ACTIVITY REPORT 2025

– Helixconnect Europe –



helixconnect

FOREWORD

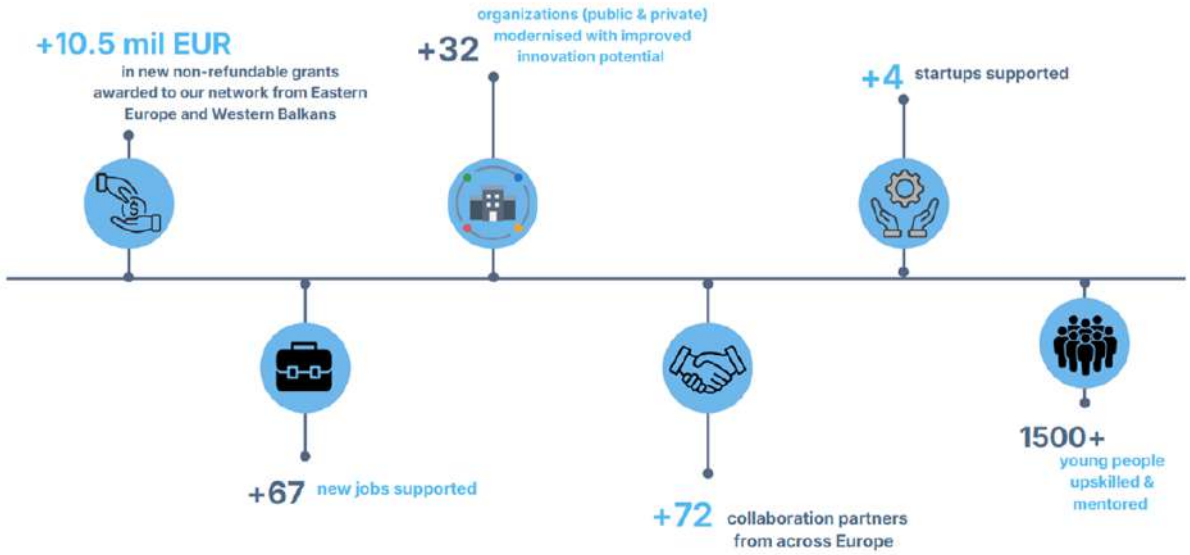


Dear network and stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the highlights and achievements of HELIXCONNECT EUROPE for the year of 2025. This year has been particularly fruitful, as we have successfully engaged in a multitude of impactful projects addressing key development challenges in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans.

Our proven impact has advanced our understanding of the regional needs and reinforced our role as a trusted partner of regional growth. We are proud of the vibrant community that we managed to build with our partners and stakeholders in our region.

2025 in a snapshot:



This report stands as a testament to the hard work and collaborative spirit of our staff, partners, and stakeholders. Our gratitude goes to all those that have made our joint achievements possible.
Looking ahead, together with our stakeholder group, we look forward to further expanding our impact in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans.

Sincerely,
Dr Adrian Solomon
Director, HELIXCONNECT EUROPE

1. MISSION OF HELIXCONNECT EUROPE

HELIXCONNECT EUROPE (HELIXCONNECT) emerged as a need for a better hands-on approach to facilitating innovation, helping organisations grow and enabling a proper integration among innovators, NGOs, industry, and government. Our vision is to bridge global innovation systems and enable global knowledge and technology transfer in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans. With the up rise of modern technologies and organisational performance frameworks, massive shifts and business model innovations are required in order to transform organisations to stay competitive while ensuring that they reach their intended impact in a fair and responsible manner. Currently, HELIXCONNECT has 9 experienced staff members (4 advanced career researchers with PhD, 2 Early career researchers, 2 software developers, 1 admin) and casually, works with a range of 15-20 international experts. Helixconnect has offices both in Romania and in Serbia covering 6 main departments:

- Ecosystem Integration Lab (start-up & scale-up acceleration platform and support for social entrepreneurs delivered via universities)
- Triple Helix Romania (knowledge and technology transfer via a triple/quadruple helix approach to foster enterprising)
- Center for Digital Transformation (toolkits for digital transformation of higher education and entrepreneurs)
- Balkan Science Tellers (toolkits for citizen science and science communication)
- Bauhaus & Inclusive Cities (toolkits for participatory engagement in sustainable and inclusive urban development.
- Engineering and Material Science Centre (R&D for technological acceleration)

2. ONGOING PROJECTS

PREMETS – Predictive Maintenance Education & Training System: An alliance for boosting the European Innovation in Predictive Maintenance through entrepreneurial cooperation, education, and training – Alliances for Education and Enterprises, 2023 – 2026. https://premets.eu

This project aims to introduce an alliance for boosting the European Innovation in Predictive Maintenance through entrepreneurial cooperation, education, and training for the development of a coherent digital platform that covers all aspects of the PM process.

WELDIFY – Deep tech driven inclusive and socially aware circular material joining & welding for a safe future, 2024-2027.
https://weldify.eu

WELDIFY addresses the emerging need of developing skilled workforce in the field of welding circular/reused metals. Particularly, as the construction and automotive sectors are rapidly relying on recycled metallic infrastructures, high-tech welding technologies need to be applied to counteract the catastrophic effects of poor-quality welding.

BLUEVISION – Sustainable predictive maintenance for circular material preservation and human-centric remote-operations in maritime critical infrastructures via augmented reality and digital twins: from education incubators to industrial metaverse (2025-2028)

Aims to upskill maritime professionals in sustainable predictive maintenance through augmented reality, digital twins, and industrial metaverse technologies, enabling safer, greener and more resilient maritime infrastructures while fostering innovation, skill portability, and entrepreneurial capacity across Europe.

VETINNOVATE - Transformation of VET Centres to become regional leaders of inclusive, sustainable and digital skills ecosystems (2025-2027)
https://www.linkedin.com/company/vetinnovate/

Transform VET centres and make them the leaders of inclusive, sustainable and digital skills ecosystems through assessing their capacities and help them gain the ability to identify potential

problems within the institution and engage quadruple helix ecosystems to find innovative solutions.

UrbanSoul - Fighting loneliness via urban gardens (2025-2026)
https://urbansoul-project.com

Enhance the inclusivity of senior citizens in urban development by training urban and public space designers to create environments that encourage active participation, combat ageism, and reduce loneliness and foster intergenerational collaboration in green urban spaces, influencing local policymakers to prioritise elderly-friendly urban redevelopment.

Resilience+ Boosting the emotional wellbeing, resilience, and social integration of LGBTQI+ youth (2025-2026)
https://www.linkedin.com/company/resilience-project-eu/

The Resilience+ project aims to boost the resilience and emotional wellbeing of the LGBTQI+ community by training youth, social workers, and psychologists on stress management and anti-LGBTQI+ violence response, offering psychological support and emotional coaching, and developing an online platform for professional counseling, peer support, and story sharing.

PreVenT – Predictive Maintenance via Deep Tech Solutions for Environmental and Social Impacts in Manufacturing (vocational education) – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (VET), 2024-2025. https://deeptechprevent.eu

This project aims to help VET providers develop tailored industry-oriented trainings on PM via deep tech applications, while positioning VET providers at the forefront of “deep tech” and sustainable/social technological innovation education for the labor market.

TEXTSTYLE – Supporting small clothing producers to embed circular & sustainable textile processing & use – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (VET), 2024-2026. https://texstyle-project.eu/
This project aims to support small clothing producers to embed circular and sustainable textile processing by training them on green practices and piloting work-based learning.

GREENBIM - Transnational MSc in BIM and Energy Efficiency in Buildings – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2022 – 2025. https://greenbim.yasar.edu.tr

This project aims to tackle the lack of know-how and engineering skills on Building Information Management in EU and Turkey for achieving energy efficiency in buildings. Through the activities of the project, GREENBIM aims to contribute to the efforts of EU in transforming the current building stock into an energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and sustainable one.

WELDNET – Vocational Centre of Excellence in Circular Material Welding and Predictive Maintenance – Erasmus+ Centre of Vocational Excellence, 2025-2029. https://weldnet-project.eu/

This project aims to create an inclusive, learner-centered VET program to upskill workers, including marginalized groups, in circular material welding (CMW) and preventive maintenance, addressing industrial labor needs while driving environmental and social impact. It supports the development of regional skills ecosystems in five WELDNET regions through strong public-private partnerships, aligning with EU strategies to reform VET governance, foster employment, and enhance sustainability.

ENABLE – Digital tools for supporting the employment of people with disabilities in manufacturing – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (VET), 2024-2025. https://enableproject.eu

Enable SMEs in manufacturing to support employees with disabilities with digital tools by certifying SMEs and staff and developing policy recommendations.

PREVENT – Prevention of natural disasters using deep technology – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2024-2025. https://prevent-project.com

PREVENT aims to leverage the potential of deep tech systems in environmental applications. The project also aims to introduce new and enrich existing modules in Engineering undergraduate programmes in HEIs on technologies related to prevention of natural disasters and the use of networks of sensors for the real-time collection of data which is pushed to centrally implemented Artificial Intelligence algorithms for optimize certain conditions and/or rectify or prevent disasters.

HINTS – High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transitions in Manufacturing – Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Vocational Education, 2024-2025. https://www.hintsproject.eu

The HINTS project is aimed at enhancing the quality and responsiveness of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Western Balkans and South-Mediterranean (WB&SM) countries.

DIEM – Distributed Ledger Technology: Innovation & Ecosystem Management) – Horizon Europe, 2022 – 2026. https://diem-dn.eu

DIEM brings together academic, government and industry expertise to holistically investigate the managerial, economic, and societal implications of DLT. To achieve its goals, DIEM sets out to facilitate an international network of interdisciplinary scholars, organizations, and institutions across sectors to support cutting edge innovation in DLT.

BETTER-LIFE – Entrepreneurial & engaged life science universities – Horizon Europe, 2022 – 2025. https://betterlifehorizon.eu

The general objective of the project is to establish the EU Digital Centre of Excellence for Socially Engaged Research in Life Sciences (hereinafter EU BETTER Life Centre).

DICE – Digital accelerator for socially engaged students – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2022 – 2025. https://www.diceaccelerator.eu

The DICE Project will develop a scalable acceleration program to advance digital CE courses for university educators and programme directors to design and implement their own courses.

SHIFT – ESG Impact Index in Higher Education – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2023 – 2026. http://shift-esg.eu

This project aims at increasing the capacity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to contribute to SDGs by assessing and implementing ESG strategies and policies through the ESG Impact Index platform, it will equip Higher Education institutions' students, academics, researchers and staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement and monitor ESG practices and reinforcing transnational cooperation by facilitating the sharing of best practices and knowledge among HEIs.

REED – Redesigning Education for Ethical Digitalization: Crafting a Social and Environmental Sustainability Mindset for Future Technology Leaders – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2024-2025. https://reed-project.eu

This project aims to boost readiness, resilience and competences of academics by providing knowledge/tools to address ethical issues and risks that arise from the Digital Economy and digitalization.

RiHEI – Responsible and Impactful University Transformation in Georgia – Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education, 2023-2026. https://www.rihei.eu

The general aim of RiHEI is to transform the Georgian HEI ecosystem into an engine of sustainable and responsible (socially, environmentally) growth for enterprise and job creation by investing in the capabilities of youth and better connecting education, research and innovation with private sector needs.

CHARLIE – Challenging Bias in Big Data user for AI and Machine Learning – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2022 – 2025. http://charlie-project.uib.eu

This project aims at challenging the bias in big data used for AI and machine learning by bringing a greater level of awareness regarding the negative impacts of the lack of a critical and ethical approach to techEd. Its main objectives are to link with the increase capacity of HE institutions, its teachers, and its students to provide learning opportunities that meet society needs and creating synergies between HE institutions, AE organisations and Youth organisations.

DEEBTIOTECH – Deep tech in bioentrepreneurship: immersing the next generation university startups and research commercialization in life sciences towards social and environmental impact – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (HED), 2024-2026. https://deepbiotech.eu/

This project aims to modernize life science education and research by fostering entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and engagement. It empowers students and entrepreneurs to integrate deep tech into life science startups, facilitates spinoffs and technology transfer, and drives economic, environmental, and social impact through innovation.

INTERGAMES – Incorporating Interdisciplinarity in Secondary School Education Using Conflict Video Games – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (SCH), 2023-2025. http://intergames-project.com

This project aims to enhance secondary school curricula and build teachers' and students' capacities by introducing interdisciplinary approaches to education through conflict video games.

GenAI – Generative AI Skills for youth – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (YOU), 2024-2025.
https://genai-project.eu/en/home/

This project aims to empower youth to engage with generative AI (and/or other similar tools), highlighting its applications, and limitations by introducing these tools to Generation Z, ensuring they are digitally ready to capitalize on the opportunities GenAI offers.

FOR-J – FOstering alternative means of conflict solutions through Restorative Justice practices and innovative tools – Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership (YOU), 2024-2026. https://for-jproject.eu

The FOR-J project aims to share good practices at the European level related to conflict management between youth, with a special focus on conflicts arising out of migration backgrounds and discriminations.

3. EVENTS & MILESTONES

WELDIFY: Deep-tech driven inclusive and socially aware circular material joining & welding (CMW) for a safe future; January 2025.

We have just launched WELDIFY, a cutting-edge initiative focused on advancing safe and reliable circular material joining and welding practices across key industrial sectors.



WELDIFY aims to address critical challenges related to the use of recycled metals by improving material quality, safety, and performance, enabling the wider adoption of circular economy practices in sectors such as automotive, construction, and manufacturing. The project is coordinated by Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH) and brings together an ambitious consortium committed to strengthening skills, innovation, and quality assurance in circular material joining and welding. https://helix-connect.com/2025/01/24/weldify-started-deep-tech-driven-inclusive-and-socially-awarecircularmaterial-joining-welding-cmw-for-a-safe-future/

Hints Building Skills Ecosystems in Europe, February 2025



Our mission to support regional innovation ecosystems in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans extends beyond innovation stakeholders alone. We take a holistic approach, focusing equally on the capacity of “end users” to effectively embed innovations into their workflows and daily operations.

Over the past two years, together with our partners, we have been actively developing skills ecosystems aligned with the key smart specialisation strategies of the regions we support. Effective skills ecosystems, particularly in cutting-edge domains, require strong alignment between innovation producers (such as academia and research institutions) and those responsible for upskilling the workforce (including vocational education and training centres and industrial training providers). With the rapid rise of

deep-tech solutions, this alignment has become even more critical, especially in light of the horizontal pressures faced by EU industries and society, including environmental compliance, social equity, and human-centric transformation.
Our initial portfolio of skills ecosystem projects, implemented jointly with leading European institutes, contributes directly to this transformation of the EU labour market:

1. PreMETS – Predictive maintenance in critical infrastructures
2. PreVEnT – Deep-tech enabled predictive maintenance for environmental and social impact
3. WELDIFY – Circular material welding and joining
4. WELDNET – Vocational Centre of Excellence in human-centric material joining and maintenance
5. ENABLE EU Project – Assistive technologies for employees with disabilities in manufacturing
6. TEXSTYLE – Circular textile manufacturing
7. HINTS – Green and digital transitions in manufacturing and VET centre reform

Through these initiatives, we continue to strengthen the foundations for sustainable, inclusive, and innovation-driven skills development across Europe.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/02/03/building-skills-ecosystems-in-europe/

Preparing GenZ for GenAI, February, 2025



As part of our broader efforts to build resilient skills ecosystems, we look beyond purely technical training required to develop Europe's deep-tech talent in engineering, industrial labour, and technical professions. A key priority is supporting the next generation of the workforce by enabling GenZ to make responsible and effective use of generative AI.
The science behind impactful AI use lies in targeted prompt engineering, which requires a strong foundation in knowledge development, critical inquiry, and structured thinking. Our GenAI initiative addresses this challenge by strengthening GenZ's academic, professional, and personal capacities. The initiative focuses on:

- Fostering digital literacy
- Enhancing prompt engineering skills
- Cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving
- Raising awareness of generative AI's opportunities and limitations

At its core, the initiative promotes a balanced synergy between AI and human intelligence, reaffirming the human role as the primary evaluator, decision-maker, and validator in AI-assisted environments.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/02/18/preparing-genz-for-genai/

WELDNET – Centre of Vocational Excellence on Circular and Socially Safe Automotive Manufacturing; March 2025



We are proud to be part of the latest cohort of 16 new Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). Through the WELDNET project, we continue advancing our work in skills ecosystem development, building on the strengths and complementarities of our partnership. Over the next four years, WELDNET will co-develop Regional Centres of Vocational Excellence in Romania, Serbia, Greece, Spain, and Austria, focusing on Circular Material Welding (CMW) and Preventive Maintenance (PM) for socially safe, resilient, and sustainable automotive manufacturing.

At a time when Europe faces increasing resource constraints, industrial transformation pressures, and the need for greater production resilience, WELDNET supports the development of talent capable of strengthening durability, safety, and continuity of manufacturing systems.
WELDNET aims to:

- Rapidly and sustainably upskill CMW and PM talent through a holistic and inclusive IVET & CVET programme aligned with industrial labour needs and environmental and social impact objectives.
- Establish five regional skills ecosystems functioning as VET living labs, supporting public–private cooperation and long-term transformation of vocational education.
- Foster sustainable cooperation among the five Centres of Vocational Excellence, leveraging complementarities and the expertise of the Austrian ecosystem to support emerging regions.

The Centres of Vocational Excellence will be located in:

- Valencia (Spain)
- Thessaloniki – Central Macedonia (Greece)
- Kragujevac – Šumadija and Pomoravlje (Serbia)
- Timișoara – Western Romania (Romania)
- Vienna / cross-country (Austria)
- Led by Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH) and supported by a strong European consortium, WELDNET contributes to strengthening Europe's manufacturing ecosystem through coordinated skills development and regional collaboration.

https://helix-connect.com/2025/03/06/weldnet-centre-of-vocational-excellence-on-circular-and-socially-safe-automotive-manufacturing/

HINTS Builds Skills Ecosystems, March 2025



Building effective skills ecosystems begins with strong vocational education and training (VET) centres capable of addressing skill gaps across the EU. The forward-looking initiative HINTS – High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transformations supports this objective by providing transformation tools that enable VET providers to take a leading role in regional skills ecosystem development.
HINTS equips educational institutions with practical instruments to modernise their training provision and align with green and digital transition priorities.
Key offerings include:
▪ The HINTS Hub – A digital ecosystem enabling collaboration, secure knowledge exchange, and remote learning.
▪ Digital Industry Course – Focused on e-learning methodologies, digital innovation, instructional design, and the integration of emerging technologies.
▪ Green and Sustainable Education Course – Covering energy-efficient technologies, sustainable manufacturing practices, and green industrial policies.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/03/25/hints-builds-skills-ecosystems/

Conflict Video Games as an Innovative School Education Method, April 2025



Through the InterGames EU initiative, we are exploring interdisciplinary approaches to secondary education by integrating conflict-based video games into school curricula. The project combines three core components — interdisciplinarity, conflict studies, and game-based learning — to strengthen the development of 21st-century skills among students aged 14–16.

By using carefully selected educational games, the initiative supports the development of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, emotional intelligence, and civic awareness, helping students prepare for the labour market, active citizenship, and personal growth.
Recently, several methodologies were piloted through teacher training activities in collaboration with Liceul Pedagogic in Timișoara, Romania. The ongoing monitoring phase evaluates the impact of this approach on classroom effectiveness, student motivation, engagement, learning satisfaction, and knowledge retention.
During the pilot phase, ten games were tested:

- This War of Mine

- Bury Me, My Love
- Liyla and the Shadows of War
- September 12th
- Quandary
- Freedom Bridge
- Phone Story
- Plasticity
- Aguamod
- The Climate Trail

The selected games address the social, economic, environmental, and technological dimensions of conflict, as well as approaches to conflict resolution, offering students immersive and reflective learning experiences.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/04/03/conflict-video-games-as-innovative-school-education-method/

ENABLE Workshop in Belgrade,May 2025



As part of the ENABLE EU Project, we continue advancing digital solutions that support the employment of people with disabilities in manufacturing.

ENABLE promotes inclusivity and diversity across the manufacturing sectors of Romania, Greece, and Serbia. The initiative recognises the untapped potential of individuals with disabilities and works to ensure equal access to education, training, and employment opportunities. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), while central to job creation and economic growth, often lack the resources and expertise needed to effectively accommodate employees with disabilities. ENABLE addresses this gap by equipping SMEs with targeted digital tools and practical training that enhance their capacity to create inclusive workplaces, ultimately strengthening competitiveness and long-term sustainability.
On May 28, 2025, project lead Lola Vasković engaged regional stakeholders during a dedicated workshop hosted at LOLA Institut in Belgrade, Serbia. The session focused on presenting the project's tools, facilitating stakeholder access, and raising awareness of the available support mechanisms.
Interested SMEs can access the project's resources free of charge via the ENABLE Certification Centre:
https://enableproject.eu/certification-center/
ENABLE complements our broader portfolio of initiatives aimed at inclusive and resilient manufacturing systems, including WELDIFY, WELDNET, PreMETS, and PreVEnT.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/05/28/9611/

HINTS' First Cohort of Graduates, May 2025



We are proud to celebrate the first cohort of certified learners from the HINTS – High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transformations project.
This hands-on training programme focused on strengthening green and digital competences through innovative learning content and practical methodologies, delivered with the support of leading experts from across the HINTS consortium. Participants engaged in interactive sessions based on the newly developed e-learning curriculum, structured around two core domains:
Digital Competences

- Digital media, tools, and online communication
- Gamification and educational games
- Virtual and augmented reality in learning
- Innovative pedagogies and learner-centred approaches
- Digital learning environments and AI integration

Green Skills for Industry Transformation

- Principles of green industries and sustainable manufacturing
- Energy-efficient technologies and sustainable construction
- Lifecycle analysis and circular economy practices
- Green education for sustainable lifestyles
- Industrial automation and robotics for greener processes

The successful completion of this first cohort marks an important milestone in supporting VET institutions and professionals in leading green and digital transitions across their regions.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/05/29/hints-first-cohort-of-graduates/

FOR-J Takes Restorative Justice to the Next Level; June 2025

The FOR-J initiative continues advancing restorative justice approaches among young people across Europe, with a strong focus on addressing conflicts related to migration, discrimination, and social exclusion. As part of the project's implementation, a demonstration and pilot session was organised in Timișoara in cooperation with the Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT), bringing together youth workers and young participants to test and evaluate restorative justice methodologies within a youth work context.
The primary objective of the piloting session was to assess the applicability and effectiveness of restorative justice (RJ) tools, as outlined in the Romanian national action plan of the FOR-J project.
The session focused on two main objectives:

Introducing and contextualising restorative justice concepts: Participants were provided with a structured introduction to the core values of restorative justice, including accountability, empathy, reparation, and inclusion. Through the use of digital storytelling, including a Romanian podcast case study, the workshop offered a locally relevant and emotionally engaging entry point into RJ principles, highlighting their practical relevance in both personal and professional settings.



Piloting experiential methods from the national Action Plan Two methodologies were tested: The Tree of Conflict and Circle Dialogue. These exercises enabled participants to explore conflict resolution through metaphor, storytelling, role-play, and facilitated dialogue. The pilot assessed the accessibility, clarity, and emotional resonance of these tools, informing further refinement and scaling of the approach.

Through these activities, FOR-J contributes to strengthening youth work practices and promoting constructive, dialogue-based conflict resolution across diverse communities.

https://helix-connect.com/2025/06/23/for-j-takes-restorative-justice-at-the-next-level/

WELDNET (Centre of Vocational Excellence) Kicked Off, June 2025



The WELDNET Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) has officially been launched, marking the beginning of a four-year initiative dedicated to advancing skills ecosystem development in Europe. WELDNET builds on the strengths of its partnership to co-develop Regional Centres of Vocational Excellence in Romania, Serbia, Greece, Spain, and Austria. The project focuses on Circular Material Welding (CMW) and Preventive Maintenance (PM) for socially safe, resilient, and sustainable automotive manufacturing.

At a time when Europe faces increasing resource constraints, industrial transition pressures, and the need for greater production continuity, WELDNET supports the development of talent capable of strengthening durability, safety, and resilience across manufacturing systems.

WELDNET aims to:

- Rapidly and sustainably upskill CMW and PM talent across five regions through a holistic and inclusive IVET & CVET programme aligned with industrial labour needs and environmental and social priorities.
- Establish five regional skills ecosystems functioning as VET living labs, supporting public–private cooperation and innovation in vocational education.
- Foster long-term cooperation among the five Centres of Vocational Excellence, leveraging complementarities and the expertise of the Austrian ecosystem to support emerging regions.

The Regional Centres of Vocational Excellence will be located in:

- Valencia (Spain)
- Thessaloniki – Central Macedonia (Greece)
- Kragujevac – Šumadija and Pomoravlje (Serbia)
- Timișoara – Western Romania (Romania)
- Vienna / cross-country (Austria)

Through coordinated regional action and cross-country collaboration, WELDNET contributes to strengthening Europe's manufacturing ecosystem and long-term industrial resilience.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/06/20/weldnet-centre-of-vocational-excellence-was-kicked-off/

Predictive Maintenance Teaching Factory Successfully Organised, July 2025



From June 2 to June 27, 2025, Inteliform and ISIM Timișoara hosted the Teaching Factory pilot event under the **PreVEnT – Predictive Maintenance via Deep-Tech Solutions for Environmental and Social Impacts in Manufacturing** project. The initiative brought together academic institutions and industry actors to address real industrial challenges through deep-tech solutions, predictive maintenance, and sustainable manufacturing practices.The Teaching Factory served as a dynamic bridge between academia and industry, engaging students, educators, and professionals in the co-creation of vocational education and training (VET) curricula aligned with labour market needs. Through collaborative sessions focused on sustainable innovation, participants explored eco-conscious manufacturing methods and advanced predictive maintenance applications, contributing to a shared vision for responsible industrial transformation.

The successful implementation of the PreVEnT Teaching Factory 2025 demonstrated how a hybrid, industry-driven model can enhance vocational education by integrating practical problem-solving with technological innovation.PreVEnT plays a key role in supporting the objectives of the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative and complements our broader portfolio of industry-driven projects that apply Teaching Factory methodologies, including PreMETS, WELDIFY, WELDNET, TEXSTYLE, and ENABLE.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/07/09/predictive-maintenance-teaching-factory-successfully-organised/

WELDIFY Team Meeting Advances Certification Centre Launch, July 2025

The WELDIFY consortium convened for a productive working meeting focused on accelerating the launch of the project's Certification Centre. The upcoming centre will provide a structured series of targeted micro-courses designed to respond directly to evolving sectoral needs in circular material joining and welding. The planned learning course units (LCUs) include:

- LCU1: High-quality material joining and welding in a circular economy
- LCU2: Innovative welding methods (GMAW, GTAW, SMAW, FCAW)
- LCU3: Human–machine interaction in welding through automation
- LCU4: Automated quality assurance and certification
- LCU5: Environmental assessment and hazardous impact reduction

.With the full training package scheduled for release in early autumn, WELDIFY is moving closer to delivering a comprehensive and high-quality certification framework aligned with industry transformation priorities.



The programme will be open to both individual professionals and institutions seeking structured upskilling opportunities in advanced welding and circular manufacturing practices.

https://helix-connect.com/2025/07/10/the-weldify-team-gathered-for-another-productive-meeting/

Helixconnect Among the Top 10 EU Deep-Tech Training Providers for the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative; July 2025

Helixconnect has been recognised among the top 10 EU deep-tech training providers contributing to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative milestone of reaching one million

trained talents across Europe.This recognition reflects our sustained commitment to strengthening skills ecosystems in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, supporting EU missions and values through targeted upskilling initiatives in advanced technological domains.



Our deep-tech engagement spans multiple strategic areas:

- PreMETS – AI and big data for predictive maintenance
- PreVEnT – Deep-tech solutions for environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing
- PREVENT–Deep-tech applications for disaster management
- TEXSTYLE–Digital and circular solutions for textile manufacturing
- WELDIFY–Advanced technologies for circular material welding
- WELDNET–Centre of Vocational Excellence advancing deep-tech in welding and circular materials
- ENABLE EU Project – Assistive technologies supporting employees with disabilities in manufacturing
- CHARLIE Project–Addressing bias in artificial intelligence
- DeepBioTech – Deep-tech innovation in life sciences

Through these and other initiatives, Helixconnect continues contributing to Europe's deep-tech transformation by fostering inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven skills development across sectors.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/07/03/helixconnect-among-the-top-10-eu-deeptech-training-providers-for-the-eit-deep-tech-talent-initiative/

Helixconnect Supports HINTS Training on Digital and Green Transformation in VET, July 2025

Helixconnect participated in the recent HINTS training session held in Podgorica, focused on Digital Training through e-Learning, Green Technologies for Industry, and the development of Quality Assurance and Innovative e-Learning Systems within VET institutions.
The team contributed to the delivery of the training programme, working closely with teachers and institutional representatives from across the Western Balkans. The sessions addressed practical approaches to strengthening digital learning environments and supporting green transformation strategies within vocational education systems.



The training formed part of the broader HINTS initiative aimed at enhancing institutional capacity and supporting the alignment of VET provision with green and digital transition priorities.
We extend our appreciation to the HINTS consortium and partners for a productive and collaborative week dedicated to advancing skills development in the region.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/07/10/helixconnect-supports-hints-training-on-digital-and-green-transformation-in-vet/

WELDNET Serbian Stakeholder Group Launches National Development Process, August 2025



The Serbian stakeholder group of the WELDNET EU Project officially initiated its country-level development process on August 19, 2025, marking an important milestone in establishing the regional Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Sumadija & Pomoravlje. Guided by the local representation of EIT Manufacturing in Serbia, partners collaboratively developed the regional roadmap for building a cohesive skills ecosystem focused on circular material welding and predictive maintenance systems in automotive manufacturing.
During the session, representatives from Helixconnect presented the foresight-based skills ecosystem methodology that will support the strategic design of the future CoVE. Regional development actors and vocational education representatives aligned public–private partnership priorities with sectoral training needs, while industrial stakeholders contributed perspectives on labour market demand and long-term regional competitiveness.

The region of Sumadija & Pomoravlje holds strategic importance as a historic industrial hub and a key centre of automotive production in the Balkans. With a strong industrial base, active business community, university infrastructure, national data facilities, and a leading industrial park, the region offers a solid foundation for developing a sustainable vocational excellence ecosystem. Within this framework, WELDNET aims to establish a network of five Centres of Vocational Excellence across Greece (Central Macedonia), Romania (West Region), Austria (multi-region), Serbia (Sumadija & Pomoravlje), and Spain (Valencia). These Centres will activate regional skills ecosystems in circular

material welding and preventive maintenance, providing long-term IVET and CVET upskilling mechanisms aligned with smart specialisation strategies and inclusive workforce development priorities.

The Serbian CoVE will soon offer:

- Training and certification opportunities
- A VET institution self-diagnosis tool
- Institutional transformation support to position VET providers as ecosystem leaders
- Learner mobility pathways

Through coordinated regional action and cross-border collaboration, WELDNET continues strengthening sustainable skills development in Europe's manufacturing sector.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/08/19/the-serbian-stakeholder-group-from-the-weldnet-eu-project-held-today-its-country-level-kick-start-of-the-development-process/

Strategic Meeting for the Austrian WELDNET Ecosystem
Hosted in Vienna; September 2025



A strategic meeting for the Austrian ecosystem of the WELDNET EU Project was hosted on September 4, 2025, by Technische Universität Wien, in cooperation with EIT Manufacturing and project partners. The session focused on advancing the development of the Austrian Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) within the broader WELDNET framework.

WELDNET aims to establish a network of five Centres of Vocational Excellence across Greece (Central Macedonia), Romania (West Region), Austria (multi-region), Serbia (Sumadija & Pomoravlje), and Spain (Valencia). These Centres are designed to activate regional skills ecosystems in circular material welding and preventive maintenance in automotive manufacturing, delivering long-term IVET and CVET upskilling mechanisms aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies and inclusive workforce priorities.
Technische Universität Wien and EIT Manufacturing act as key advisory partners in supporting the development of skills ecosystems in circular material welding and preventive maintenance systems, guiding the transformation process across participating regions.
The Austrian ecosystem will soon benefit from:

- Training and certification opportunities

- A VET institution self-diagnosis tool
- Institutional transformation support to position VET providers as ecosystem leaders
  Learner mobility pathways

Through coordinated action and cross-regional collaboration, WELDNET continues to strengthen Europe's manufacturing skills base and long-term industrial resilience.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/09/04/a-strategic-meeting-for-the-austrian-ecosystem-of-the-weldnet-eu-project-was-hosted-by-technische-universitat-wien-together-with-eit-manufacturing-and-our-team/

Elevating Innovation Ecosystems through Global Collaboration; September 2025



Excellence in innovation ecosystem development depends on effective multi-level governance structures and strong global interconnectedness. In a rapidly evolving global landscape, European innovation must actively integrate knowledge and collaborate with dynamic ecosystems across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia to remain competitive. On September 18, 2025, a keynote address was delivered at the Triple Helix Innovation Summit, organised as a prelude to the IASP World Conference 2025. The presentation focused on two leading European models of innovation ecosystem governance developed by EIT Manufacturing and TUM International GmbH.

The EIT Manufacturing model, grounded in the Knowledge and Innovation Community framework of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), follows a mission-oriented approach that strengthens regional innovation capacity and drives development in key market areas. It has evolved into the largest innovation community in Europe. The Munich Innovation Model, implemented by TUM International GmbH, transforms cities into open innovation infrastructures where academia, industry, and public actors collaborate within a Triple Helix framework. This approach enables scalable growth, enhanced social value creation, and long-term sustainable development.
Strengthening bridges between Europe and emerging global innovation ecosystems remains a strategic priority, with continued efforts to support open marketplaces for technology transfer and collaborative growth.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/09/18/elevating-innovation-ecosystems-through-global-collaboration/

Supporting Skills Ecosystem Development in Egypt through HINTS; September 2025



As part of our broader skills ecosystem development activities, we continue contributing to the transformation of emerging regions by supporting institutional capacity-building processes. During the past week, experts Dr Emilia Binchiciu and Dr Mihai Lisetchi contributed to the development of the skills ecosystem of Alexandria University, Egypt,
through the HINTS High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transformations project.

HINTS supports VET transformation through two complementary tracks:
Track 1 – Digital Learning & Green Technologies for Industry

- Digital competence, gamification (including VR/AR), and AI in learning
- Sustainable manufacturing, lifecycle analysis, and circular economy principles
- Robotics, automation, and machine vision
- Green education for sustainability
- Innovative technologies supporting the transition to green industry

Track 2 – Support for Quality Assurance & Innovative E-learning Systems

- Quality assurance procedures, risk management, and compliance
- Training design, delivery, and evaluation
- Continuous improvement mechanisms in education
- Implementation of innovative e-learning systems

These activities strengthen institutional readiness for green and digital transformation while contributing to regional ecosystem development.

The initiative complements our broader commitment to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative and creates synergies with ongoing projects including WELDNET, WELDIFY, PreMETS, and PreVEnT.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/09/08/as-part-of-our-skills-ecosystem-development-work-we-take-an-active-role-in-shaping-developing-regions-to-succeed-in-their-transformational-process/

Building Skills Ecosystems Beyond the EU: HINTS Activities in Tunisia, September 2025

The development of skills ecosystems extends beyond EU borders. In this context, two successful events were organised in Sfax, Tunisia, under the ERASMUS+ project 101129017 – HINTS – High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transformations (ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CB-VET).

Between September 22–26, 2025, project representatives participated as trainers and facilitators in two key activities:

- Digital Training through E-Learning and Green Technologies for Industry, hosted at the North American Private University in Sfax.
- Support for the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms and innovative e-learning systems within vocational education and training institutions.

In collaboration with project partners, technical guidance, strategic direction, and quality assurance support were provided to strengthen operational procedures in education and facilitate institutional transformation.



The activities contributed significantly to enhancing partner competencies in e-learning methodologies, accelerating green and digital transition processes, and reinforcing quality assurance mechanisms within vocational education and training systems.

Through such international capacity-building actions, HINTS continues expanding its impact and strengthening skills ecosystems across neighbouring regions.

https://helix-connect.com/2025/09/30/building-skills-ecosystems-goes-beyond-the-eu-borders-and-reaches-tunisia/

PreVEnT Consortium Meeting in Belgrade: Advancing Predictive Maintenance for a Sustainable Future, November 2025



The PreVEnT consortium held its latest transnational project meeting in Belgrade on September 15–16, 2025, hosted by LOLA Institute. Partners from Romania, Italy, and Serbia convened to review progress, exchange expertise, and define the next strategic steps toward strengthening sustainable industrial learning ecosystems.

Over two days of constructive working sessions, discussions focused on:

- Monitoring project milestones and assessing ongoing outcomes;
- Advancing the accreditation process for recognised competency units;
- Implementing pilot hybrid learning activities through the Work-Based Learning Teaching Factories (WBLTF) model.

Through collaborative engagement and shared technical expertise, partners continue refining predictive maintenance approaches that generate both environmental and social benefits within the manufacturing sector. The meeting reaffirmed the consortium's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and cross-border cooperation.

The PreVEnT partnership includes:

- National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing ISIM Timișoara LOLA Institut
- IIS
- Istituto Italiano della Saldatura
- Helixconnect
- Inteliform

Together, the consortium advances a shared vision of strengthening predictive maintenance practices and vocational excellence across Europe's manufacturing industries.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/11/10/prevent-consortium-meeting-in-belgrade-advancing-predictive-maintenance-for-a-sustainable-future/

HINTS Project Empowers Green and Digital Skills in Amman, Jordan, November 2025

From October 5–9, 2025, the HINTS – High Innovative VET for Green and Digital Transformations project (101129017 - ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CB-VET) successfully delivered two major training events in Amman, Jordan, hosted by the Jordan Engineers Association.



Over 40 hours of interactive sessions combined practical learning, peer exchange, and applied toolkits to support green and digital transitions within vocational education and training (VET). Participants engaged in two flagship activities:

- Digital Training through E-learning and Green Technologies for Industry (E2.5)
- Support for Implementing Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Innovative E-learning Systems (E4.5)

Experts from partner organisations contributed to the delivery of the programme, strengthening cooperation across Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region.
The training focused on:

- Digital competences, data and media literacy, online collaboration, and safe internet use
- Gamification, AI-supported learning design, and innovative e-learning tools
- Sustainable manufacturing, circular economy, energy efficiency, automation, and sustainable construction
- Quality assurance systems, risk management, compliance procedures, and continuous improvement in VET delivery

The activities reinforced the link between technological innovation and environmental responsibility while enhancing institutional capacity for structured, high-quality VET transformation.
The week concluded with the awarding of certificates and the establishment of a shared roadmap for scaling these approaches across partner regions.
Through initiatives such as this, HINTS continues strengthening inclusive, future-ready education systems that drive both digital and green transformation.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/11/10/hints-project-empowers-green-and-digital-skills-in-amman-jordan/

Launching VETINNOVATE: Advancing VET Excellence Across Europe, October 2025



We are entering a new phase in strengthening vocational education and training (VET) excellence across Europe with the introduction of VETINNOVATE, a practical and evidence-based self-assessment tool designed to support Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in their institutional development.
VETINNOVATE builds on established European frameworks such as HEInnovate and ISATCOVE, translating EU strategic priorities, including the green transition, digital transformation, and social inclusion, into measurable and actionable steps tailored to VET institutions.

The tool is structured around eight core pillars reflecting the key dimensions of modern vocational education:

- Digital assistive technologies for learners with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions
  Digital transformation and Industry 4.0 skills
- Leadership and management innovation
- Organisational capacity and staff development incentives
- Ecosystem-building and public–private partnerships
- Learner preparation for digital and entrepreneurial transitions
- Internationalisation and mobility
- Green skills development in manufacturing, automotive, robotics, and energy sectors

Each pillar includes dedicated key performance indicators (KPIs) designed to support institutional reflection, identify development gaps, and enable data-informed decision-making. The objective is to enhance clarity and strategic direction rather than introduce additional administrative complexity. VETINNOVATE supports institutions in connecting EU competence frameworks such as DigComp, GreenComp, and EntreComp to

everyday educational practice, reinforcing inclusive learning environments, industry collaboration, and sustainability integration.
By fostering a shared language of quality, innovation, and resilience, VETINNOVATE positions VET centres not only as training providers, but as strategic actors within regional innovation ecosystems and the twin transition.

This initiative creates strong synergies with ongoing projects including WELDNET and WELDIFY, further reinforcing coordinated ecosystem development across Europe.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/11/10/we-are-starting-a-new-exciting-chapter-in-advancing-vet-excellence-across-europe/

Our Innovation Manager at the 10th EMES International Research Network Conference – Presenting the REED Project, November 2025



Our Innovation Manager, D. Mihail Lisetchi, participated in the 10th EMES International Research Conference on Social Enterprise, held from November 3–7, 2025, in Rotterdam and Utrecht, The Netherlands. The conference brought together leading academics, practitioners, and policymakers to explore the future of social innovation and sustainable economic models.
During the event, the REED Project was presented, highlighting its focus on addressing the ethical, social, and environmental implications of the digital economy. While digital transformation offers significant opportunities, it also introduces challenges related to data privacy, market concentration, digital inequality, and environmental sustainability.
REED brings together experts from academia, industry, and civil society to strengthen educators' capacity to integrate ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility into higher education curricula. The initiative aims to empower both students and lecturers to become responsible technological citizens, combining technical competence with critical awareness and social accountability.
Through its contribution to REED, HELIX continues bridging education, innovation, and ethics, reinforcing its commitment to advancing inclusive, sustainable, and human-centred digital transformation.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/11/10/our-innovation-manager-d-mihail-lisetchi-at-the-10th-emes-international-research-network-conference-presenting-the-reed-project/

'Weaving Sustainability' Workshop Held at LUSS Textile, Raška, November 2025



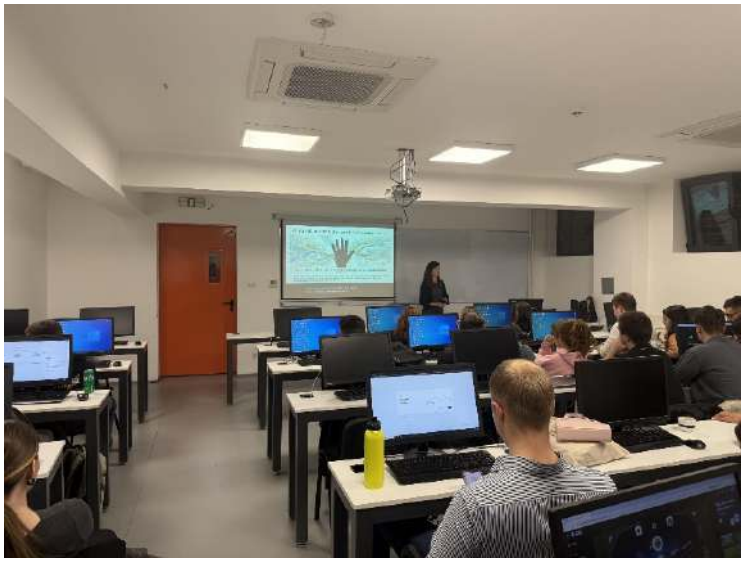
On November 13, 2025, the HELIX team successfully delivered a work-based learning workshop under the TEXSTYLE project (2024-1-RO01-KA210-VET-000243913) at LUSS Textile in Raška. The training, developed within the TEXSTYLE framework, introduced company employees to deep-tech enabled digital solutions supporting circular materials processing, wastewater management systems, and the ethical sourcing and use of textile materials.

In a real work environment setting, participants engaged in discussions on integrating digital and green innovations into everyday operations, from optimising workflow processes to strengthening supply chain sustainability. The workshop combined theoretical frameworks with practical applications tailored to the company's operational context. The initiative reinforces TEXSTYLE's objective of supporting sustainable transformation within the textile sector through vocational upskilling and industry collaboration. We thank LUSS Textile for their active engagement and look forward to continued cooperation in advancing circular material use and sustainable processing practices.

https://helix-connect.com/2025/11/14/weaving-sustainability-workshop-held-in-luss-textile-raska/

GENAI Event at FON: Youth Explore the Future of Responsible AI, December 2025

In December, 2025, Helixconnect Balkans, in collaboration with the Faculty of Organizational Sciences (FON), University of Belgrade, organised an interactive learning event under the Erasmus+ project GENAI, Generative AI for Responsible **Societies.** The session brought together FON students for a dynamic programme combining training, live demonstrations, and hands-on challenges aimed at strengthening future-ready digital skills and promoting a critical and responsible approach to generative AI technologies. An inspiring lecture titled *"Building a Responsible AI Future"* introduced participants to a range of generative AI tools, including widely used and emerging platforms. The session demonstrated how such tools can enhance learning, productivity, and creativity when applied thoughtfully and ethically, with clear awareness of their limitations. A practical demonstration of NotebookLM highlighted how AI systems can synthesise documents, generate summaries, extract insights, and support collaborative academic and professional work. The training emphasised safe, efficient, and responsible integration of AI tools, fully aligned with GENAI's objective of strengthening digital literacy and prompt-engineering competences among Gen Z learners.



Following the training, students worked in teams on practical challenges related to responsible AI use, applying newly acquired knowledge in creative and collaborative formats. The event concluded with an interactive quiz session that reinforced learning outcomes in an engaging and competitive setting.
Through activities such as this, GENAI continues to:

- Promote digital preparedness and resilience
- Empower young people to collaborate responsibly with AI technologies
- Contribute to reducing the digital divide across Europe
- Support youth employability through the development of relevant digital competences

The strong engagement and curiosity demonstrated by the participants reaffirm the growing need for accessible, practical AI education tailored to young learners — a core mission of the GENAI initiative.
https://helix-connect.com/2025/12/04/genai-event-at-fon-youth-explore-the-future-of-responsible-ai/

Urban Soul Design Competition for High School Students, January 2026



As part of the URBAN SOUL Erasmus+ initiative, a design competition was organised for landscape architecture students of the Technical School “Drvo Art” in Belgrade. The competition focused on the creation of inclusive, sustainable, and intergenerational urban spaces. During the event, the URBAN SOUL project was presented, outlining its mission and thematic modules. The session highlighted how urban parks and public spaces can be designed as environments that foster connection, wellbeing, and community life, with particular attention to social inclusion and addressing loneliness among older generations. Students were encouraged to view their design skills as tools for generating meaningful social impact.

The event concluded with the official presentation of competition results, where student projects were exhibited and awards were presented to the winners.

Award recipients:

- Ariana Durmić
- Teodora Gagić

The winning projects stood out for their creativity, conceptual clarity, and effective integration of social inclusion, sustainability, and landscape design principles.
We congratulate the award recipients and thank all participating students and teachers for their commitment and engagement. Initiatives such as this demonstrate the importance of empowering young designers to contribute to more inclusive and human-centred urban development.
https://helix-connect.com/2026/01/26/design-competition-for-high-school-students-by-urban-soul/

FOR-J Project Concludes with Final Conference in Timișoara, February 2026



On February 2, 2026, the FOR-J – Fostering Alternative Means of Conflict Resolution through Restorative Justice project held its Final Conference at the premises of FITT – Foundation for Youth in Timișoara, Romania.
The event brought together youth workers, educators, NGOs, and practitioners to reflect on project achievements and explore innovative approaches to youth conflict management. The conference served both as the formal closure of the Erasmus+ FOR-J initiative and as a dissemination platform highlighting practical tools developed throughout the project. Discussions focused on restorative justice methodologies, digital storytelling, and multisensory spaces (MSS) as inclusive instruments for youth work across Europe. Participants examined the transferability and long-term relevance of these tools for youth centres, educational institutions, NGOs, and local authorities.
All project resources remain publicly available for adaptation and continued use beyond the project's lifetime at: https://for-jproject.eu

The final conference reaffirmed the project's contribution to promoting dialogue-based conflict resolution and inclusive youth engagement practices at European level.
https://helix-connect.com/2026/02/05/for-j-project-concludes-with-final-conference-in-timisoara/

4. MEMBERSHIPS

1.Member of the Pact for Skills

HELIXCONNECT is an approved member of the Pact for Skills, a European Commission initiative supporting large-scale partnerships for upskilling and reskilling across Europe. As part of this commitment, HELIXCONNECT promotes a culture of lifelong learning and implements targeted upskilling and reskilling actions, with a KPI of training at least 500 beneficiaries, contributing to resilient and future-ready skills ecosystems.

2. New European Bauhaus Initiative

HELIXCONNECT is an official partner of the New European Bauhaus Initiative (500+ partners) where it provides advice on multistakeholder engagement for designing EU's new inclusive and sustainable urban spaces where democratic societal co-creation with public authorities, architects, civil engineers, designers is seen as key facilitator.

3. EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative

HELIXCONNECT is also a member of EIT's Deep Tech Pledge through which it aims to upskill young people with deep tech skills (the majority of which are geared towards breaking barriers to education, democratic participation, and employment).

4. EIT Higher Education Initiative

This initiative is a key objective of the EIT as part of its new strategy, the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027.
Through it, HELIXCONNECT aims to support higher education institutions by providing expertise and coaching, access to the EIT innovation ecosystem, and funding, enabling them to develop innovation action plans tailored to their specific needs.

Where can you find us?

Meet us in Romania at FABER Cultural Centre – Splaiul Peneș Curcanul 4-5, Timișoara, Romania:



Or

Meet us in Serbia at Work Space One Belgrade – Milutina Milankovića 11g, Beograd 11000, Serbia:



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