

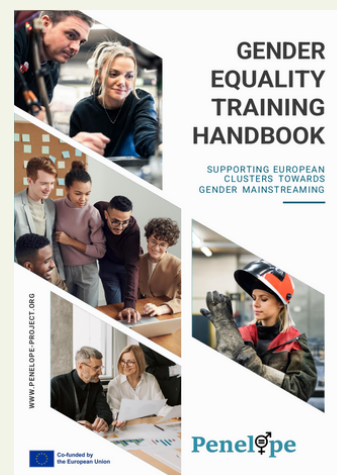
NEWSLETTER #3

CLUSTER-BASED APPROACH TO INTEGRATE GENDER
MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES IN EUROPEAN SMES

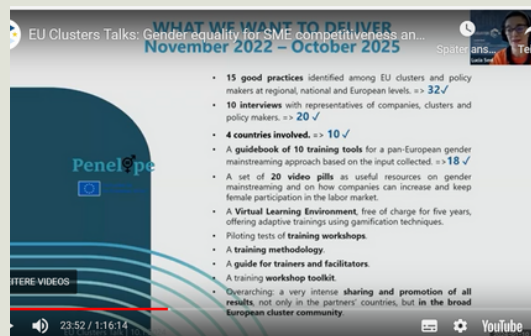
OUR GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING HANDBOOK BECOMES ITSELF A GOOD PRACTICE IN EUROPE!

Being a pioneer action, with its collection of good practices, interviews and development of a toolbox supporting companies towards gender mainstreaming, the PENELOPE 'Gender Equality Training Handbook: Supporting European Clusters Towards Gender Mainstreaming' has soon become a point of reference in the cluster community. In fact, between mid-February and mid-May 2024, it has been downloaded a whopping 273 times!

An intense promotion has also been done on social media, on our [LinkedIn profile](#) (with already 240+ followers) and on various other external media ([Austrian National Cluster Platform](#), [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#), newsletters, among others).



The handbook was introduced by our representative Lucia Seel in avant-première on January 2024 at the **EU Clusters Talks** organised by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform in a session dedicated to "Gender Equality for SME competitiveness and sustainability", with more than 90 registered participants. You can watch the recording of the event [here](#).



[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE HANDBOOK](#)

Our work was promoted as well to several European associations of women through an online event organised by the **EWMD Network** under the Brussels Declaration initiative. On 31 January, our representative Raquel Ortega Martínez presented in detail to 50 registered participants the practical toolkit for gender mainstreaming and answered the questions that followed afterward.



On 8 May, during the largest ever **European Cluster Conference** that took place in Brussels with more than 500 participants, during the session dedicated to “Shared Value Through Clusters” gathering more than 120 persons in the room, our representative Mirela Greti Puiu introduced the PENELOPE Handbook as well as the upcoming activities on our agenda. During the conference, our flyers increased the visibility of the project, and we will continue to show our presence in the newly created LinkedIn Group “Shared Value Through Clusters”.

OUR NEXT ACTIONS

We entered the second phase of the PENELOPE Project which is dedicated to delivering a new **video toolkit on gender equality strategies for SMEs** that help them in building a gender-inclusive company culture. This toolkit will support them in developing their own internal strategies to solve potential gender inequities in the workplace, contributing to the basis of broad-based, long-term, and substantial reforms within the European SMEs landscape.

The creative work is under progress, and we are busy to finalise it by the summer in order to let it flow into the upcoming **Virtual Learning Environment**, an e-learning platform allowing cluster practitioners and SMEs to access free of charge after registration all materials from any type of devices. Stay tuned!

WE PUT UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT OUR INTERVIEWEES!

As in our past newsletter, we take pride to present you our series of 20 interviews with personalities from the clusters and networks world: cluster managers, cluster policy makers or network leaders in various European countries.

We learned from their experiences about the challenges encountered when it comes to creating gender equality, what levers are seen as possible to induce change towards a more gender-balanced and inclusive approach in companies, and about their personal motivation to support gender equality.



**MASSIMILIANO
RUMIGNANI,**
PROJECT MANAGER AT
AMBIT

"GENDER EQUALITY CAN REPRESENT A DRIVER OF EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION THAT COMPANIES IN THE SECTOR NEED TO PRESERVE AND INCREASE THEIR COMPETITIVENESS. I THINK THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE SECTOR TWIN TRANSITION (GREEN AND DIGITAL) CAN SUPPORT THE DEPLOYMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY APPROACHES AND POLICIES".

THE FULL INTERVIEW CAN BE READ [HERE](#).



**ANDREA
LUCIANA MARCU,**
MANAGER OF THE CENTER FOR
CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND
TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION
AT THE DANUBIUS UNIVERSITY

"IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED THAT WHEN THE WORK TEAMS ARE MADE UP OF BOTH FEMALE AND MALE PERSONS, IN A BALANCED NUMBER, THE SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED IN SOLVING THE CHALLENGES ARE MUCH MORE CREATIVE".

THE FULL INTERVIEW CAN BE READ [HERE](#).



**CAMILLE
ESQUERRÉ,**
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE
CLUSTER MECANIC VALLÉE

"THE ROLE OF THE CLUSTER IS REALLY TO LEAD THE NETWORK, PROVIDE INFORMATION AND RAISE AWARENESS. AS MECANIC VALLÉE HAS BEEN RUNNING THESE COLLECTIVE AWARENESS-RAISING INITIATIVES FOR A LONG TIME, WE CAN SEE THAT THEY HAVE A REAL KNOCK-ON EFFECT, IN PARTICULAR WHEN COMPANIES ARE FACING RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES".

THE FULL INTERVIEW CAN BE READ [HERE](#).



PÄIVI EKDAHL,
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AT
REGIONAL COUNCIL OF
LAPLAND

"WE SEE DIGITALIZATION, INDUSTRY 4.0, AS ONE OF THE KEY SOLUTIONS IN INCREASING THE INTEREST OF WOMEN TOWARDS BASIC INDUSTRIES. VIA DIGITIZATION OF FACTORIES AND THE TASKS THAT TRADITIONALLY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AS "MALE-TASKS", IT IS POSSIBLE TO RAISE THE INTEREST OF WOMEN".

THE FULL INTERVIEW CAN BE READ [HERE](#).