



## AILEEN Reaches Two-Year Milestone: Empowering Europe's Aerospace and Defence Sectors through Skills and Innovation

As AILEEN reaches its halfway point, the consortium proudly reflects on two years of impactful work advancing vocational education and training in the aerospace and defence sectors. Funded by the Erasmus+ programme under the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) initiative, AILEEN addresses Europe's growing need for highly skilled professionals in advanced manufacturing, positioning itself as a strategic contributor to Europe's industrial resilience.

In just 24 months, AILEEN has established a transnational network of six Centres of Vocational Excellence across Europe, using a nomination methodology to ensure quality, consistency, and sectoral relevance. These centres form the backbone of a cooperative ecosystem uniting vocational training providers, industry leaders, and research institutions. Together, they are driving a shared vision for excellence in training, innovation, and workforce development. Explore our interactive [AILEEN CoVEs Network Map](#) to learn more about the established centres and their activities.

An additional ten Centres of Vocational Excellence will be launched across Europe over the next two years, welcoming cooperation from external stakeholders.

A key outcome has been the development of a European training framework, based on the existing [International Qualification Systems](#) managed by EWF, tailored to the specific needs of the aerospace and defence sectors. Designed with flexibility and future-readiness in mind, the framework covers cutting-edge domains such as quality assurance and control in Additive Manufacturing (AM), AM design and inspection, advanced welding processes and materials, advanced welding applications for aerospace and defence, the integration of digital technologies in manufacturing systems, and sustainable design practices including environmental compliance, among others – equipping both new learners and experienced professionals with the tools needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving industrial landscape. The 1<sup>st</sup> round of courses will be released this fall.

Inspired by WorldSkills, and to further engage youngsters and promote excellence in vocational education, AILEEN has launched national skills leagues in participating countries. These leagues have introduced an element of healthy competition, helping to identify talent, highlight best practices, and create a culture of innovation within the vocational training community.

A significant milestone was the delivery of the first AILEEN workshop, held at the IPH in Hannover, Germany. This event presented the European Training Framework for Advanced Manufacturing in Aerospace and Defence to stakeholders across the education and industrial spectrum. It provided a unique opportunity to explore collaborative opportunities aligned with the evolving needs of the aerospace and defence sectors. The next workshop is already scheduled for 7–9 October 2025 at the MTC Campus in Coventry, United Kingdom, where further collaboration and knowledge exchange will take place.

AILEEN's visibility has steadily grown, with the project featuring prominently at national and EU-level events. AILEEN's growing visibility is reflected in its presence at key conferences, exhibitions, and publications across Europe, including:

- CEDEFOP Conference "Shaping learning and skills for Europe" in Brussels
- EDA INNOVATION Days 2025 in Krakow
- Danish Defence Annual Conference (DDAC) 2025 in Alborg Denmark
- WAM 2024 – the 2nd International Hybrid Conference in Instambul
- Dutch Welding Symposium in October 2024
- FEINDEF (Feria Internacional de Defensa y Seguridad de España)
- Advances in Welding and Metal Additive Manufacturing Technologies during WAM 2024
- Reference in the Wholers Report 2025



Its relevance is undeniable in the current European context, where the green and digital transitions, security imperatives, and economic recovery demand a skilled and adaptable workforce. By aligning its goals with key EU priorities – including the European Green Deal and the Digital Education Action Plan – AILEEN supports Europe's ambition to remain competitive, sustainable, and secure.

Looking ahead, the project will build on this momentum by growing its partnerships, bringing its innovative training solutions to new audiences, and contribute meaningfully to shaping vocational education across Europe. With two years remaining, AILEEN is on track to deliver lasting impact not just within its partner countries, but across the European skills ecosystem.

**For more information, please contact:**

[info@aileencove.eu](mailto:info@aileencove.eu)

<https://aileencove.eu>

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