

SKILLS AND LABOUR SHORTAGES



A ROADMAP FOR ACTION

January 2026

CONTEXT

- The hospitality sector continues to face **acute skills shortages**, intensified by the green and digital transitions.
- **Labour shortages** remain a **major concern** in several EU countries, while in others the situation has improved.
- Overall labour market conditions remain challenging, driven by an ageing population, a fragile economic recovery and **persistent labour market slack**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Addressing skills shortages:** Strengthen education and training, promote upskilling and reskilling, encourage apprenticeship schemes, and anticipate future skills needs.
- **Tackling labour shortages:** Promote diverse and flexible forms of work and improve the image and attractiveness of careers in hospitality.
- **Improving labour mobility:** Facilitate legal migration pathways, support access to affordable housing, and reinforce tools such as EURES to better match skills and labour demand.
- **Ensuring adequate funding:** Sustained funding at both EU and national level is essential to support the implementation of these measures.

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A. Economic Contribution of the Hospitality Sector

HOTREC is the umbrella organisation representing Europe's hotels, restaurants, bars and cafés, bringing together 47 national associations from 36 countries. The hospitality industry plays a major role in the European economy by driving employment and economic activity. It is an open and diverse sector, promoting gender equality and offering many young people their first professional opportunities.

The sector accounts for 8.5% of total household consumption expenditure in the EU and generates around 2%¹ of value added to the business economy. It covers 2 million businesses, 90%² of which are micro-enterprises employing fewer than 10 people. Between 2015 and 2024, hospitality alone created 1.2 million additional jobs, increasing its workforce from 9 million to 10 million employees across the EU's 27 member states.

The hospitality sector is highly inclusive: in 2021, around 30%³ of the sector's workforce had not finished upper secondary school (compared to 16.3%⁴ in the overall economy), demonstrating its ability to integrate people from varied backgrounds. Hospitality also plays a key role in offering young people their first job opportunity, with 11%⁵ aged 15-24, versus only 8%⁶ in the wider economy. Gender balance is another strength: women represent 53%⁷ of the hospitality workforce, compared to 46.4%⁸ across the entire economy.

The hospitality sector is committed to addressing skills and labour shortages while continuing to contribute to Europe's economy and transition goals. With coordinated action from EU institutions, national governments and social partners, the sector can strengthen its workforce, improve training and mobility, and enhance its overall attractiveness.

¹ Calculated as the ratio of gross value added and income from the hospitality industry to that of the entire economy.

² Calculated as the proportion of micro-enterprises in accommodation and food services relative to the total number of enterprises of all sizes in the same sector.

³ Calculated as the proportion of employed persons in accommodation and food services with lower secondary education relative to total employment in accommodation and food services across all education levels.

⁴ Calculated as the proportion of employed persons with lower secondary education across all economic activities relative to total employment in all services at all education levels.

⁵ Calculated as the proportion of employed persons in accommodation and food services aged 15-24 relative to total employment in the same sector across all age classes.

⁶ Calculated as the proportion of employed persons across all economic activities aged 15-24 relative to total employment across all age classes.

⁷ Calculated as the share of female employment in accommodation and food services within the tourism industry relative to total employment (male and female) in the same sector.

⁸ Calculated as the proportion of female employment in the tourism industry relative to total employment (male and female) in the tourism industry.

1. Skills and Labour Shortages: Main Challenges

1.1. Addressing Skills Shortages

Skills shortages have long been a structural challenge for the European hospitality sector. Even **before the COVID-19 pandemic**, businesses were already reporting growing difficulties in recruiting workers with the right competences. These challenges have intensified notably due to the **green and digital transition**, which require new specialised skillsets.

Digital skills are amongst the most pressing needs. Companies increasingly need staff who can operate hotel and restaurant management systems, handle online booking channels, manage digital check-in tools, and respond effectively to customer expectations shaped by technology. Skills in **online communication** – such as monitoring reviews, managing social media visibility, and ensuring high-quality online customer service – are becoming essential. In parallel, **cybersecurity awareness**, data protection, and the safe use of AI tools (including chatbots) are now crucial competences for daily operations.

Human and interpersonal skills remain at the heart of hospitality. These include strong communication abilities, knowledge of foreign languages, empathy towards guests, effective problem-solving, conflict resolution, and the capacity to work in diverse and multicultural teams. As customer expectations rise, these “soft skills” are increasingly decisive for service quality and guest satisfaction.

Finally, **green skills** are becoming indispensable as companies align with sustainability goals. Workers need to understand how to measure and reduce their environmental impact, minimise food waste, manage water and energy consumption responsibly, implement circular practices, and ensure safe waste handling. Awareness of sustainability standards, certification schemes and reporting obligations is also becoming more relevant.

Additional shortages persist in key operational roles such as chefs, cooks, maintenance specialists and technical staff – professions that require high levels of expertise and experience. Ensuring that workers can acquire and update their skills throughout their careers is critical for the sector’s competitiveness.

1.2. Tackling Labour Shortages

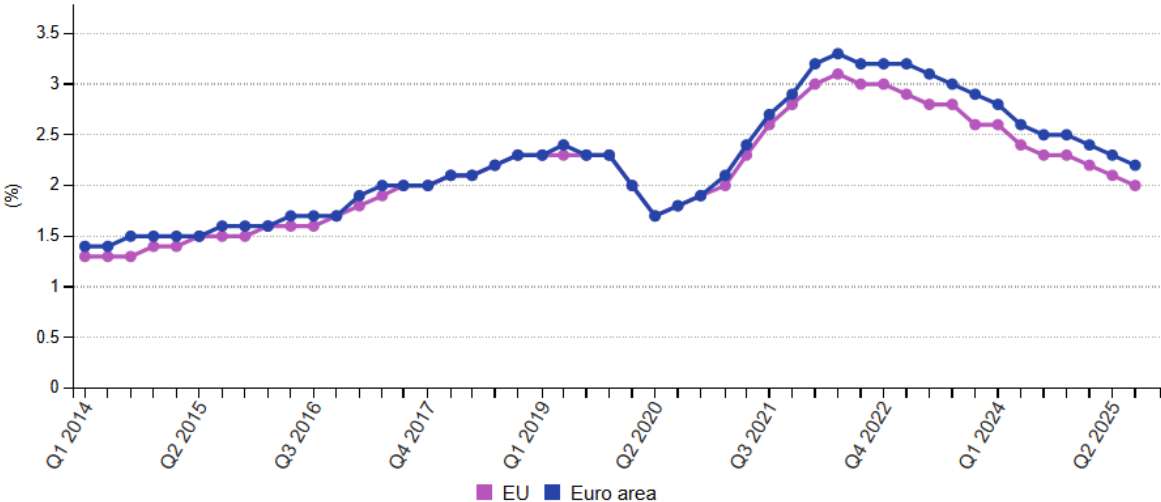
Across Europe, labour shortages in the hospitality sector have eased compared to the post-pandemic period, but they remain a structural challenge in many countries. The table in Annex I shows a comparison between 2022 and 2025 of the total number of employees missing in the sector⁹.

⁹ To note that all data was provided by HOTREC members.

According to the collected data, while several Member States report a marked improvement – with shortages reaching low levels in countries such as Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Croatia and Luxembourg – other countries continue to face significant pressure in filling vacancies. In Portugal, Spain, Greece, Romania and Czechia, labour shortages remain among the highest in the EU, affecting the sector’s capacity to operate at full speed, especially during peak seasons.

This divergence illustrates that, although the situation is stabilising in parts of Europe, labour shortages remain a major concern in several tourism-dependent economies. The sector’s seasonal nature, changing labour market expectations, and the limited availability of domestic workers continue to influence recruitment dynamics in many regions. Overall, on average, the sector is currently missing 10% of its workforce¹⁰.

Figure 1: Quarterly job vacancy rates, seasonally adjusted, Q1 2014 – Q2 2025 (Eurostat)



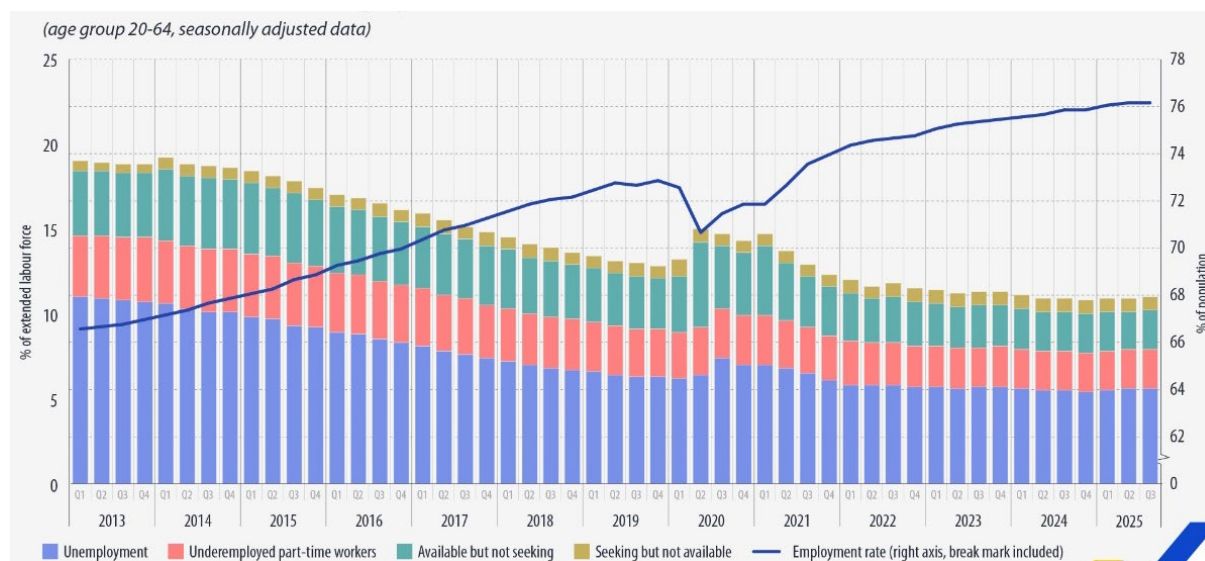
Labour shortages remain a horizontal challenge across the EU economy, as shown by Eurostat’s job vacancy (Figure 1) and labour slack indicators (Figure 2). While shortages peaked in the immediate post-COVID period and have since gradually eased across most sectors, underlying structural vulnerabilities persist.

Two main drivers will continue to shape labour shortages. First, **population ageing**. The old-age dependency ratio is projected to reach **56.7%** by 2050, reducing the total available workforce. Second, a **fragile economic recovery**. Recruitment difficulties may re-emerge quickly if labour demand increases or if migration and labour market participation decline.

Furthermore, the **labour market slack**, which includes inactive people willing to work, part-time workers seeking more hours and those available but not actively searching, remains significant despite gradual improvement (more than 50% of the EU population). Given these trends, targeted measures to reduce labour shortages remain essential.

¹⁰ To note that right after COVID the sector was missing between 10%-20% of the workforce.

Figure 2: Labour market slack and employment rate in the EU, Q1 2013 – Q3 2025 (Eurostat)



1.3. Improving Hospitality's Image

The hospitality industry operates **365 days a year, 24 hours a day**, to provide essential services to guests. This reality shapes working patterns, but it is often perceived negatively instead of being recognised as intrinsic to the sector's service mission. Many hospitality businesses, such as **dinner restaurants, nightclubs or bars**, operate only during specific hours. Their main activity takes place in the **evening, at night or during weekends**, making full-time contracts difficult to offer in many cases.

Work-life balance has become crucial to attract and retain staff. However, ensuring balanced schedules in a sector with irregular demand requires strong organisational capacity and adequate digital tools, an aspect often overlooked by public debates. The sector typically relies on a **core workforce under permanent contracts**, complemented by temporary, seasonal or part-time staff. This mix ensures operational continuity and prevents excessive workloads.

Different work arrangements (full time, temporary, seasonal, or part-time staff) must comply with national and EU labour legislation. In some Member States, long shifts may be offered with employee consent and compensatory rest periods. Allegations of irregularities require proper verification by authorities. Discussions around wages often overlook the sector's **low-profit margins** and the fact that many entry level positions require few formal qualifications. Post-COVID, wage levels have been reviewed in many Member States through collective bargaining.

To note that many companies in the hospitality sector are also investing in **career development pathways** to retain workers and strengthen the sector's image. By offering progression opportunities, internal mobility and continuous learning, businesses demonstrate that hospitality can provide **long-term, rewarding careers** rather than temporary jobs. These efforts help employees feel valued, increase motivation, and support workforce stability. Despite widespread compliance with labour standards, negative narratives persist, impacting recruitment.

2. Skills and Labour Shortages: Key Solutions

2.1. Addressing Skills Shortages

To overcome skills shortages and ensure the hospitality sector's competitiveness, HOTREC proposes the following measures on **education and training**:

- **Upskilling and Reskilling the Workforce**

The hospitality sector requires **large-scale and continuous training efforts**. Skills must be developed not only when individuals enter the sector, but **throughout their careers**, as customer expectations, technologies, and sustainability requirements evolve rapidly. A culture of **lifelong learning** is essential.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The EU, national, regional and local authorities and companies should develop massive training programmes to upskill and reskill the workforce.

- **Strengthening Apprenticeship Schemes**

Apprenticeships play a vital role in building a solid skills base for the hospitality sector. They should be seen as a **first-choice career pathway** and not as a last resource. High-quality apprenticeships are essential to attract young talent.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Member States should **further encourage** apprenticeship programmes.
- Companies should apply the Council Recommendation on "*European Quality and Effective Apprenticeship schemes*" (6779/18)

- **Curriculum Design and Job Profiles**

The definition of occupational profiles and the design of targeted training curricula is essential for the hospitality sector. Areas where employers report heavy skills shortages should be targeted.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Focus on modular training formats instead of full curricula.

- **Portability and Recognition of Non-Formal Certifications**

Many competences are acquired directly in the workplace or through short, practical trainings such as micro-credentials, vocational courses or continuous professional development programmes. Better recognition of practical experience across borders would facilitate mobility, improve matching between workers and vacancies, and support lifelong learning pathways in the sector.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Member States and social partners should explore **mutual trust-based approaches** that allow employers to understand and value skills across borders, while fully respecting national competences in education and qualification systems.
- Formal certifications should not be downgraded.

- **Adapting Curricula to Business Needs**

Education and training curricula, particularly in vocational schools and hospitality institutes, must adapt to the **real needs of companies**.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Strengthen cooperation between training providers and employers.
- Curricula should integrate green and digital skills.

- **Anticipating Future Skills Needs**

The speed of change in hospitality makes it essential to **anticipate future skills demands**. Waiting until shortages materialise is too late, given that training professionals often requires months or years.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Use skills intelligence tools and structured social partner dialogues.

- **Pact for Skills (EU initiative)**

The main objective of the Pact for Skills for Tourism¹¹ is to promote joint action to bridge the skills gap in the sector by improving existing skills (upskilling) and training new skills (reskilling). It also envisages to overcome labour gaps in the sector.

¹¹ HOTREC encourages large scale partnerships, where employer organisations, trade unions, education providers and public authorities collaborate through stable structures.

HOTREC supports the initiative and calls for continued investment in **large-scale partnerships**, easier access to EU funding and improved coordination at national level to ensure that training opportunities reach SMEs.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The European Commission should continue supporting the deployment of the Pact for Skills.
- Tourism stakeholders at national level should contribute to the Pact for Skills' activities at national level.

● **Pedagogical Innovation**

The hospitality sector needs **flexible and attractive training formats** (micro-credentials, online modules, blended learning) adapted to SMEs' realities. Short, accessible modules can be adapted via PowerPoint or document format, easily supporting SMEs in delivering learning with minimal costs.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Companies and curricula should work on the best formats to deliver attractive trainings.

● **Awareness Raising**

Better awareness raising campaigns should highlight hospitality careers as **professional, skilled, and evolving** occupations.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Companies should develop targeted communication campaigns.

● **Allocating Necessary Funding**

Massive trainings are necessary to upskill and reskill the workforce in the hospitality sector. HOTREC welcomes the possibility of the EU to develop a skills academy on tourism with Member States, social partners and other interested stakeholders.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Including training support in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.
- Focusing on direct access to funding at national level (e.g. cohesion funds).
- Improved communication from EU and national authorities on funding opportunities.

- **Encouraging Social Dialogue**

Social dialogue plays an important role in helping the hospitality sector address skills shortages. To identify evolving competence requirements in the sector, social partners are best placed to work together on training solutions that respond to both workers' expectations and companies' operational realities.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Social partners should jointly engage in training initiatives at EU and national level where mutually agreed.

2.2. Tackling Labour Shortages

To overcome labour shortages and ensure the hospitality sector's competitiveness, HOTREC proposes the following measures:

- **Improving the Image and Attractiveness of the Hospitality Sector**

Enhancing the perception of hospitality careers is crucial to attracting new talent. The sector offers diverse, people-focused career paths and promotes inclusiveness and gender balance.¹²

Awareness-raising and education campaigns can help convey these strengths and highlight the wide range of career paths available, from entry-level positions to highly skilled and managerial roles.

HOTREC Recommendation

- EU institutions should use a positive narrative when referring to the sector.
- National members should promote the advantages of working in hospitality.

- **Promoting Diverse Forms of Work**

Flexible work options (part-time work, fixed-term contracts, temporary agency work and casual work) are essential for a sector operating year-round and at all hours. They also respond to the needs of employees who may wish to combine work with studies, caring responsibilities or other personal commitments.

When properly regulated and compliant with EU and national legislation, diverse forms of work contribute to work-life balance, support individual career choices, foster social inclusion, and encourage participation in the labour market.

¹² Hospitality plays a key role in offering young people their first job opportunity, with [11%](#) aged 15-24, versus only [8%](#) in the wider economy. Gender balance is also a strength: women represent [53%](#) of the hospitality workforce, compared to [46.4%](#) across the entire economy. See page 2 for further information.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The EU should promote and recognise the contribution of diverse forms of work.
- Companies should continue to offer **suitable and lawful forms of work**, adapted both to market needs and to the preferences or circumstances of employees or self-employed workers.

• **Supporting Companies through Digitalisation and AI**

Human interaction will always remain at the heart of hospitality and is indispensable for delivering high-quality guest experiences. However, **digitalisation, AI and robotisation** can support companies in managing recurring tasks more **efficiently** (e.g. online marketing, reservations management, cashflow monitoring, timesheets, stock and inventory control, data reporting, etc.). These technologies can free up staff time to focus on guest-facing activities, improve predictability, and reduce administrative burdens for SMEs.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Companies should consider integrating appropriate digital solutions to support internal processes, while preserving the essential human dimension of service delivery.

• **Reducing Inactivity Rates and Strengthening Cooperation**

Strengthening cooperation between public and private employment services can ensure more efficient matching of workers and job vacancies in hospitality. This might reduce inactivity rates in Europe.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The European Commission should facilitate collaboration between private employment services and the EU Public Employment Services Network.

• **Encouraging the Participation of Retired Workers**

Many retired workers possess valuable experience, strong interpersonal skills and a high level of reliability – qualities that are particularly beneficial in hospitality roles. Facilitating their participation, on a voluntary and part-time basis, could support the sector, while promoting active ageing.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Member States should consider flexible frameworks that make it possible for retirees to contribute voluntarily without losing pension entitlements or facing excessive administrative burdens.

• Supporting Social Dialogue

Social dialogue plays an important role in helping the hospitality sector address labour shortages. At national level, **social partners are well placed to analyse the specific situation of the sector**, understand labour market needs, and work together on practical, tailored solutions including on working conditions and pay.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The EU and national governments should support **capacity-building measures for social partners**, where such support is appropriate and where national actors are willing to strengthen their dialogue.

2.3. Improving Labour Mobility

HOTREC considers that labour mobility solutions can address both the challenges of skills and labour shortages, and proposes the measures highlighted below to improve labour mobility.

2.3.1. Labour Mobility within the EU

• Strengthening the EURES Network

With the improvement of matching jobseekers with employers across Member States, EURES can help businesses access a wider pool of candidates with the competences they need, particularly during peak seasons.

The network should increase its **streamlined procedures for cross-border recruitment**, reinforce cooperation with vocational **education and training providers and further promote the network**.

HOTREC Recommendation

- EURES should become more visible and efficient to help better match labour supply and demand within the EU.

- **Housing Initiative**

Everyone should have access to affordable housing. However, the fast growth of short-term rentals (STRs) in certain areas has driven up rental prices, making it difficult for many workers in the sector to find suitable accommodation. The hospitality industry itself often lacks the capacity to house all its employees, and only a small number of hotels are currently able to offer staff lodging.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The EU should establish a **level-playing field** between hotels and STRs.

- **European Social Security Pass (ESSP)**

The European Social Security Pass (ESSP) is a valuable initiative to simplify and modernise the coordination of social security systems across the EU. For employers, especially SMEs and micro-enterprises, the ESSP could greatly reduce administrative burdens by allowing faster and more reliable verification of workers' social security status through secure digital tools. This would save time, cut costs, and make compliance easier.

For workers, particularly those who are mobile or seasonal, the ESSP would provide clearer access to information on their contributions and entitlements, ensuring continuity of rights and greater transparency. Moreover, the ESSP could help combat fraud and errors by enabling real-time data verification and more effective cooperation between national authorities. It would also promote interoperability between Member States' systems, supporting the EU's broader digital transformation goals.

HOTREC Recommendation

- The EU should adopt the ESSP and fully implement it.

2.3.2. Labour Mobility from Third Countries

For third country nationals, HOTREC recommends the same measures indicated as for labour mobility within the EU and adds the following:

- **Bilateral Agreements with Third Countries**

HOTREC recommends national governments to sign bilateral agreements with non-EU countries to help bring in workers from abroad. Since bilateral agreements fall under the responsibility of individual Member States rather than the EU, each country must determine its own approach. This includes deciding how recruitment will be carried out, how long migrants may stay, how many can be admitted, and what administrative requirements will apply for these third-country nationals to enter under such agreements.

- **Implementation of the EU Talent Pool**

HOTREC encourages the swift implementation and operationalisation of the **EU Talent Pool**. The aim is to match job applications of third-country migrants with the needs of European employers.

- **Promotion of Talent Partnerships**

Talent Partnerships with selected non-EU countries should continue to be developed to support **legal and circular migration pathways**, better matching skills with labour market needs. Countries included in the partnerships so far include Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

- **Implementation of the revised Single Permit Directive ([2024/1233](#))**

Member States should swiftly transpose and fully implement the revised Single Permit Directive ([2024/1233](#)), which aims to make procedures **simpler, faster, and more predictable** for employers and third-country nationals. For instance, Member States must issue the permits within 90 days (instead of 120). Also, single-permit holders gained the right to **change employer, job or sector**, simply by notifying the authorities (rather than applying for a brand-new permit).

- **Recognition of Qualifications of Third-Country Nationals ([C\(2023\) 7700](#))**

HOTREC supports efforts to improve and accelerate the recognition of qualifications from third-country nationals, in line with the [Commission Communication](#). Faster and clearer procedures would help businesses recruit legally and efficiently while ensuring fair treatment of workers.

- **Recognition of Long-Term Residents Directive**

HOTREC encourages EU legislators to reach an agreement on the revision of the Long-Term Residents Directive. Facilitating long-term residence for third-country workers would strengthen integration, stability, and retention in the labour market.

HOTREC Recommendation

- Member States should sign bilateral agreements with third countries to facilitate administrative procedures.
- Member States should implement the EU Talent Pool and promote the Talent Partnerships.
- Member States should implement all EU legislation and policy related to legal migration.

ANNEX I

Total Number of Employees Missing in the Hospitality Sector (2025 compared to 2022)

HOTREC Member / Country	Lack of labour at national level in the sector in 2022	Lack of labour at national level in the sector in 2025
Federalberghi & FIPE / Italy	250.000 employees missing	35.000 unfilled positions -> 3% of total workforce (1.170.000) missing
UMIH / France	200.000 employees lacking. On average, 50.000 unfilled positions each year	Estimate between 120.000 and 150.000 unfilled positions UMIH: More than 200.000 jobs unfilled in the hospitality and catering sector in France in 2024
HORESCA / Luxembourg	1.500 missing (8% of total employment)	+1.200 employees missing (+-5%)
HORESTA / Denmark	6.000 - 10.000 workers lacking	2.600 employees missing, out of 140.000 employees
WKO / Austria	33.000 employees missing	45.800 people missing, out of 232.000 positions
FIHR / Romania	24% (~42.000 employees)	25% missing (~50.500 employees)
HotellerieSuisse / Switzerland	7.749 job vacancies in the hospitality industry (hotels and gastronomy) in Q3 2022 (rate: 2,9%); total employees: 260.077	4.371 job vacancies in the hospitality industry (hotels and gastronomy) in Q3 2025 (rate: 1,6%); total employees: 269.658
CHA / Cyprus	7.000 unfilled positions (~25% of total workforce)	/
HCH / Greece	Almost 25% of total employees lacking (~55.000 jobs)	14% of total employees lacking (~36.145 jobs) out of 263.026 positions

AHR CR / Czechia	90.000 people missing, out of 270.000 positions	90.000 people missing, out of 270.000 positions
EHRL / Estonia	Around 30.000 people working in sector. On average 1/3 of staff was lost due to restrictions and lack of support measures	/
IGHP / Poland	40–50% of employees lacking (~55.000–60.000 employees)	10 -12% of employees lacking (14,000 - 17,000 employees). Total number of positions: ~140,000
IHF / Ireland	Hotels: 10% less employees (previously 70.000). Restaurants: lost 25.000 out of 40.000 employees	Accommodation and Food Services: 1,35% decline 2024-2025 Which 2.500 less employees – labour shortage (Q2 - 2024 - 184.800 employed vs Q2 2025 182.300)
LVRA / Lithuania	14.600 vacancies, 42.700 employed	47.371 employed, 5.500 free vacancies declared
MaRa / Finland	18.000 employees lacking, out of 83.900	6.300 employees lacking out of 90,000 i.e. 7 %
TGZS / Slovenia	15–20% of employees lacking (out of ~55.000 - 60.000 employees)	0-15% of employees lacking, out of 55.000 - 60.000 employees
UKHospitality / UK	174.000 employees missing	73.000 employees missing
UPUHH / Croatia	110,000 employed. High season requires 35.000–40.000 extra staff. 5.000–7.000 workers lacking	/
IHA / Germany	/	20.000 job vacancies
VISITA / Sweden	2022: 60% of the hotels experienced labour shortages and 38% of the restaurants	9% (hotels) 10% (restaurants) experience labour shortages, 200.000 employees in the sector

Norwegian Hospitality Association / Norway	Lack of chefs: 2.150 Lack of restaurant managers: 50 Lack of waiters: 1.400 Lack of receptionists: 100	Lack of chefs: 950 Lack of restaurant managers: 50 Lack of waiters: 750 Lack of receptionists: 50
AHRS / Slovakia	30.000 employees lacking	5.000 employees lacking
AHRL / Latvia	Catering: 24.200 employees Accommodation: 5600 employees	Q2 Catering: 28.400 employees Q2 Accommodation: 7.200 employees
APHORT / Portugal	19.468 employees lacking in a total of 950.307 (2,1%)* <small>*The numbers include restaurants, accommodation and other types of establishments such as retail</small>	18.764 employees lacking in a total of 1.046.679 (1,8%)*
HORECA Wallonie / Belgium	Q1: 9,5% (12.422) Q2: 7,9% (10.036) Q3: 7,8% (10.435) Q4: 8,2% (10.801)	Q1: 5,4% (7.068) Q2: 5,3% (6.900) Q3: 4,3% (5.623)

Nota Bene: Please note that all the above data was provided by
HOTREC member associations.

ANNEX II

Actions Developed at EU and National Level

In light of the significant labour and skills shortages affecting the sector, HOTREC and their members are actively engaged in initiatives to attract and retain the workforce.

Across Europe, companies and associations are implementing a wide range of measures, from communication campaigns to awareness-raising activities, education and training programmes, and social partner dialogue aimed at improving the sector's overall attractiveness.

The examples below illustrate the diverse actions taken at both EU and national level to support the sector's workforce and respond to current challenges.

Actions Developed at EU Level

HOTREC's Contribution to Addressing Skills and Labour Shortages

HOTREC has been actively engaged at European level in tackling labour and skills shortages and promoting a more attractive, resilient and future-proof hospitality sector. Through advocacy, social dialogue, and strategic participation in EU initiatives, HOTREC plays a central role in shaping policies that support both employers and workers.

- **Strong Advocacy on Skills and Labour Shortages to the EU Institutions:**

HOTREC has been highly vocal in EU policy debates concerning labour and skills shortages. This includes issuing dedicated position papers, coordinated messaging with member associations, and active interventions in public conferences, high-level panels and expert dialogues. In March 2024, HOTREC and EFFAT published a **Joint Declaration on Labour and Skills Shortages**, demonstrating a shared commitment to constructive and balanced solutions. This document has been widely disseminated both at EU and national level. This shows the importance of social dialogue at EU level.

- **Active Role in the Pact for Skills:**

HOTREC is a member of the **Pact for Skills Tourism Executive Board**, where it contributes directly to the design and implementation of EU-level training and skills development strategies. HOTREC provides input on key strategic orientations, participates actively in meetings and working groups, and ensures that the needs of SMEs are reflected in the Pact's priorities and actions. HOTREC is part of the new ERASMUS+ EU funded project: "FUTURE ALLIANCE".

- **Commitment to Strengthening the Sector’s Image and Promoting Health and Safety at the Workplace:**

HOTREC is a signatory of the **European multi-sectoral guidelines to prevent and tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work**. These guidelines support safer working environments and contribute to strengthening the sector’s public image by demonstrating a strong commitment to the protection and well-being of workers.

- **Supporting Knowledge Exchange among National Associations:**

HOTREC regularly gathers and disseminates good practices from its members on recruitment, training, inclusion and workforce retention. This supports peer learning, helps members design effective national initiatives, and contributes to a stronger and more coordinated European approach to labour and skills challenges.

Actions Developed at National Level

Education and Training Activities

- Broad range of **training courses** and strong cooperation with schools (Switzerland)
- **“TOP Training Company”** initiative: certification recognising training standards in Germany’s hotel and restaurant industry (Germany)
- **National Skills Strategy 2025**: strategy to align education and training with labour market needs (Ireland)
- VisitaAkademin: professional targeted training academy for hospitality businesses (Sweden)
- New course in **vocational school for tourism** (ITS) on the professional role of “Food & beverage management, marketing and communication” (FIPE/Italy)
- NHO Reiseliv Academy: **academy offering a wide range of courses**, helping businesses stay competitive, innovative and future-ready (Norway)

Case Study 1: Greek Education and Training Book (HCH – Hellenic Chamber of Hotels)

The [My Hospitality](#) programme aims to create the preconditions for introducing young pupils in the 2nd and 3rd grades of primary school to the concepts of hospitality, diversity, acceptance, innovative and eco-friendly business development in the hospitality industry, as well as to acquaint them with hospitality-related professions and the career opportunities they provide in Greece.



© HCH – Greece

The program is part of a wider skills workshop scheme under the “Create and Innovate” category and can be taught to grades 2 and 3 of primary school over a five- to seven-week period for two hours a week. It is now available to all schools in Greece. These activities will promote teamwork and a cooperative spirit, develop organisational thinking, and reward critical thinking, while also laying the foundations for the establishment of effective communication channels among students, but also between students and educators and the local community, as well as fostering discovery learning, among others.

- The My Hospitality programme aims to equip students not only with practical knowledge but also with key life, soft, and technological skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, adaptability, and empathy.
- It helps students understand the link between inclusion and hospitality.
- Ultimately, it encourages them to propose ways to foster a more sustainable, inclusive, and welcoming world.

Case Study 2: Scandic Hotels' Project “The Hotel Industry in Change” (VISITA / Sweden)

The European Social Fund has provided Scandic employees with funding to develop skills in areas such as Front Office and Conference, Housekeeping, and Food & Beverage, mainly through digital training.

The project has been completed and evaluated, and Scandic confirms it has created clear added value for both the company and its employees while strengthening the focus on skills development.



© Scandic Hotels

Digital formats and integrated language support made training more accessible, improved professional competence, and enhanced employees’ Swedish and digital skills. In total, 4.000 employees participated, completing around 31.400 training hours.

Scandic will continue offering these training programmes, as the need for ongoing skills development remains high. This includes onboarding training for new staff. Work is already underway to roll out these **digital courses** across all Scandic countries.

Raising Awareness

- **Communication campaigns** (“Get a job – Your chance in Tourism!”, “Talents for tourism”) (WKO/Austria).
- **Open days at hotels** for young people (Romania, Croatia, Switzerland).
- **Work and Skills Events** – recruitment events to connect employers with employees (IHF/Ireland).
- **[DM i Skills initiative](#) – championship** for young people in vocational education and training (HORESTA/Denmark).
- **“[Adjust to taste](#)”** – recruitment and branding campaign (Norwegian Hospitality Association/Norway) to attract young people (and other talent) to the food and restaurant industry.

Case Study 3: Pop-up Restaurant (UMIH / France)

The “**Pop-up Restaurant**” initiative, launched by UMIH in 2022, offers a hands-on recruitment experience by placing jobseekers selected by France Travail in real restaurant settings, both in the kitchen and dining room.

- Candidates prepare and serve meals to business-owner recruiters, who assess their skills, attitudes, and potential for employment or training.
- Designed as a one-day job-dating event, it takes place in Vocational Training Centres or restaurants and allows participants (regardless of their experience level) to explore hospitality careers in a practical environment.
- The initiative has gained strong momentum nationwide, with around forty events held during the third Tourism Professions Week in March 2025 and has received broad regional and national media attention for its innovative and effective approach to recruitment.
- **2024 results:** 48 events organised, 600 jobseekers involved, 350 businesses engaged.



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Its success relies on the collaboration of several key stakeholders:

- **France Travail:** identifies and supports motivated jobseekers exploring hospitality careers, helping them re-enter employment.
- **Selected candidates:** prepare and serve full menus, gaining real experience that can lead to training or jobs.
- **UMIH local branches:** connect participating restaurants with the initiative and coordinate employer involvement.
- **Training organisations (CFAs and UMIH restaurateurs):** host and supervise participants throughout the day.

The initiative embodies a win-win situation, as it strengthens ties between jobseekers and employers through authentic, practical work situations.

Case Study 4: German Kununu Experience (IHA + DEHOGA / Germany)



The **German Hotel Association** (IHA) and the employer review platform **Kununu** have announced in June 2022 a cooperative initiative aimed at strengthening the hotel industry's ability to attract and retain skilled workers. The partnership focuses on creating greater transparency regarding working conditions in German hotels. To achieve this, the initiative seeks to increase both the quantity and the quality of employer reviews by employees on the Kununu website, giving potential employees a more reliable basis for evaluating hotel employers.

A central component of the collaboration is the provision of practical support for hotel companies. Kununu will supply various materials and tools that help hotels motivate their employees to submit reviews. Additionally, the platform will offer a special webinar series tailored to the needs of hoteliers, covering best practices for handling employer feedback and making effective use of review platforms. Together, DEHOGA, IHA and Kununu aim to strengthen the industry's image, foster trust in employer branding, and help secure the next generation of skilled professionals.

Public Relations Activities

- **Social media presence** – engaging on different topics and sharing career stories (e.g. Romania, Denmark, Finland).
- Promotion of **career opportunities** within the tourism sector (Ireland, Denmark).
- **Digital marketing** campaign to promote the image of the sector (MaRa/Finland).

Social Partners Initiatives

- **Renegotiation of collective agreements** (e.g. France; Italy; Austria; Finland; Sweden) with a focus on minimum wages and working conditions.
- “EUD + Hotel & Restaurant”: **collaboration** between employers, trade union 3F, and vocational schools to better **align training with industry needs, modernise curricula, and offer more flexible apprenticeship models** (HORESTA/Denmark).

Human Resources Activities

- **Enhancing employee benefits** – offering flexible working hours, competitive wages, social events and opportunities for career progression (IHF/Ireland).
- **Structured HR systems** to boost retention and career growth (Denmark).

- Hospitality Code – a **HR training platform** designed for SMEs in hospitality (VISITA/Sweden).
- "Been around the block" – **employer branding** – due to population ageing, how to retain experienced employees and recruit new labour resources from other industries (Norway).
- **Seasonal Quota Regulation** – national measure allowing tourism employers to hire up to 5.500 foreign workers (WKO/Austria).

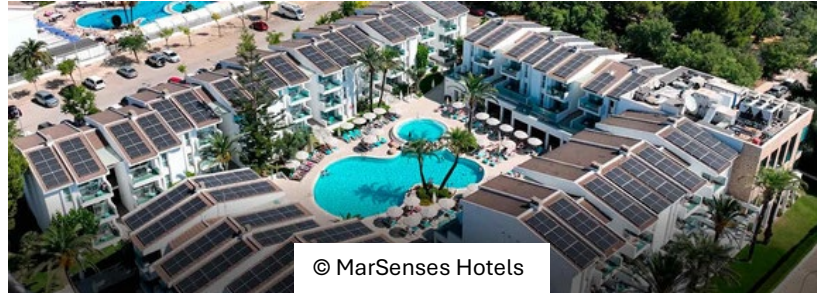
Other Activities

- "**Italy-Tunisia cooperation project**" – aimed at training and employing Tunisian personnel, as a strategic action to meet the needs of companies in the sector in terms of personnel qualifications and recruitment. A training programme is being developed in the EU with a view to enabling Tunisian workers to enter Italy. Specific agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour where set. The Italian embassy in Tunisia is playing a crucial role. (FIPE/Italy).

Multiple Activities

Case study 5: MarSenses Hotels & Homes (CEHAT / Spain)

Raising awareness: ensuring **gender diversity** within the company; taking actions to highlight diversity and inclusion efforts.



Public relations activities: collaboration with local associations (e.g. GREC, La Caixa Foundation) to promote social responsibility and inclusion.

Education and training activities: providing **cooking courses** for people at risk of social exclusion (e.g. ex-prisoners); creating a **school** in the production kitchens for training purposes.

Social partners activities: working with SOIB (Professional Guidance Service) to support the employment of marginalised individuals; partnership with GREC and La Caixa Foundation in social inclusion programs.

Human resources activities: recruitment and **integration of people** at risk of exclusion (e.g. former prisoners); **offering internships and job contracts** to trained individuals once eligible for employment.