wblchampion

Empowering students and educators for tomorrow's workplaces

WBL Champion Draws to a Close, Having Reached Educators and Employers Across Four Countries

Two years, four countries, one shared goal:
A look back as WBL Champion concludes...

On 31 August 2026, the WBL Champion project reached the end of its two-year Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership (KA220-HED, project number 2024-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000245540). The consortium brought together two higher education institutions and two SMEs across four EU member states: VITECO (Italy, coordinator), Knights College (Malta), Technological University Dublin (Ireland) and INOVA+ (Portugal), with Malta's National Skills Council taking part as associated partner. The project set out to close a persistent gap: Work-Based Learning has long been standard practice in vocational education and training, but higher education has been slower to adopt it, leaving graduates without the applied, workplace experience that employers increasingly expect.

Two Years of Results, and the Campaigns That Shared Them

In its final months, the project turned its attention to making sure two years of results reached the people who can put them to use. Between the second week of July and 31 August 2026, all four partners ran coordinated national social media campaigns to raise awareness of the three CPD courses, the Online Learning Platform and the QA Toolkit among higher education institutions, employers and workplace mentors. Each campaign shared a common methodology and messaging framework, adapted to that country's own stakeholder networks.

What the project delivered

Over its two years, WBL Champion delivered six outputs:

- The Final Country Report on National and EU WBL Policies: A comparative regulatory analysis across Malta, Italy, Portugal and Ireland, combining desk and field research into a common framework and recommendations for WBL in higher education.
- The Quality Assurance (QA) Toolkit: An assessment framework and best-practice guidelines for higher education institutions and industry partners to implement and assess WBL programmes to a consistent standard.
- Three CPD courses, developed and piloted for the people who make WBL work in practice, including HEI tutors, industry mentors and HEI administrative staff.
- The free Online Learning Platform, hosting the CPD courses and the QA Toolkit, and serving as the project's public website throughout its lifetime.
- Six redesigned higher education curricula embedding WBL, developed by Knights College and Technological University Dublin with input from industry, academics and students.
- Pilot testing of the redesigned micro-credentials and CPD courses with real tutors, mentors, HEI staff and students across all four partner countries, with their feedback used to refine the resources before final release.

The project's closing public moment

The project's final major public event was the WBL Champion Education Conference, held on 28 May 2026 in Malta under the theme 'From Insights to Impact: Pioneering Work-Based Learning and Digital Transformation'. Its keynote address came from Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, alongside Malta's Minister for European Funds and a range of academic, industry and policy speakers, genuine third-party validation for a project of this scale.

What the campaigns set out to do

Each national campaign was built around the same four objectives: driving qualified traffic to the WBL Digital Platform; raising awareness and uptake of the WBL Framework and Online Learning Resources, the QA Toolkit and the CPD programmes; positioning WBL Champion as a practical European reference point for Work-Based Learning; and engaging industry and education stakeholders as active users of the project's outputs, not passive readers of a newsletter.

Who the campaigns targeted

The primary audience was SMEs and employer representatives, workplace mentors and industry tutors, and HR managers and training coordinators: the people most directly responsible for hosting and supporting WBL placements. A secondary audience of higher education institutions, careers offices and quality assurance bodies, and a tertiary audience of chambers of commerce, policy stakeholders and education networks, extended the campaigns' reach.

How the campaigns were run

Each partner ran its campaign through its own channels (principally LinkedIn, with Facebook and Instagram as secondary channels), supported by targeted email outreach through institutional and chamber mailing lists, and cross-promotion with partner organisations. The approach followed a shared four-pillar structure across all four countries: building awareness of the project and the platform, communicating the value of its resources to employers, tutors and HEIs, encouraging direct engagement and converting that engagement into real adoption.

Why it matters

For SMEs and employers

The campaigns gave SMEs and employers a direct, low-effort way to discover free tools, the QA Toolkit and mentor CPD course in particular, that make hosting a WBL placement more straightforward and effective.

For higher education institutions

The campaigns gave institutions visibility to a set of resources (CPD courses, a QA Toolkit, and a comparative policy report) that they can adopt without the cost of building them independently.

For the wider WBL community

The campaigns are a coordinated, cross-border demonstration, whereby the same messaging and methodology can be adapted across four different national contexts while still speaking to local audiences.

For the Erasmus+ programme

The campaigns are evidence of a project meeting its dissemination and exploitation commitments, reaching beyond the consortium itself to the wider network of institutions and employers the project set out to serve.

European Added Value

We deliberately ran four campaigns on a shared methodology, rather than four unrelated ones. A common messaging framework, shared KPIs and a joint reporting template mean the project's reach can be understood at a European level, not only country by country. That is the point of an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership: results that add up to more than four separate national efforts.

Looking Ahead

Not an ending, a handover

WBL Champion's funded period has closed, having delivered its full set of committed outputs, but the four partners are not treating that as a full stop. Each institution has committed to continuing to embed Work-Based Learning within its own practice beyond the life of the funded project, including in how it engages government bodies, other higher education institutions, and SMEs and industry partners.

The relationships the project built over its two years, with MFHEA, Malta's Ministry for European Funds, the National Skills Council, the Malta Digital Innovation Authority, Deloitte, Konnekt, Eurochambres, the Malta Business Bureau, EduAlliance, the University of Malta and Dublin City University among them, continue beyond the grant.

Further EU funding

The consortium intends to explore further EU funding to scale this work beyond the current four partner countries.

A peer-reviewed publication

The partners also intend to publish the project's findings as a peer-reviewed article, building on the Final Country Report on National and EU WBL Policies and the desk and field research already carried out across the four countries.

As the project's funded period ends, we encourage everyone who has followed WBL Champion to:

- Explore everything the project produced, including the **Final Country Report**, the QA Toolkit and the CPD courses **platform, wbl-champion.eu,**
- If you haven't already, complete one of the three **CPD courses** or apply the **QA Toolkit** within your own organisation.
- Share the **platform** with colleagues, partner institutions or employers who could put its resources to use. It remains open after the project's formal end.

Thank you for being a part of it

Two years ago, four organisations from four countries set out to make Work-Based Learning easier to deliver well: for the coordinators who organise it, the supervisors and mentors who guide it, and the students who learn through it. WBL Champion's funded period has now come to an end, but the resources it produced remain freely available. On behalf of the consortium: thank you to everyone who took part, hosted a placement, attended the Education Conference, completed a CPD course, or simply followed along. The project closes, but the work it supports continues.

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Co-funded by the European Union

WBL Champion (Work Based Learning Champion) was a two-year Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership (KA220-HED project number 2024-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000245540) bringing together VITECO SRL (Italy, coordinator), INOVA+ Innovation Services SA (Portugal), Knights College, operating as Central Mediterranean Business School Ltd (Malta), and Technological University Dublin (Ireland), with Malta's National Skills Council as associated partner. The project championed Work-Based Learning as a route to closing the skills gap between higher education and the labour market, producing a shared policy framework, a Quality Assurance Toolkit, three CPD courses, six redesigned higher education curricula and a free online platform for WBL practitioners across the EU.

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