

III PROFESSIONALS OF THE FUTURE

Human-centric (Re)manufacturing in the Era of AI

EVENT RESULTS REPORT

20 October 2026 | Eurostars Lisboa, Parque das Nações | Lisbon, Portugal



1. Executive summary

The third edition of Professionals of the Future focused on “Human-centric (Re)manufacturing in the Era of AI: Tools, Skills and Industrial Transformation”. It took place on 20 October 2026 at Eurostars Lisboa, Parque das Nações, bringing together stakeholders from education, training, industry, research, and policy to examine how people can remain at the centre of advanced manufacturing transformation.

The event was also part of the European Skills & VET Week 2026, an initiative of the European Commission organised by Cedefop, connecting education, training, industry, and policy stakeholders around shared European priorities for skills development, upskilling and reskilling.

The programme combined a keynote, project pitches, networking, three parallel roundtables and a joint debrief. The event addressed three connected priorities: digital tools for training; remanufacturing and industrial transformation; and human centricity and professional growth.

Participants	Countries	Organisations	Sessions
79	14	41	9

Headline findings

- AI-enabled tools must reinforce, not displace, human judgement and practical learning.
- Remanufacturing requires integrated technical, digital and circular competences supported by trusted data.
- Human-centric transformation depends on professional agency, recognition, inclusion, and continuous development.
- Project and education ecosystems need stronger bridges between pilots, standards, qualifications, and scalable adoption.

2. Event background and objectives

2.1 Context

Professionals of the Future is an EWF flagship forum connecting manufacturing, education and training stakeholders around the competences required for industrial transitions. The 2026 edition moved from the broad green and digital transition framing of the second edition to a more focused question: ***how can AI and remanufacturing transform production while keeping professionals as creative, informed, and accountable decision-makers?***

As part of the European Skills & VET Week 2026, an initiative of the European Commission, Professionals of the Future III contributed to the wider European dialogue on skills development and the future of vocational education and training. By addressing the implications of artificial intelligence, digitalisation and remanufacturing for industrial competences, the event highlighted the importance of continuous upskilling, reskilling and closer cooperation between education, training, and industry.

This commitment was further reflected in the involvement of vocational education and training institutions and learners, bringing the perspectives of future professionals into the event. Their participation reinforced the connection between education and the professional world, while highlighting the value of practical learning experiences, transversal skills development, and the active engagement of young people in shaping the future of industry.

2.2 Objectives

- Explore the role of AI-enabled tools in training and industrial practice.
- Identify skills and qualification implications of remanufacturing and circular production.
- Discuss human-centricity, professional growth and the changing role of trainers and workers.
- Showcase European projects and connect project results with practitioner needs.
- Generate practical recommendations for EWF activities, qualification systems and future initiatives.

2.3 Intended audiences

EWF members; VET and higher education providers; industrial companies and SMEs; researchers; project coordinators; standardisation and qualification experts; teachers, trainers, and learners; and relevant ecosystem actors.

3. Event design and programme

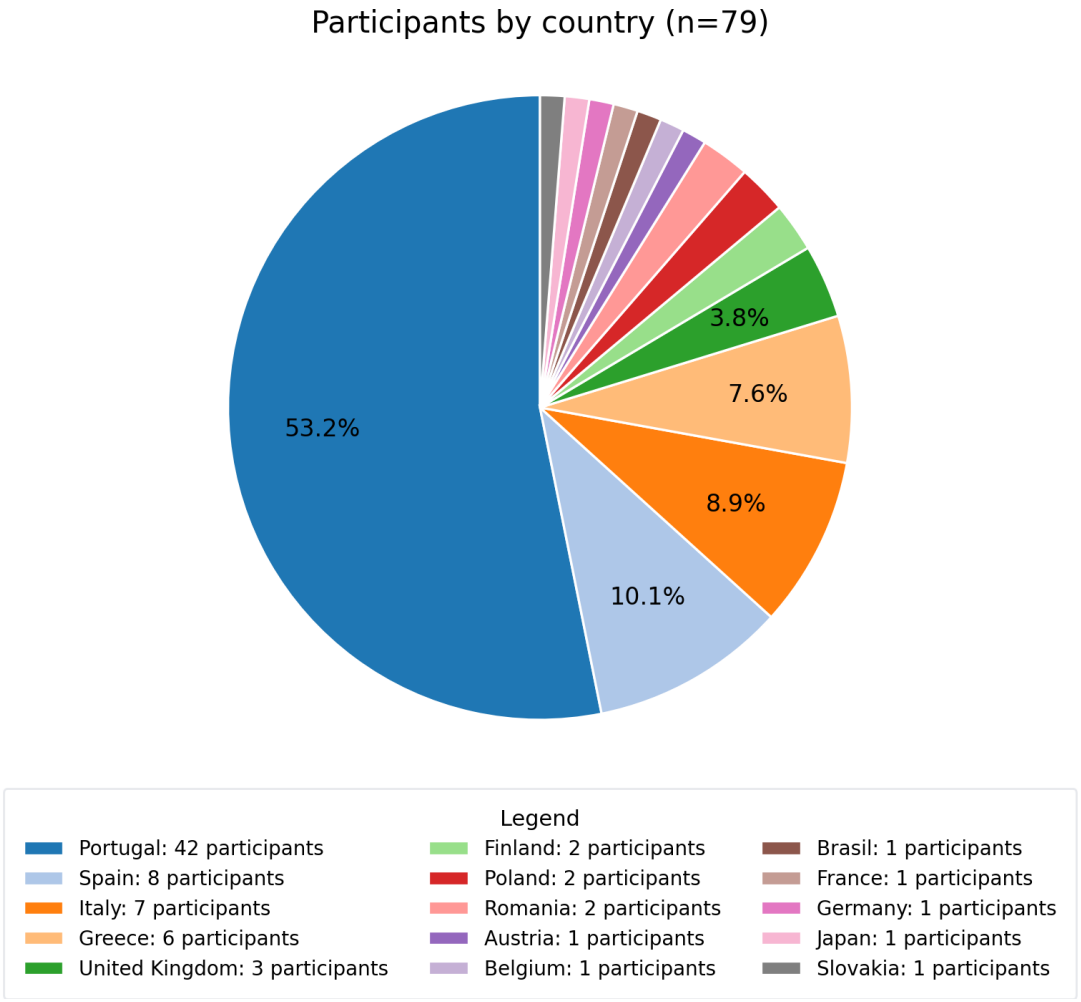
The event concentrated on the main III POTF theme through plenary contributions, project pitches and three parallel roundtables. The event was moderated by Pedro Catarino, EWF Systems manager.

Time	Session	Speaker
09:00–09:15	Opening Session	Fernando Mañas, EWF President
09:15-09:45	Keynote Speech: Human-centric (Re)Manufacturing in the era of AI	Jorge Fraga, Fresenius Medical Care & NovaSBE
09:45–10:30	Innovation projects pitch session: standardAIse FuturENG 3D-CIRCULAR & Remanufacturing-X EGALITARIAN	*Presented by:* Rafael Afonso, Helix connect Lara Ramos, ISQ José Ferreira, Uni Nova Anabela Alves, Uni Minho
10:30–11:00	Networking break and interviews	
11:00–12:30	Parallel roundtables 1. Digital tools for training 2. Remanufacturing & Industrial Transformation 3. Human Centricity & Professional growth	*Co-moderated by* Emanuele Gandolfo, IIS Georgia Kolyva, WGI Katharina Umlaub, SZA
12:30–13:00	Final debrief and closure	Eurico Assunção, EWF Director

4. Participation and stakeholder profile

This section should demonstrate not only scale, but also the diversity and relevance of participation.

4.1 Geographic Reach



4.2 Inclusion of learners and schools

The involvement of vocational education and training learners represented an important dimension of the event's human-centric approach. Through the participation of students from *the Escola Profissional de Hotelaria e Turismo de Lisboa (EPHTL)* and *Escola Profissional Val do Rio*, the event created an opportunity to connect formal learning with a real professional environment, encouraging the development of transversal competences such as communication, teamwork, responsibility and adaptability. This participation also reinforced the event's alignment with the European Skills & VET Week 2026, highlighting the value of vocational education and training and the importance of providing young people with meaningful opportunities to engage with professional communities beyond the classroom.

5. Plenary and innovation spotlight

5.1 Opening and keynote

The opening keynote, **"In the Era of AI: How people and machines can work together in increasingly intelligent environments"**, delivered by Jorge Fraga, framed the event around a central challenge: the rapid adoption of generative AI is not automatically translating into organisational value. While AI tools are increasingly accessible and can support a wide range of professional activities, effective use depends on the quality of instructions, context and data provided, as well as on the ability of professionals to critically assess their outputs.

The keynote emphasised that the main challenge is therefore not simply technological adoption, but the redesign of work and the development of the competences required to use AI effectively and responsibly. Training and qualification were presented as essential conditions for moving from individual productivity gains to sustainable organisational impact. Particular emphasis was placed on **human oversight, professional judgement and accountability**, reinforcing the principle that AI should operate as a co-pilot rather than on autopilot.

From a learning perspective, the keynote also highlighted the importance of instructional design: digital and AI-enabled tools can enhance performance without necessarily strengthening learning unless they are embedded in sound pedagogical approaches. The professional of the future was consequently characterised not simply as an AI user, but as someone able to select the appropriate tools, provide relevant context, validate outputs and remain accountable for decisions. These principles provided a common conceptual foundation for the three roundtable discussions that followed.

5.2 Project pitch session

The pitch session translated the broader event theme into concrete European initiatives, showing how complementary approaches to education, skills, standardisation, digital technologies, circularity and industrial transformation can contribute to a more human-centric transition.

Project	Challenge addressed	Contribution to III POTF	Follow-up opportunity
EGALITARIAN	Need to prepare students to address real sustainability and social challenges through interdisciplinary and international collaboration.	Demonstrated how project-based learning and real-world sustainability challenges can simultaneously develop technical, digital and transversal competences while producing tangible societal impact.	Transfer lessons from the living-lab and challenge-based approach to other education and training contexts, particularly activities connecting learners with industrial and societal challenges.
3D-CIRCULAR	Skills shortages at the intersection of digital technologies, sustainability and the circular economy.	Illustrated how advanced education and certification pathways can integrate AI, blockchain, IoT, digital twins and circular-economy competences, linking the green and digital transitions at qualification level.	Explore connections between the project's educational and certification pathways and wider European qualification, skills, and industry ecosystems, including opportunities for pilot training and certification.

Project	Challenge addressed	Contribution to III POTF	Follow-up opportunity
StandardAIse	Difficulty for SMEs, researchers and innovators to identify, understand and engage with relevant standards, particularly in fast-moving technological areas such as AI.	Connected trustworthy AI with standardisation, showing how accessible, AI-supported tools can help users find relevant standards, understand their practical application and connect innovation results with standardisation processes.	Engage relevant stakeholders in requirements validation and future co-creation activities, while exploring links between project results, EWF standardisation activities and innovation projects.
Remanufacturing-X	Need to scale remanufacturing as a data-driven and economically viable industrial practice while keeping products, components and materials in use.	Demonstrated how AI, digital twins and secure data sharing can support smarter remanufacturing decisions, product-life extension and circular business models, providing a direct industrial application of the event's digital and circular transformation themes.	Connect pilot experiences and project solutions with skills and qualification requirements for professionals responsible for operating, validating and implementing digital remanufacturing processes.
FuturENG	Engineering graduates require a broader combination of technical, digital, green, innovation and human competences to respond to changing industrial needs.	Showed how challenge-based learning, industry-driven experiences and educator development can prepare engineers for the digital and green transitions while strengthening cooperation between education, research and industry.	Transfer and test challenge-based learning resources and educator-support approaches in other engineering and VET contexts, strengthening links between industrial challenges and curriculum development.

Taken together, the five pitches illustrated that human-centric industrial transformation cannot be addressed through technology alone. They highlighted complementary enabling conditions: real-world and challenge-based learning; advanced digital and circular skills; accessible and trustworthy standardisation; data-enabled circular manufacturing; and stronger cooperation between education, research, and industry.

6. Roundtable results

6.1 Roundtable 1 | Digital tools for training

How can digital and AI-enabled tools improve training quality, accessibility and personalisation while preserving trust, critical thinking and hands-on competence?

Roundtable dynamic

The roundtable followed a participatory approach structured around three complementary activities, designed to encourage critical reflection, collaborative thinking and the practical application of digital technologies in vocational education and training (VET). The session opened with the question ***"Human or AI?"***, an icebreaker aimed at challenging participants' assumptions about artificial intelligence and stimulating reflection on the role of human judgement in an increasingly AI-enabled environment.

This was followed by a **MadLibs-style** exercise, a collaborative exercise through which participants explored and formulated key principles for the meaningful integration of digital tools into training. The final activity, **Learning Fit Challenge**, invited participants to apply these principles to practical training scenarios, assessing whether and how digital technologies could address specific learning needs and limitations.

Together, the activities encouraged participants to move beyond the technological novelty of digital solutions and focus on their pedagogical relevance, practical value, and responsible implementation. A conclusion matrix provided a common framework for consolidating the main insights and recommendations.

Discussion points

The roundtable addressed the following interconnected themes:

- **Pedagogical value of digital technologies**: VR/AR, simulation and AI can enhance learning outcomes when their integration is guided by clear pedagogical objectives and demonstrated training needs.
- **Complementarity between digital and hands-on training**: Digital tools should reinforce practical learning and assessment rather than replace real-world experience, critical thinking, or human interaction.
- **Trainer readiness and digital competences:** Successful adoption depends on continuous professional development, particularly in digital pedagogy and AI literacy, alongside sufficient time, and support for implementation.
- **Accessibility and learner engagement**: Digital technologies offer opportunities to broaden access to training, increase motivation, provide safe environments for practising high-risk tasks and support individual learning pathways.
- **Responsible and sustainable implementation**: Ethical AI adoption, data protection, affordability, accessibility, and the long-term sustainability of digital training solutions are essential considerations.

Main outcomes

Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed responses
• **Digital competence gaps and trainer readiness**: Differences in digital literacy, particularly among trainers with limited exposure to emerging technologies, may hinder effective implementation and create additional professional development needs. • **Costs and sustainability:** The acquisition, maintenance and updating of digital tools and infrastructure can represent significant barriers, particularly for smaller training providers. • **Pedagogical and ethical risks**: Excessive reliance on digital solutions may undermine practical learning and the role of trainers. AI-related concerns also include data protection, bias, transparency and the integrity of learning assessment.	• **More accessible and engaging learning environments:** Digital training resources can help reach a wider range of learners while supporting motivation, participation, and more flexible learning experiences. • **Safer and more personalised practical training:** VR/AR and simulation technologies enable repeated practice of complex or high-risk tasks in controlled environments, while offering opportunities for individual feedback and progress monitoring.	• **Strengthen trainer competences**: Prioritise continuous professional development in digital pedagogy, AI literacy and the effective integration of emerging technologies, including targeted support for experienced trainers. • **Adopt a responsible, evidence-based approach:** Encourage the piloting and evaluation of digital training solutions before wider implementation, supported by clear principles for pedagogical quality, accessibility, cybersecurity, transparency and ethical AI adoption.

TOP RECOMMENDATION

Prioritise trainer upskilling and the collaborative adoption of validated digital training resources, ensuring that AI-enabled technologies complement hands-on learning and are implemented according to clear pedagogical, ethical and accessibility principles.





6.2 Roundtable 2 | Remanufacturing and industrial transformation

How can AI help increase productivity in remanufacturing while ensuring quality, sustainability, and trust?

Roundtable dynamic

The roundtable was designed around **Save the Factory 2035**, a role-play simulation in which participants acted as the executive board of a European manufacturing company facing rising raw-material costs, circularity requirements, demands for traceability, AI-enabled competition, and skills shortages. Their mission was to develop a profitable, AI-enabled remanufacturing strategy within a simulated €12 million budget in EWFcripto. Ten stakeholder roles brought contrasting perspectives on company survival, operations, AI, sustainability, customers, workers, investment, regulation, quality, and remanufacturing.

Using a game board, role badges and 14 technology and solution cards, participants were invited to negotiate investments and consider trade-offs between productivity, sustainability, and customer trust. The board structured the exchange around seven stages: **Product Return; Inspection; Disassembly; Repair & Remanufacturing; Quality Validation; Traceability & Passport; and Customer & Marketplace.** At each stage, practical challenges and discussion prompts encouraged participants to weigh options such as AI inspection, Digital Product Passports, digital twins, automated disassembly, human expert assessment, workforce upskilling and certification.

The planned final evaluation assessed the selected investment portfolio against **productivity, sustainability, and customer trust**, alongside reflection on the company's dependence on AI. The guide provided two game boards, two sets of solution cards and role badges, and simulated currency. The exercise was intended to make investment decisions tangible and stimulate debate about automation, human expertise, data ownership, quality assurance, and trust in remanufactured products.

Discussion points

The discussion centered on four key takeaways:

- **Define the product and strategy:** Remanufacturing is not equally viable for all products. High-value and low-value products offer different economic opportunities, so the strategy must clarify whether the priority is productivity, cost efficiency, quality, or environmental benefits.
- **Secure reliable product information:** Decisions require reliable information about a product's condition, history, and components when it enters the remanufacturing value chain. Initial inspection and condition assessment were identified as among the most expensive stages.
- **Combine AI with human involvement:** AI can support inspection, defect detection, automated disassembly, and quality assessment, but should support rather than completely replace people, particularly where quality and reliability are at stake.
- **Address economic barriers and investment:** Manufacturing new products is often cheaper than remanufacturing existing ones. AI adoption also requires investment in technology, infrastructure and workforce skills, alongside viable business models and incentives.

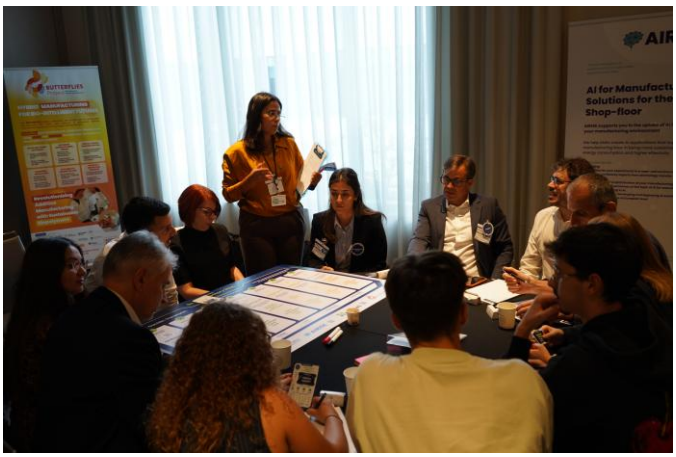
Main outcomes

Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed responses
• **Uneven economic viability:** High-value and low-value products offer different opportunities, and new products are often cheaper to manufacture than existing ones are to remanufacture. • **Costly initial assessment:** Inspection and condition assessment are among the most expensive stages; reliable information on product condition, history and components is critical. • **Investment and trust:** AI adoption requires investment in technology, infrastructure and workforce skills, while quality and reliability demand safeguards against errors.	• **Better-informed decisions:** AI and Digital Product Passports could improve access to product information and reduce inspection and assessment costs. • **Targeted automation:** AI can support inspection, defect detection, automated disassembly, and quality assessment to improve productivity. • **Human–AI collaboration:** Combining AI capabilities with human oversight can help safeguard quality, accountability, and trust.	• **Set a product-specific strategy:** Define whether productivity, cost efficiency, quality or environmental benefits are the priority. • **Improve information and target investment:** Strengthen access to reliable product data and invest selectively in automation, infrastructure and workforce skills. • **Preserve oversight and economic viability:** Keep people accountable for quality and reliability and develop business models and incentives that make remanufacturing attractive.

TOP RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a product-specific AI strategy for remanufacturing that combines reliable product information, targeted investment in automation and skills, strong human oversight, and viable business models and incentives to increase productivity while safeguarding quality, sustainability, and trust.





6.3 Roundtable 3 | Human centricity and professional growth

AI can now monitor a process in real time, flag defects instantly, and adjust parameters without human input. So, what is your role?

Roundtable dynamic

The roundtable was designed as a facilitated, card-based workshop combining plenary reflection, small-group work and collective discussion. An opening question was introduced to the participants concerning the changing role of professionals in AI-enabled manufacturing. Through Skills Under Pressure, groups selected priority skills, tested their choices against practical scenarios and presented their reasoning on a shared GROW board. The ***Attract or Keep?*** activity then invited collective discussion of organisational practices supporting talent attraction and retention.

There were two parallel tables, each accommodating 10–12 participants organised into four subgroups of two to three people. The intended participants included EWF members and representatives from industry, universities, research centres and education. Each table was supported by a lead facilitator and an observer responsible for recording contributions and supporting the wrap-up, with mixed subgroups encouraged to bring together different organisational perspectives.

The activity materials comprised the supporting presentation, printed human and hybrid skill cards, four scenario cards, a shared GROW board and an Attract/Keep canvas. Statement cards, wildcard provocations and blank joker cards supported the final discussion.

Discussion points

The supporting materials structured the exchange around three interconnected themes:

- **Human judgement and professional agency**: How should professionals question, validate or challenge AI recommendations, particularly when automated decisions conflict with practical experience, contextual knowledge or safety considerations?
- **Human and hybrid skills for the AI era**: Which combinations of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, adaptability, digital literacy, and data interpretation enable professionals to work effectively with AI while retaining independent expertise?
- **Intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer**: How can education, workplace learning, and reciprocal mentoring connect experienced professionals' tacit knowledge with emerging digital competences, avoiding overdependence on AI and divisions within teams?

Main outcomes

Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed responses
• **Developing human capabilities alongside technological change**: The skills placed under GROW point to the challenge of strengthening critical thinking, adaptability, leadership, empathy and communication so that professionals	• **More meaningful and varied work**: The emphasis on reducing repetitive tasks and creating cross-functional opportunities points to the potential to use AI to free professionals for more creative work, broaden their experience and support collaboration	• **Combine human and technical skills development**: Develop learning activities that strengthen critical thinking, adaptability, communication, and leadership alongside the ability to work with AI. Use practical, cross-functional

Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed responses
can actively shape AI-enabled work rather than simply follow technological change. • **Preserving professional agency and meaningful work:** The KEEP and ATTRACT placements suggest a need to maintain autonomy, recognise human judgement and provide opportunities beyond repetitive tasks. The challenge is to use automation to complement professional expertise while creating more varied work and cross-functional learning opportunities. • **Making manufacturing careers attractive and worth staying in**: The emphasis on external visibility, a modern career image and flexible, outcome-based working models suggests that technology alone is insufficient. The challenge is to translate industrial modernisation into a credible career proposition combining professional recognition, flexibility and meaningful contribution.	across different functions. • **Stronger professional agency and recognition**: The cards concerning autonomy and recognition of human judgement suggest an opportunity to position professionals as active contributors to AI-enabled transformation, valuing their expertise and maintaining their influence over how work is performed. • **Greater attractiveness of manufacturing careers:** The focus on external visibility, modern career identities and flexible, outcome-based working models offers an opportunity to present manufacturing as a technologically advanced sector with appealing working conditions and meaningful professional contributions.	experiences to connect these capabilities with real workplace needs. • **Redesign work to complement professional expertise**: Use automation to reduce repetitive tasks while preserving professionals' autonomy and recognising the value of human judgement. Create opportunities for more creative work and collaboration across functions, rather than treating AI primarily as a substitute for people. • **Translate industrial modernisation into an attractive career proposition**: Combine flexible, outcome-based working practices with visible recognition of professional contributions. Strengthen external communication by showing how modern manufacturing offers technologically advanced, varied and meaningful work.

TOP RECOMMENDATION

Prioritise human-centric AI adoption by combining continuous skills development with work redesign that reduces repetitive tasks, preserves professional autonomy, and recognises human expertise, making manufacturing careers more meaningful and attractive to join and remain in.





7. Cross-cutting findings

The three roundtables addressed different dimensions of industrial transformation, but several common themes emerged. Together, they point to a human-centric approach in which technology adoption, skills development, reliable data, professional recognition and collaboration need to evolve in parallel.

Theme	Evidence across sessions	Implication
Human oversight and trust	Across all three roundtables, AI was consistently seen as a tool to support rather than replace professional judgement. Digital training requires trainer guidance and critical validation; AI-enabled remanufacturing requires human oversight to safeguard quality and reliability; and professionals need sufficient autonomy and expertise to question or challenge automated recommendations.	Human oversight, accountability and trust should be embedded in the design of training, qualification, and AI-enabled industrial solutions, with clear definition of where human judgement remains essential.
Hybrid technical, digital, and green skills	The sessions highlighted the need to combine established technical competence with digital and AI literacy, data interpretation and transversal capabilities such as critical thinking, adaptability, communication, and leadership. The remanufacturing discussion additionally connected these capabilities with circularity, sustainability and changing industrial processes.	Competence profiles should increasingly integrate technical, digital, green, and human capabilities rather than address them separately. Existing qualifications and training curricula should be progressively reviewed against emerging industrial roles and technologies.
Data and interoperability	Reliable data emerged as an enabling condition for both learning and industrial applications. AI-enabled training raises questions around data protection, transparency, and learner data, while remanufacturing depends on trustworthy information about product condition, history, and components, potentially supported by Digital Product Passports and other digital solutions.	EWF should strengthen its understanding of data requirements, governance, and interoperability where these affect professional competence, qualification, assessment, traceability, and technology adoption. Relevant requirements can be further explored through European projects and standardisation activities.
Recognition and qualification pathways	Participants emphasised continuous professional development, trainer upskilling and the need to develop new combinations of human and technical capabilities. Professional growth was also linked to recognition, autonomy, career development and the ability to demonstrate competence as technologies and job roles evolve.	Emerging competences should be translated, where appropriate, into structured learning outcomes, modular training opportunities and recognised qualification or certification pathways that support upskilling and lifelong professional development.
Industry–education collaboration	All three roundtables demonstrated that effective transformation depends on connecting technological possibilities with real training and workplace needs. Trainers require exposure to emerging technologies; remanufacturing strategies depend on technical, business and workforce perspectives; and professional development benefits from practical, cross-functional learning and knowledge exchange.	Stronger feedback loops are needed between industry, education and training providers, qualification bodies and research/project activities so that emerging competence requirements can be identified early and translated into relevant learning and qualification responses.
Scalability of project results	The discussions identified promising digital, AI and circular solutions, but also recurring barriers to wider adoption, including cost, infrastructure, trainer and workforce readiness, trust, economic viability, and the need for evidence of effectiveness. Participants repeatedly favored targeted implementation, testing and validation over technology adoption for its own sake.	Project outputs should be considered from the outset in terms of transferability and post-project uptake. Promising solutions should be validated in real training or industrial settings and, where relevant, connected to qualifications, training resources, standardisation, or other mechanisms capable of supporting wider adoption across the EWF network.

8. Conclusions, recommendations and follow-up

8.1 Overall conclusion

The III Professionals of the Future demonstrated that digital and industrial transformation cannot be separated from the development of professional capability. The discussions highlighted the need to combine technical expertise with digital and AI literacy, critical thinking, adaptability and responsible decision-making, while creating accessible opportunities for continuous learning and competence recognition.

For EWF, these findings reinforce the value of an integrated approach across **qualification, training, European projects and standardisation.** European projects can provide the environment to test emerging technologies and competence needs; training and qualification systems can translate these developments into professional capabilities; and standardisation can support their reliable and transferable implementation. This positions EWF to act as a bridge between **technological innovation and the people expected to apply it in practice**.

8.2 Prioritised recommendations

#	Recommendation	Owner	Timing	Success indicator
RT1 – 1	Encourage evidence-based and responsible adoption of digital training technologies, ensuring pedagogical relevance, human oversight, accessibility, and ethical AI adoption.	VET providers, industry partners and relevant qualification bodies	2027	Digital training solutions assessed against agreed pedagogical and responsible-use criteria
RT1 – 2	Develop common guidelines for the responsible and pedagogically effective integration of AI and immersive technologies in VET.	EWF	2027 — development and testing of guidance	Common guidance developed and tested through selected training cases
RT2 – 1	Pilot product-specific AI-enabled remanufacturing strategies, selecting suitable products and process stages according to their economic, environmental and quality potential. The pilots should combine reliable product data, targeted automation and human oversight, and assess performance against productivity, sustainability, quality and customer-trust criteria.	Industry partners and technology providers, supported by European project teams and relevant research and training organisations	2027–2028: definition and implementation of pilot cases	At least two product-specific pilot cases assessed against agreed productivity, sustainability, quality, trust and economic-viability criteria, with lessons documented and shared
RT2 – 2	Identify and address the competence requirements associated with AI-enabled remanufacturing, including product-condition assessment, AI-supported inspection, Digital Product Passports, traceability, quality assurance, data interpretation and human validation of automated recommendations. Translate validated needs into modular training resources and, where relevant, qualification or certification pathways.	EWF qualification and training system, training providers and industry experts, supported by relevant European projects	2027: competence mapping; 2028: development and piloting of learning resources	Competence requirements mapped for selected remanufacturing roles; at least one modular training package developed and piloted; recommendations prepared for integration into relevant qualification or certification pathways

#	Recommendation	Owner	Timing	Success indicator
RT3 – 1	Integrate human and hybrid skills into professional development pathways, combining technical and AI-related competences with critical thinking, adaptability, communication, leadership and ethical decision-making. Prioritise practical and cross-functional learning experiences that enable professionals to apply and validate AI-supported decisions in real workplace contexts.	EWF qualification and training system, education and training providers, and industry partners	2027 – competence mapping and pilot activities	Priority human and hybrid competences mapped against selected professional profiles; at least one learning or qualification pathway reviewed, and one pilot learning activity implemented and evaluated
RT3 – 2	Promote human-centric work redesign alongside AI adoption, using automation to reduce repetitive tasks while preserving professional autonomy, human judgement and accountability. Encourage industry to create more varied and cross-functional roles and to communicate how digital transformation can contribute to meaningful and attractive manufacturing careers.	Industry partners and employers, supported by EWF members and relevant European projects	2027 onwards	At least two industry cases or practices documented on human-centric work redesign, professional agency or talent attraction/retention, with lessons shared across the EWF network

8.3 Closure & Route to POTF 2027

The closing presentation brought together the main themes explored throughout the morning around a common principle: **technology should serve people, and technological and industrial transformation ultimately depend on professional capability**. Digital learning, industrial transformation and professional growth were presented as interconnected dimensions rather than separate challenges.

Across these dimensions, several priorities were highlighted. For **digital training**, technology should be selected according to clear learning objectives and should support professionals in understanding, practising and demonstrating competence, with trainers retaining responsibility for guidance, interpretation and assessment. For **industrial transformation** particularly in increasingly digital and circular manufacturing environments, reliable data must be combined with technical competence and professional judgement to support responsible decisions throughout the industrial lifecycle. For **human-centric professional growth,** accessible and modular learning pathways, recognition of competence and opportunities for continuous development were identified as important mechanisms for enabling people to adapt as work and technology evolve.

The synthesis translated these reflections into recommendations for different actors. **Industry** was encouraged to identify emerging skills needs and integrate learning into the workplace; **education and training providers** to develop modular pathways, trainers and robust assessment approaches; and the **wider ecosystem** to strengthen recognition of competence and sustain cooperation between relevant actors. A potential role for EWF was identified in connecting stakeholders and expertise and supporting the review of shared progress.

The presentation concluded by proposing a profile of the **future professional** in which strong technical competence remains the foundation but is complemented by **AI literacy, data awareness, critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, creativity and ethical decision\-making.** These capabilities enable professionals not only to work with emerging technologies, but also to assess evidence, recognise limitations, adapt to changing requirements and remain accountable for decisions.

The final message shifted the focus from discussion to implementation: future initiatives should move through a practical cycle of **discussing, applying, evaluating and sharing**, starting from real professional needs and assessing whether interventions create demonstrable value. This positioned the III Professionals of the Future event not simply as a forum for discussion, but as a basis for continued collaboration and concrete experimentation around the capabilities required for human\-centric industrial transformation.