



INNOTECS Conference 2026

Digital Minds, Human Hearts

For three inspiring days, representatives from **11 European countries** came together in Aveiro for the **10th INNOTECS Conference**, hosted by Aveiro Vocational School (AEVA) on **18–20 May**. Under the theme **“Digital Minds, Human Hearts”**, around **75 participants** explored how vocational education and training (VET) can evolve in an increasingly digital world while keeping people at its heart.

The event began with the **INNOTECS General Assembly**, where the association unveiled its new growth strategy. Looking ahead, INNOTECS aims to strengthen collaboration by expanding its network to include businesses and by actively engaging students from member schools in its initiatives. The Assembly also marked the launch of the **INNOTECS Skills Competition**, a new international challenge for VET students that will debut during Erasmus Days this October, encouraging creativity, innovation and cross-border collaboration.

Throughout the conference, participants took part in **keynote sessions, workshops and discussions** on some of the most pressing topics in vocational education, including **artificial intelligence**, the

digital transformation of Erasmus+, inclusive learning and gamification. The programme also provided valuable opportunities for **networking and exchanging best practices** among European partners.

A visit to the **PCI – Creative Science Park** showcased successful partnerships between education, research and industry, highlighting the role of innovation in regional and European development. Beyond the conference sessions, guests also had the opportunity to experience the culture, traditions and gastronomy of Aveiro.

Reflecting on the event, **Guus Klapper**, President of INNOTECS, noted: “The theme ‘Digital Minds, Human Hearts’ helped us understand how artificial intelligence is making its way into education and how we can work together to develop solutions for a rapidly changing world. And when we do it together, we do it better than we would alone.”

The conference once again reinforced INNOTECS’ commitment to international cooperation, educational innovation and excellence in vocational education—demonstrating that the future of VET is built through collaboration.



INNOTECS is an international organization uniting directors and educators from technical Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools. Our primary mission is to advocate for the interests of technical educational institutions worldwide and contribute significantly to meeting the growing demand for technically skilled individuals in the international labor market.

One of our flagship initiatives is the organization of an annual international study visit. This event serves as a dynamic platform where members converge to share valuable insights, exchange knowledge, and forge partnerships for projects related to technology education. It’s a vital space for collaborative efforts that drive innovation in technical education on a global scale.



PITCHES “BEYOND ANSWERS – WHEN AI KNOWS EVERYTHING”

Elektrostrojarska skola Varazdin, Croatia
ORGANISATION

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CONTACT

While artificial intelligence can instantly provide information, generate content and solve problems, it cannot replace the uniquely human qualities that education must develop, such as critical thinking, judgement, ethics, character and authentic competence.

Using Electrotechnical School Varazdin as an example of innovation in vocational education, Igor Kos highlighted the need to redesign teaching and assessment so that students are evaluated on genuine understanding and practical skills rather than AI-generated answers.

The pitch concluded with the Beyond Answers Erasmus+ KA2 proposal, which aims to create a European framework for AI competence, resilient assessment methods, teacher training and ethical AI use, emphasising that in the AI era, authentic competence becomes the new currency of trust, because while information is unlimited, judgement is rare.

ROUNDTABLES

VET2Sustain

MBO RAAD
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www.vet2sustain.eu
PROJECT WEBSITE

SUMMARY: The VET2Sustain project focuses on making vocational education and training (VET) more attractive in Europe. The project aims to identify, analyse and compare policy measures, initiatives and best practices implemented by national and regional VET governing and qualification-awarding bodies across the participating countries. This provides recommendations on how digitalisation, internationalisation, and the green transition can enhance the attractiveness of VET.



FoR (Fake or Real)

CALASANZ SANTURTZ
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SUMMARY: The FoR project aims to create an online and blended learning opportunity for teachers and trainers to help VET learners, who have not received any formal training about data literacy during their scholar education, to acquire basic knowledge and develop essential skills for interpreting and critically reflecting on the data and information they routinely access on the internet and social media platforms.

This project will also contribute to raising awareness among citizens, organisations, and decision-makers about the spreading of fake information on digital and social media, and the limitations of a large group of the population to deal with this problem, given their limited digital data analysis and interpretation skills.

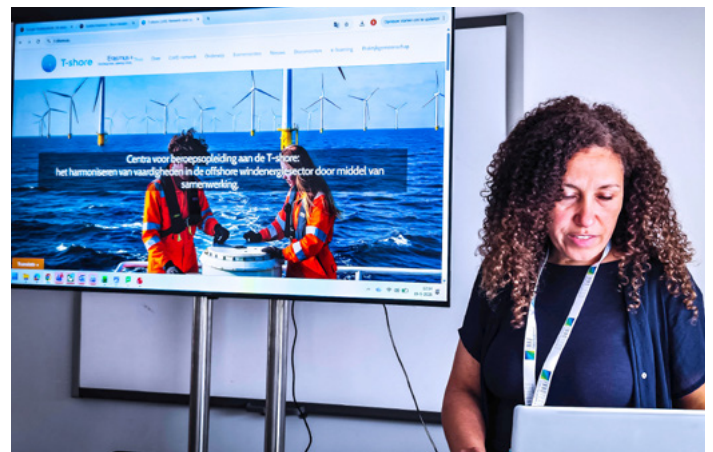
SMARCO – Smart Communities Skills Blueprint for Resilient and Sustainable Cities

FORAVE
ORGANISATION

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www.smarco.eu
PROJECT WEBSITE

SUMMARY: The SMARCO project aims to become a unique one-stop shop for smart community skills by pursuing three key objectives: developing resilient and sustainable smart communities through targeted upskilling courses and forward-looking training programmes that address the skills gaps of smart city engineers, planners, and procurers; promoting flexible, learner-centred education with a transnational dimension, enhanced learning mobility, and broad recognition of qualifications through micro-credentials, training certificates, and a comprehensive certification scheme; and fostering a sustainable stakeholder community to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and scale up training, upskilling, and reskilling initiatives related to smart community skills through participation in the Pact for Skills and its Digital Large-Scale Partnership, as well as the organisation of roundtables with decision-makers.



T-Shore

SCALDA
ORGANISATION

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SUMMARY: Project offering an innovative educational offer in the field of wind energy (including topics such as bolt tightening), contributing to the energy transition.

ROUNDTABLES

COVE College for European Datacenter Education

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CONTACT

SUMMARY: The COVE College for European Datacenter Education is a valuable contribution to demonstrating how collaboration between the business sector and secondary vocational education can be successful. internationalisation, and the green transition can enhance the attractiveness of VET.



VR4M (Vet Ready for Mobility)

AVENTUS
ORGANISATION

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SUMMARY: The aim of this project is to develop an online tool for students, referents (mobility coaches), and host organisations that are interested in hosting an international student for an internship. The tool will provide practical guidance and relevant information on the benefits of hosting, as well as clear steps to take before, during, and after the international internship.

Global 3D printing project and the crossover with business admin

NOVA COLLEGE
ORGANISATION

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SUMMARY: Crossover with departments of business developments/economics- Special tasks for business department: f.e. set up a web shop to realize in selling the tiles, carrying the story of the students, platform for exposure for talented students.



Digital Twin on Smart Manufacturing

APRO INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT
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www.digitaltwinproject.eu
PROJECT WEBSITE

SUMMARY: Training modules on key topics, including Virtual Commissioning, Business Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and Virtual Environments, designed to be used as needed during classes or for self-study.

INNOTECS' *Students Competition*

A European VET Challenge for Innovation & Skills Development

INNOTECS' STUDENTS COMPETITION TO LAUNCH IN 2026

The **INNOTECS' Students Competition** will bring together vocational education and training (VET) students from across Europe to address real-world challenges through teamwork, innovation and entrepreneurship. The first edition is scheduled to take place in **Aveiro, Portugal**, from **27 to 29 October 2026**, during **Erasmus+ Days 2026**, and will be hosted by our member **AEVA**.

The competition is designed as a collaborative learning experience for technical VET students. Working in mixed international teams, participants will analyse industry challenges, develop innovative solutions, explore business concepts, and present their proposals to a panel of experts. Throughout the process, students will have the opportunity to strengthen entrepreneurial, digital, green and intercultural competences alongside technical and problem-solving skills.

Industry partners will play an active role by proposing real challenges, mentoring student teams and contributing to the evaluation process. Their involvement is intended to strengthen cooperation between vocational education providers and the labour market while exposing students to practical business contexts.

For participating schools, the competition offers an opportunity to engage in an international activity within the INNOTECS network and provide students with project-based learning experience in a multicultural environment.

The 2026 edition will serve as a pilot for a planned annual event, with future editions expected to be hosted by different members of the INNOTECS network. The initiative aims to encourage collaboration between VET institutions, students and industry while supporting the development of skills that are increasingly relevant in today's labour market.