfer of our know-how to the new generation of employees of our Industry.

Together with our national ISP's¹ the European TCL Skills Council is keeping on collecting national information and best practices in order to develop a new and harmonised EU Skills strategy for the Industry to achieve a better match between skills and labour market needs.

The European Vacancy and Recruitment Report 2014 published on 23rd June 2014 confirms that low-skilled workers encounter increasing difficulties to find a job, face lower job stability and are out-competed by medium-skilled workers even in elementary occupations. In contrast, job opportunities are growing in some high-skilled professions. This report also highlights the increase in temporary and part-time work during the crisis and underlines the need to better support school-to-work transitions, to decrease segmentation of the labour markets and to up-skill jobseekers, particularly the low qualified.

All this is good but the translation into tangible results for our companies and workers across Europe remains still uncertain. We believe that the new 2014-2020 European Cohesion (Social and Regional) funds dedicated to the Smart Regional Development could be an opportunity for our ISPs and members. I do hope that they will be able to find additional support, at regional level, for enforcing our recommendations particularly in the regions with a high concentration of TCLF² companies to ensure inter alia the "generational change"³ as well as the actions identified by the Fashion and High-end industries in the plan adopted in London in December 2013 and promoted by Vice-President Tajani⁴.

Though crucial for our future we have also the feeling that there is much uncertainty in the policies pursued by the European Institutions for supporting the work of networking and co-development started by our pioneering enlarged European TCL Skills Council. We do hope clarify such points to avoid losing all the work carried out since 2008 together with our EU Social Partners

Francesco Marchi

EURATEX Director General and Board member of the EU TCL SSC

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¹ ISP's : Industry Skills Partnerships, meaning the national observatories

² TCLF : Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=51&langId=en&newsId=8070>

⁴ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-42_en.htm



from our National Observatories

■ Fundación Tripartita para la Formación en el Empleo (*Tripartite Foundation for Training in Employment*) is a nonprofit organization belonging to the Spanish State public sector. We encourage training among employers and workers, to meet the needs of the labour market and contribute to the development of a knowledge-based economy in Spain.

The Spanish *Training for Employment Subsystem* consists of the set of instruments and actions aimed at promoting and extending between firms and employed and unemployed workers appropriate training programmes that meet their needs and contribute to improving both workers' employability and enterprises' competitiveness.

Social partners' involvement and collective bargaining is in the very heart of Fundación Tripartita from the beginning in 1993, when it was born under the name FORCEM. Nowadays their Board of Directors is composed of members of the Spanish National Employment Agency and of the most representative employers' organizations (CEOE and CEPYME) and trade unions (CCOO, UGT and CIG) at a national level.

The role of social partners is essential in the development of common strategies to predict and anticipate the necessary and appropriate training that will address the ongoing socio-labour

changes, and in particular those arising as a result of the impact of the current economic crisis. Because of the close link between vocational training and employment, specific training clauses have progressively been incorporated to collective bargaining in Spain.

Training planning and response to the needs of the labour situation can only be understood from the perspective of sectoral analysis. Representative business organizations and trade unions in each sector at Fundación Tripartita are the **Joint Sectoral Committees** and they are set up on a national scope basis.

The Joint Sectoral Committees have been in duty over nearly 20 years and contribute to the development and extension of training for employment in the field of sectoral reality. They also play a task of the highest order in the configuration and extension of the Spanish training for employment subsystem and in spreading out a culture of training among employers and employees.

With the support of Fundación Tripartita, a total of 87 Joint Sectoral Committees are currently active in the subsystem and provide coverage to 92.4% of the population employed in the private sector. Their activity is directly linked to the status of collective bargaining, which is undergoing a process of adaptation to changes in labour laws right now.



Fundación Tripartita
PARA LA FORMACIÓN EN EL EMPLEO

In the textile, clothing and leather (TCL) industries, we count on three Joint Sectoral Committees: Textiles and Clothing, Footwear and Tanning. Following Spanish official figures, these three areas collect a busy population of 131,948 workers, representing approximately 0.76% of the statewide total. TCL's employed population in Spain has experienced a reduction of as high as 22.85% in the last three years.

The Joint Sectoral Committees of TCL industries in Spain are formed by representative social partners in the sectors as follows:

Textiles and clothing:

Business organizations:
Spanish Intertextile Council (CIE)

Trade unions:
Federation of Related Industries (FIA-UGT)
Federation of Textile and Leather, Chemicals and Related Industries (CCOO-FITEQA)

Tanning:

Business organizations:
Spanish Tanning Association (ACEXPIEL)

Trade unions:
Federation of Related Industries (FIA-UGT)
Federation of Textile and Leather, Chemicals and Related Industries (CCOO-FITEQA)

Footwear:

Business organizations:
Federation of Spanish Footwear Industries (FICE)
Spanish Association of Footwear Components (AEC)

Trade unions:
Federation of Related Industries (FIA-UGT)
Federation of Textile and Leather, Chemicals and Related Industries (CCOO-FITEQA)

Joint Sectoral Committees have a crucial role in establishing training priorities in their respective fields. Meeting labour market

needs in the different sectors is one of the key issues in the development of the subsystem of training for employment, especially in times of economic crisis and high unemployment rates, as it is the case in Spain at present.

Making available thorough and accurate information on the evolution of the sectors, on the changes arising from new industry regulations, on innovation, technological adaptation and overall trends is a must to enable anticipation of the skills required by the labour market in the short to medium term.

Fundación Tripartita's involvement in the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL, together with European social partners and other relevant industry organisations in Europe, is aimed at

providing stakeholders with meaningful shared tools and instruments to better face industry challenges in the near future. Our best wishes of success to the EU TCL SKILLS COUNCIL!

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An interview with...

Bill Macbeth

Managing Director TEXTILE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



The Centre has recently been established as a national body to help the sector to secure the skills required to compete effectively. We asked Bill about this important new development.

Q: How did your organisation start?

■ The Textile Training Group is a Group Training Organisation which was created 37 years ago when 7 local textile manufacturing companies decided to work together to recruit and train young people to join their workforce. The Group has grown steadily since then and is very active in skills and research and development activity. We work closely with UK Government departments to promote the industry and with sector bodies including Euratex to develop new approaches and new courses and to secure financial support for the sector.

Q: So what has changed with the new national role?

■ The national Fashion and Textiles Group Training Association was established in April 2013, building on the industry-owned GTA operation based here in Huddersfield. The new GTA now works closely with Creative Skillset, our sector skills council and training providers across England to:

- address the barriers that prevent employers engaging in skills development activity;
- promote the Apprenticeship programme and other skills development activities;
- build clusters of companies with similar skills needs, aggregating demand and creating/facilitating cost-effective delivery options to stimulate provision;

- build capacity in companies through shared resources and increased access to in-company training;
- identify and secure various sources of local, national and European funding to support collaborative approaches to skills development.

The GTA can support all forms of training activity in fashion and textiles companies and we offer:

- Practical support and advice;
- Access to quality assured training providers;
- On-line information and training services;
- Access to financial support;
- Support for Leadership and Management development;
- Help with school links and Apprentice recruitment;
- Capacity building in companies.

Q: What are the GTA's priorities?

■ We spelt these out last year when we submitted a proposal to the UK Government. We suggested that we need to ensure that young people leaving school were much better prepared for the world of work and that training provision needed to be re-shaped to better meet the needs of businesses. We also identified the need for increased collaboration between employers to address cross-sector or supply-chain issues, and for more employer leadership, commitment and investment in skills, including the involvement of employers who do not have a track record of investment.

Q: How relevant is European activity to your organisation?





■ European activity and funding is central to our mission. The UK does not have much of a track record for engagement in EU projects compared to many Member States, but our organisation is very active and we know that we have much to learn from European partners and much to gain from collaboration. The European Social Fund is an increasingly important source of financial support for skills development across the sector and the new Erasmus + programme looks like a very relevant platform to help us develop and share new approaches to the skills challenges our companies face. I think the European Sector Skills Council and Euratex have a major role here. They are ideally placed to facilitate partnerships across the sector, to

identify common needs including the need to attract bright young people into the sector and to prepare, coordinate and manage EU funded projects. I'd like to see skills issues receiving as much attention as trade issues in Euratex, they are every bit as important to our future prosperity.

In brief

The Textile Centre of Excellence is a not-for-profit company owned by its members, primarily textile manufacturing companies in West Yorkshire, UK. The Centre delivers a wide range of training and development support. Training provided includes apprenticeships and NVQs, Leadership and Management training, Health & Safety, IT and Fork Lift Truck training. The Centre provides support to hundreds of companies each year.

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