

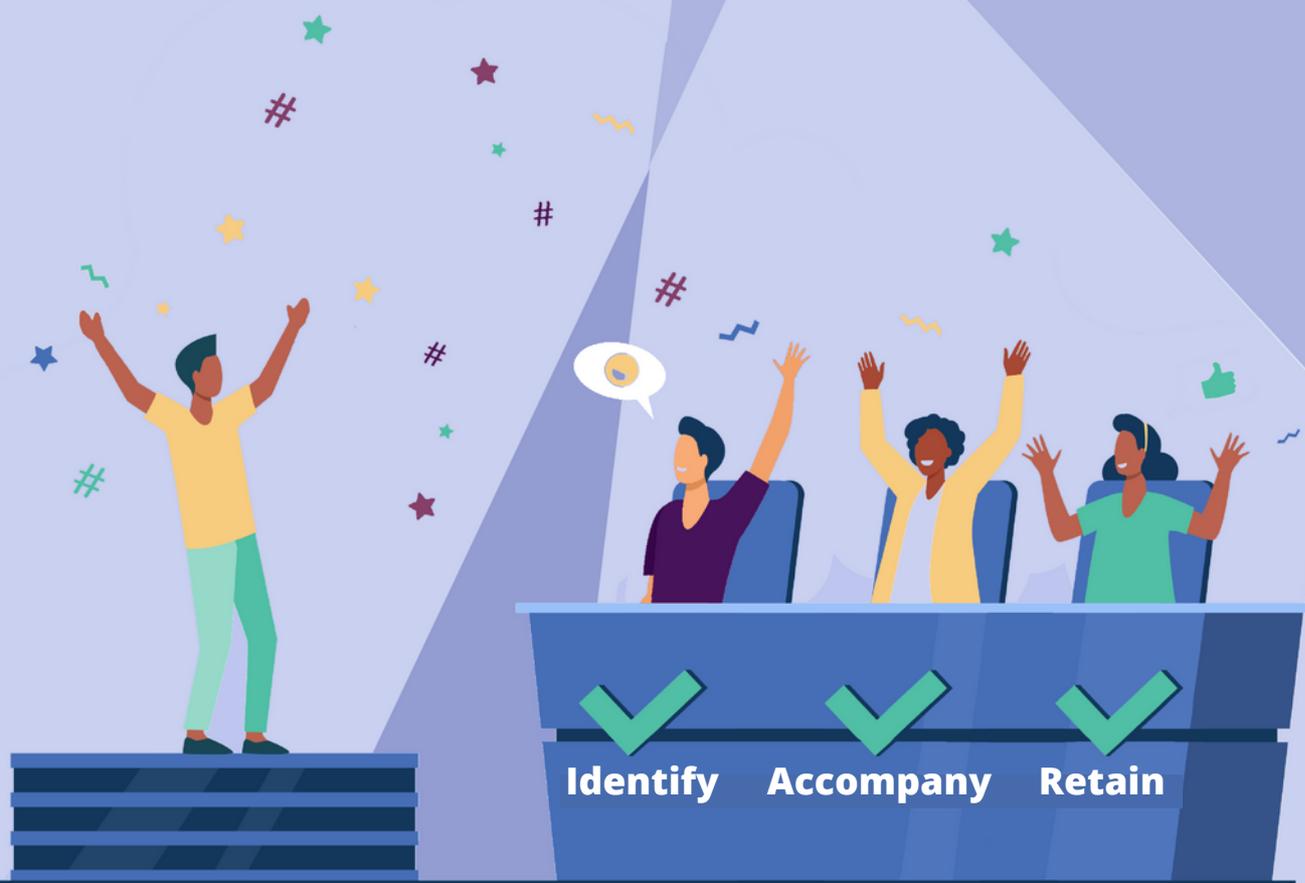
# FREREF Day 2023

Identify, Accompany and Retain  
Talents in our territories

Foster Regional Peer-Learning



## Synthesis





This document is a synthesis of all the presentations, conferences, workshops and exchanges which took place during the 2023 FREREF Day in Bologna and Reggio-Emilia on the 13th and 14th November.

## **Welcome Word of Jacques Faubert – President of FREREF**

Dear friends and partners,

It is a great pleasure and an honour to see the opening of our FREREF Days 2023 here in the Emilia-Romagna region, which welcomes us so warmly and has long provided us with our work, and with so many quality players involved in our European projects.

I'm sure this will be a good event among our meetings, considering both the participants and our theme for the year: "Identifying, supporting and retaining talent". And indeed, in most European countries and regions, the building and supporting of career paths that enable young (and not-so-young) people to gain lasting employment and to gain access to sustainable employment develop their experience and skills has become an essentiality.

Above all, it's about offering meaning, quality of life at work, and the opportunity to recognize employees' experience and skills by promoting them from within.

We'll be able to verify that it also means knowing how to "spread" the benefits of experience, enabling people to bounce back and develop in a positive way, by providing support for professional transitions in a given region. In this sense, building loyalty also means "retaining talents" in a given region. And these various points will be widely illustrated by our various speakers. I want to thank each and every participant in advance for being here.





## Presentation of CIS, host of the 2023 FREREF Day

CIS joined the network of members of FREREF in 2022. This membership is the logical continuity of years of collaboration on topics such as mobility of apprentices and VET learners, or the collaboration between Education and Training and Business.

CIS – Business Management School is the training and consultancy company of Unindustria Reggio Emilia, a local association of manufacturers of the Confindustria system that represents around 1.000 manufacturing enterprises (involving approximately 41,000 workers) in the Province of Reggio Emilia. Established in 1984, it is accredited by the Emilia-Romagna Region to conduct training programs supported by public funds.

CIS stands out as the primary training provider in Reggio Emilia for the industrial sector, operating within a highly competitive national landscape marked by significant achievements in exports, technological specialisation, and research and development (R&D). In fostering entrepreneurial competitiveness and local enterprise innovation, CIS collaborates with universities (i.e., University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Bocconi University, Polytechnic University of Milan, Bologna Business School), industry partners, employment agencies, research centres, and local stakeholders.

CIS is the owner of the Human and Technology Training Centre (HTTC), a laboratory equipped with advanced technologies designed to develop specialistic skills on digital transformation. Additionally, CIS is one of the founding members of ITS MAKER, offering post-secondary school courses in the Higher Technological Institute for Mechanics, Mechatronics, Automotive, and Packaging.

To achieve its objectives, CIS plans, organises, and provides training for both young individuals and workers. This includes supporting young unemployed individuals in entering the labour market, adapting the skills of workers to technological and organisational changes, and requalifying adult workers to facilitate their reintegration into the job market.





## Intervention of Gabriele Marzano - Policy manager on employment and innovations policies- Emilia-Romagna Region

Mr. Marzano introduced a New law in the Emilia Romagna Region for the attraction, the valorisation and promotion highly specialised talents. This law is one of the newest elements of the Emilia Romagna Region policies in Education and Employment, in particular regarding Human capital connecting with industrial policies.

This law is based on three main themes: brains, territories and transition. It takes its conceptual roots in the renewed conception of work geography, from the concept of “flat world”, reviewed by Mr. Moretti in “The new geography of jobs”, to the conception of capital in a more and more digitalised world by Haskel.



Big cities have an important role in producing innovation and value added in advanced, service-based economies. They constitute a space attracting talents and there is a “brain drain” process between cities and peripheral spaces. The web of innovative cities “alpha cities” attract investment and human capital, at some costs for themselves and other territories.

Drawbacks for the entire agglomeration economies :

- deindustrialisation in peripheral area, demographic crisis, loss of productivity
- in urban areas: congestion effect, increasing price /rent, labour cost inflation, environment unsustainably.

Then, in addition to the digital and green transitions, Mr. Marzano pointed out a third transition: the demographic change. Decreasing birth rate, and increasing part of the elderly population are now current in European countries. The decreasing natural scale of population is only maintained or mitigated by the flows of migration from other regions and countries. One example can be found in the southern regions of Italy who suffer from exodus and become poorer and poorer.



The immigration and emigration processes in Emilia-Romagna can be synthesised like this:  
Southern region → Emilia Romagna  
Emilia Romagna → Other regions or countries

The Emilia-Romagna policy officer advocates for an urgent shift from a passive state-of-the-art to active policies for targeted retention and attraction of talents. Competition among cities and regions and even countries lead to the weakening of some, and the overload of others. That is why we have to find a strategy based on cooperation rather than competition, to build a cooperative framework to support an organic ecosystem inside and outside of regional territory, including universities, VET centres, public and private services.

What is the perimeter of the final users of the law ? Emilia Romagna chose a large definition of “highly specialised talents”, meaning people who have gained knowledge and experience in particular relevance connected with the regional smart specialisation strategy.

The implementation of the law involves public municipalities for empowerment and giving information for a better awareness of beneficiaries and with the objective to remove bureaucratic obstacles. This objective led to the establishment of local “one-stop shop service” for beneficiaries. Universities are also involved in the management of talents; they provide job career support and help former students to find a job in the area. Finally, the policy includes support features for the start-up ecosystem and the creation of technopoles. The implementation of this law in this many domains results in a “Permanent manifesto” matching job and talents, supported by local firms through skills intelligence systems and “head hunting” at international level.

## Definitions of “talent”

Many of the participants gave their definition of talents, and however there are some differences depending on the background and local context, we can acknowledge that they are all complementary in defining a broader meaning of “talents”.

“The interpretation depends on the context in which we use the word 'talent'. Here are the definitions In ancient times, talent was a weight between 20 and 27 kg Or perhaps a bargaining chip. It is also a particular ability to do something in the artistic field; it is called a gift. For me, it's a skill in life.”

“Talent in the workplace can refer to both innate abilities and mastered skills. While talent is a natural aptitude that emerges effortlessly, skills are acquired abilities developed through learning and practice. In HR, “talent” often describes high-performing and high-potential employees, varying based on context.”



“From my point of view, the notion of talent is above all a notion relating to artistic culture. For workers, I prefer to talk about know-how. It is a constant difficulty for employers today to manage jobs and skills. Now, the real questions are now linked to working conditions first.”

“Talent is the combination between creativity, skills, intelligence and commitment.”

“It's the special ability or facility of a person to learn or do a certain task.”

“Talent refers to a person's innate or acquired skills and abilities that excel in a specific activity or field, and which, in the context of lifelong learning, should be identified, developed and supported to promote the growth and retention of individuals in their communities and territories.”

“Talent is the connection of technology foresight and skills foresight.”

## Intervention of Lara Porciatti - Emilia-Romagna Region

44% of companies in Emilia Romagna do not find the skills they need (data from the regional chamber of commerce). There are 400 000 unmatched job offers in Emilia Romagna.

What is skills intelligence = Talent attraction + talent circulation + talent retention. Data on skills and human capital (job offers online) are compelled and analysed thanks to machine learning to get the skill gap.

This tool is designed for regional services, to facilitate data management and the identification of new strategies and regional laws, but also for universities and VET providers to update their curricula and modules. Now Emilia-Romana is thinking about including this tool in career guidance paths. One long-term objective would be to create a system based on artificial intelligence.

ItTTER is a regional programme targeting third country nationals who live in Emilia Romagna, or want to move in, and graduated Italians living abroad, and focuses on the following steps:

Moving to → setting up → living in → get involved

How to move the new skills in the profiles within a profession ?

Capitalism without capital, capitalistic view on talents ? Instead of competing to get talents, how to work with people in highly specialised work with people > do you invest in researching people able to be flexible enough to work in 5 or 10 years and gain new skills and abilities.

This is a complementary issue, but it does not solve the space issue connected to attraction and retention of talents. Vertical and horizontal approach of talents.

## Round- Table “Regional policies on identifying and retaining talents”



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

### Corinne Famiano – treasurer of Symetal Alpes-Loire CFDT

“I ‘d rather talk about “qualified workers and employees” than “talents”.”

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region is the 2nd region for the number of employees in France, and one million six-hundred thousand people work in the field of metallurgy. There are a lot of opportunities, without candidates or qualified candidates.

“In our lovely region of, we are facing chronic difficulties in staffing : young workers stay not more than 5 years within the same company.”

According to the representatives of the French Trade Union CFDT, there is no sufficient effort for social services nor training workers, while liberal Education, Training and Employment policies are developing in France. There is also an important challenge which should be addressed: the ecological transition. Companies do not have the mean to adapt even though their survival depends on it. Lifelong learning and securing career path are crucial elements to be included in future Education and Employment policies. Workers want quality jobs, investment in health and security, and mentoring, and they expect employers to improve work conditions.





## Susana Diaz – deputy director of the Employment Public Service (SOC) – Catalogne

“Changes in the technological sector, supporting talents becomes a key subject in public employment services. The Labour guidance model is based on the ESCO model (European Skills Competences System) and puts the persons and her/his skills at the centre of the approach. One challenge identified by the SOC is to integrate transversal skills in the data basis of job seekers and to modernise the current system on professional experience and training, to make people more aware of the skills they have and to what job they can apply consequently. Another challenge is to support companies in identifying talents. One starting point could be the identification of competences, especially with young people, so they can make relevant decisions regarding their future. This process would take place in a public-private collaboration.

Example of three projects conducted in Catalonia :

- The Digital Talent Project is promoted by the Generalitat de Catalonia and Remo Capital (public - private collaboration). The objective is to fill the digital talent gap by providing training for the local market needs, based on “learning by doing” and community knowledge approaches. The participants are building a community of companies and establishing a network in order to identify needs and provide guidance on reskilling and reorientation. The project elaborated a dictionary containing a description of 60 digital occupations, in compliance with the ESCO classification.
- The August Universidad programme targets young entrepreneurs and was launched in 2021. It supports universities in launching their project, and benefits companies in attracting new ideas and talents.
- The Programme + Talent Act was initiated by the public employment service and continuous training and lifelong learning centres and Universities to fund actions for high level professionals.

What is the place for Europe in these policies ? What about European cooperation between regions, between cities ?

There is a network including Emilia Romagna Region sharing “best practices” at European level. This network is enabling fruitful experience sharing even though labour markets are very different depending on the countries. The European Commission (DG Regio) is leading an initiative focusing on experience sharing. The best performing regions have to share their knowledge and know how, thanks to an online platform launched in September. The aim is to promote European Talent Circulation, going beyond the concept of brain-drain and brain-gain, based on the acknowledgement that nowadays people and especially the new generations, are not moving to a country A to a country B, but moving in many directions at different steps of their lives.

This is a shared frame with all European public bodies, inspired by the ORNET classification used in the USA which contains very precise descriptions of tasks and skills.

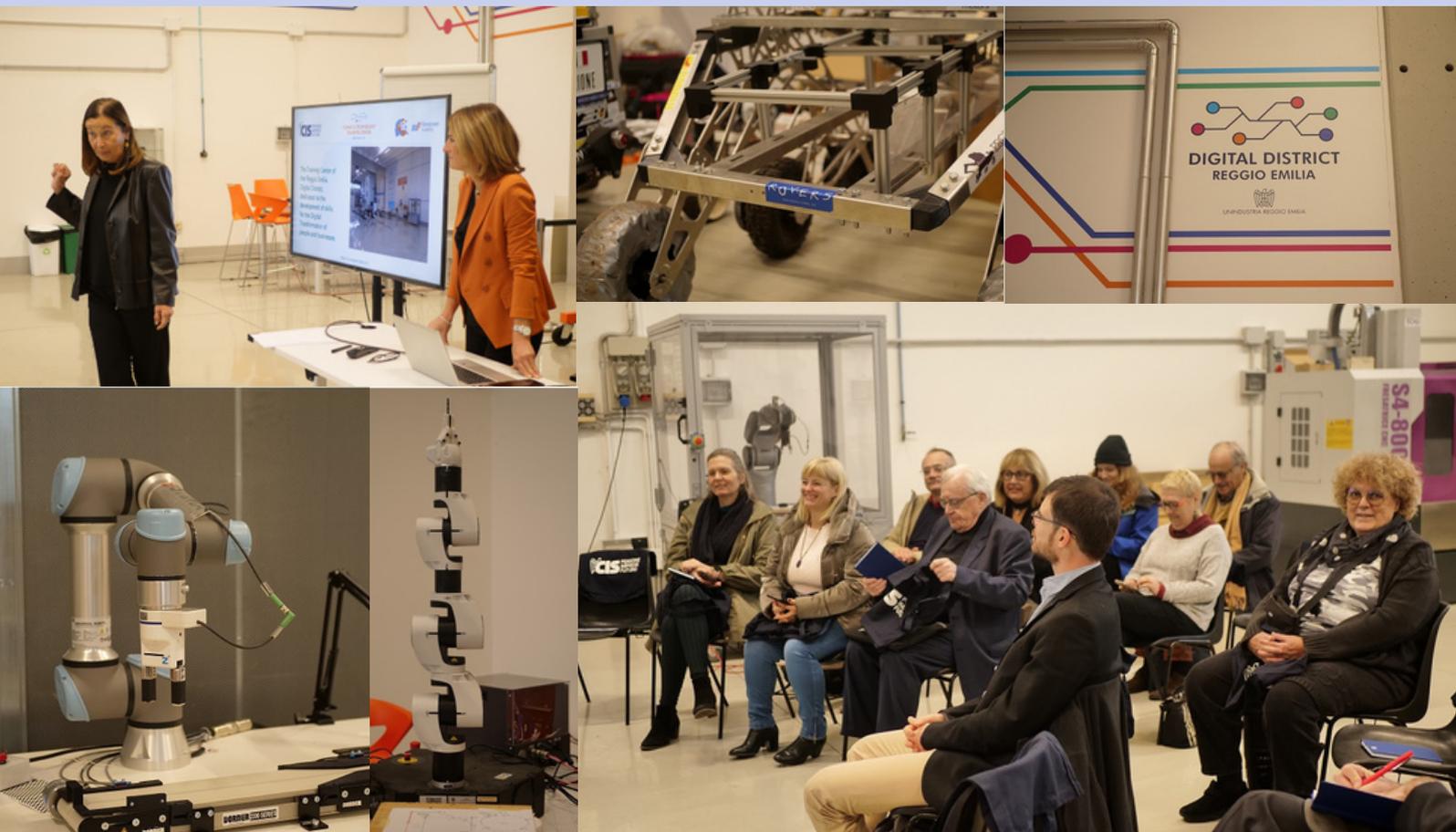
Employers and their roles: workers first need good working conditions : social and health law and improvement of working conditions = this is what workers look for before moving anywhere. Example of Thales : it is difficult to find young engineers. Also importance of the values and the social value and meaning of the work. Young generation : have higher requirements before engaging in a company/with an employer.

What about the collaboration between employment services and trade unions about the recognition of competences ?

In France the trade Unions are involved in Commission for employment, in OPCO (competences operator organisations) or in the Economic, Social and Environmental regional Council. The trade unions sections in companies share information and negotiate working conditions and subjects like skills recognition or workers continuous training and learning opportunities at the branch or at the national level.

One sector we identified as having a high need of training to cope with the transition from thermic to electric device is the automotive sector. This transitions requires huge changes in the companies internal organisation and training offers.

## Study-visit to the Human and Technology Training Centre





We visited the Human and Technology Training Centre, situated within the “digital district” built by the Unindustria, in Reggio Emilia. This centre provides training for the development of digital competences of persons and companies and hosts a laboratory of applied technologies for experiential learning. This is part of a larger “digital district” aiming at supporting companies in the digital transition process, by providing advice and automation and innovation laboratories. In the district, the automation lab offers support with a consultant and user-friendly software linked to machines to enable experiential learning.

The Human and Technology Training Centre has been inaugurated during the pandemic, and it has attracted a young audience, unemployed or temporary employed, who benefited from free training. After being trained some could work temporarily for companies involved in the Centre as software programmers, automation technicians, or handlers.

In 2023, 48 training courses were delivered, for more than 500 persons, with the contribution of 66 companies including national companies such as Max Mara. The Centre can also develop specific tailor-made training courses depending on the needs of companies and the needs of the job market identified. CIS delivers the training while the employment agency selects candidates for the training, and supports them after the training to find employment.

## Study-visit to the E80 Group



E80 Group (former E80 company) is specialised in the automation process. The company started in the Reggio-Emilia area, and then incorporated other companies as part of their supply chain and developed worldwide with 13 branches. One of the specificities of E80 is that they develop their own machines and software to create a “4,0 factory”. Therefore, they invest a lot in research and development, notably thanks to the delivery of internal training.

The participants met Tania Ferrari, Academia manager at E80 Group. She is in charge of the corporate academy for continuous learning, which enables workers to enhance their competences and develop their career, as well as enabling the company to be at the forefront of the industry market. They collaborate with multiple universities such as the Universities of Modena and Reggio-Emilia (UNIMORE), Krakow, Monterrey or in Illinois. They encourage exchanges between old and young workers.



The company considers these learning opportunities as one of their main assets to attract talented workers. Workers can indeed improve their technical skills but also language and soft skills. Every worker is granted 2 hours of training per week, included in their working time. E80 also developed welfare advantages for its employees in specific situations: parents of new-born, parents of graduated child, or for workers involved in community or civil society initiatives. They also adopted a more flexible way of working with for instance remote working or flexible working hours.

**The E80 Group  
Academia trained  
2600 people  
between 2017 and  
2022**

The company uses a performance management system, including weekly discussions with a manager, and the setting of individual goals assessed in a later phase. This system creates more engagement of workers according to the company.

## « Skills, innovation and complexity : Industry 5,0 » by Pr. Lorenzo Ciapetti

Pr. Ciapetti started his intervention with a historical perspective on the Reggiane Innovation Park : this building hosted the mechanic company Reggiane, which employed up to 12% of the Reggio Emilia population in 1940. Regarding the current economic trends in regional economies, Pr. Ciapetti evoked some evidence suggesting that there is a double trend regarding digital transformation and sustainable transformation: there is a correlation between those two tendencies.

**"The next decade's competences are soft and hybrid"**  
Pr. Lorenzo Ciapetti





## Workshop “Policies for preventing drop-out in Catalonia” by Xavier Farriols - FREREF counsellor

The training and insertion programme (PFI) in Catalonia focuses on young people around 15 years old, with or without diplomas, looking for training or employment. The Deputation of Barcelona (a territorial scale between regional and local scale, aiming at supporting local administrations) is looking for ways to enhance the exchange of information and collaboration between local administrations and training centres to prevent drop-out after secondary education, and reduce the risk of marginalisation.

This programme is the consequence of the implementation of a law in 1990 which enforced the concept of “educational guarantee”. This law enables those who do not have sufficient education to get learning opportunities and to prevent chronic under-qualification. One of the challenges identified within this workshop is the difficulty to get necessary information in time: when administration get the information of drop-out, it is already too late (one year later). The department of education and the department of employment also have different calendars and deliver offers not at the same time.

**NEETs = “Neither in Employment, Education nor Training”**

**This global phenomenon is rising in all European countries, and is studied by CEREQ ( Centre d’études et de recherches sur les qualifications). NEETs are mentioned in several EU recommendations and specific educational policies.**

Some leads to foster training and employment policies, as well as for preventing drop-out are

- offering long-lasting funding or complementary funding paths
- a better cooperation between local administrations and local departments and between local departments themselves.
- taking into account the migratory process (global, European and local) with more than 2 pupils out of 10 not born in Catalonia. This new demographic pattern requires a specific attention to language and intercultural competences, “catch-up” programme for accelerated elementary education, and collaboration with civil services for the regularisation of unaccompanied minors.

One tendency observed by participants is the increasing role of private organisations in training opportunities. Private bodies are at the same time complementary and concurrent to public education. The global ecosystem is more agile and dynamic: companies become training centres and training centres are providing more professional training. This process meets the need of social integration and economic development in an uncertain context. One proposal is to promote the design of an integrated platform gathering all information related to education and training, linked to a professional profile, such as what was done in Catalonia with the “My Health” application, designed to face the covid pandemic.



Another acknowledgement is that there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome to change from career path or education field. There is a major financial barrier to change path, and few, isolated or not known programmes. A “right to make mistakes” or rather a “right for education and professional transition” should be implemented in that respect.

## **Workshop on third-places for accompanying Talents**



Participants had the opportunity to discuss the results of the Places-3T project focused on the new ways of working in the current society, especially since the labour market is so variegated. We started by looking at old industrial places that are going to waste and proceed to requalify them in a way that enables people to start their own business. We added places as partners in the project. It is important to understand that the main actor in the project is the place: we wanted to create a place for a more desirable future.

One interesting aspect of the project is the diversification of the partners: with all of them specialising in different themes and thematics. This made it for a better pool of skills to draw from. Some of the difficulties that emerged from the discussion are related to the difficulty in finding new fundings to sustain these places or even start them to begin with. Another important point made, revolved around the importance of the involvement in the place: one can simply be a landowner waiting for the money to come in, but this is not beneficial to the place itself. Instead, by actively being involved in the life of the place, one can better understand what improvements are needed to survive. And finally, the importance of looking around is essential to the success of these spaces. However, copying other places doesn't work all the time for multiple reasons, but taking inspiration is allowed and more than welcomed.

**Thank all of you for your presence !**



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