



Public Scholarship, Development,
Disability and Maintenance
Fund of the Republic of Slovenia

KOC 3.0 Competence Centers for Human Resources Development



TOGETHER FOR GREATER
COMPETITIVENESS

Authors: Karin Sulič, Barbara Flakus, Nejc Ojsteršek, David Kastelec
and Vladimir Milovanović

Photographies: private archive and Competence centers' archive

Proofreading: Meta Kožuh, Paul Steed, Amidas., d. o. o.

Publisher: Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and
Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia

Design: Birografika Bori, d. o. o.

Ljubljana, November 2022

Cobiss ID
Zapis CIP

Kataložni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni
in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

COBISS.SI-ID 130876163
ISBN 978-961-96046-1-8 (PDF)

FOREWORD



mag. Barbara Leder,
Director

I am proud and happy to have co-created the success story of the Competence Centres for Human Resources Development: (*Kompetenčni centri za razvoj kadrov - KOC*), and to have been involved in it from the beginning, back in 2010. After 12 years of implementation, we have exceeded all our original expectations and objectives, since the stakeholders have recognised the programme's quality. Evidence of this is the many encouraging responses from employers and, above all, the excellent results of the programme.

During this time, we have supported 46 competence centres which have involved almost a thousand Slovenian companies, with more than 100,000 participants in various training programmes to date.

The secret of this success lies in partnerships and alliances between companies in related industries, which also lead to joint training sessions and education tailored to their needs and enable the strengthening of specific competencies.

The programme has helped improve the competitive positions of individual companies and the economy, and the positions of employees in the labour market.

Every company can become a team of successful, creative and satisfied individuals who constantly push the boundaries of development and co-create stories of success, provided that we continuously train them and take care of their development.

And since today all good stories have sequels, we have been working and preparing everything for the programme of competence centres to continue as soon as possible. I am confident that all the lessons learned will help us achieve our goals even faster, and that they will have even more significant impacts.

My thanks also go to the entire team, the employees of the programme who worked hard to provide the best support for businesses.

What are Competence Centres?

Competence Centres for Human Resources Development (KOC) are partnerships of companies from the same sector or priority area as defined in the Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy S4. These partnerships bring together businesses of all sizes – micro, small, medium-sized and large. The idea of establishing competence centres emerged more than ten years ago, with the first KOC being set up in 2011.

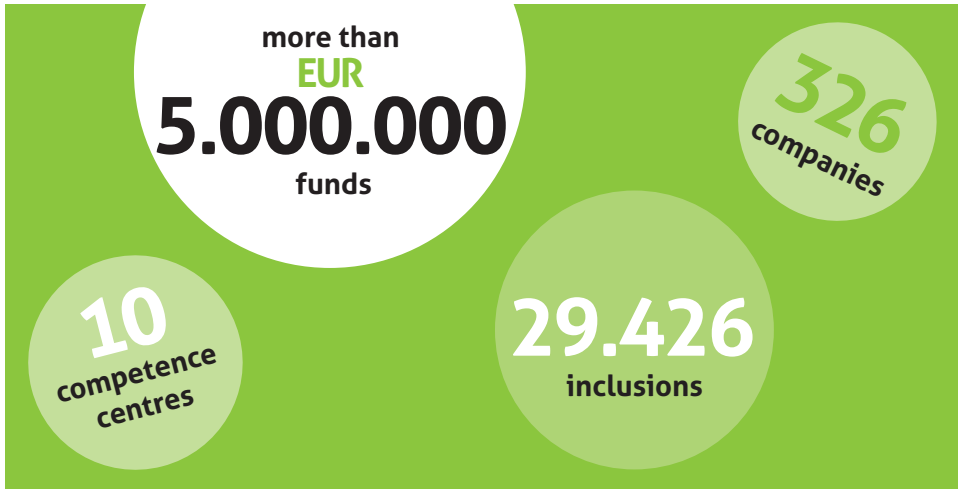
KOC 3.0 is the continuation of KOC 2.0 implemented from 2016 to 2019. Under the KOC 3.0 programme, a public invitation to tender for the establishment and operation of Competence Centres for Human Resources Development 2019–2022 was launched. Ten KOC partnerships were selected, involving 326 companies, of which 186 were small and medium-sized enterprises. The partnerships covered all nine verticals and the horizontal of the Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy S4:

- **KOC Circular Economy** (Networks for the transition to the circular economy)
- **KOC Food 2** (Sustainable Food Production)
- **KOC ICT**
- **KOC Sustainable Tourism II**
- **KOC INOVATIS** (Smart Buildings and Homes Including Wood Chain)
- **KOC AS** (Health and Medicine)
- **KOC MAT 2.0** (Development of Materials as End Products)
- **KOC LOGINS** (Mobility)
- **KOC ENERGY** (Smart Cities and Communities)
- **KOC TOP** (Factories of the Future)

An overall budget of EUR 5,262,255.12 was earmarked for the establishment and functioning of the competence centres. The utilisation rate was 98%, or EUR 5,156,229.80.

The envisaged objective was 15,000 inclusions into training programmes. By the end of the programme, 29,426 inclusions were achieved, representing a 196.17% utilisation rate.

In addition to their core activities, i.e. the training of employees in partner companies, the competence centres carried out a range of other activities, from promoting lifelong learning and the KOC programme, working with external stakeholders in promoting companies and industries to young people, to organising a wide range of training sessions.



Companies committed within KOC 3.0 to deliver at least 10 joint training events, i.e. training events organised by the KOC project office for partner companies of that KOC or for other interested companies. Moreover, some KOCs implemented additional programmes or established contacts with companies in Slovenia or abroad in the KOC's field of activity, further connecting partner companies and offering them new content.

Much of the success of the KOCs relies on project offices that manage these partnerships. The project office is made up of one to three companies which, as a first step before applying for the tender, bring together the selected companies (called partner companies) within one of the competence centres which they then manage administratively and creatively throughout the project. From the start, project offices were set up and run by large companies, given that they had already developed both human resources and financial capacities. Most small and many medium-sized enterprises have no or poorly developed HR departments and lack experience in HR development. As a result of this, large companies can offer, in cooperation with smaller ones, their solutions and experience to facilitate the introduction of certain well-established or new concepts in HR development. However, the same applies in reverse. Small companies are much more flexible and can try out new HR approaches more easily, giving large companies the opportunity to see how useful specific approaches are before introducing them themselves.

The following pages present individual competence centres and some of their achievements during the tender implementation.

Competence Centres introduce themselves

KOC Circular Economy



The main focus of the competence centre was the development of circular economy competences. The concept of the circular economy model is based on natural systems where each component optimally complements the whole. The essence of the circular economy model is that from the start all materials, products and processes are planned and designed so that there is no or as little waste as possible. In this context a successful transition requires investments in the key competences of employees who are directly involved in the business processes relevant for the change from a linear to a circular economy.

into their business environment. The internal structure of companies was strengthened through informal training formats, thus improving their performance on the market and competitiveness of the Slovenian economy in the key area of the Smart Specialisation Strategies S4 – Networks for the Transition to a Circular Economy.

The long-term objectives of the partnership were: providing knowledge and skills through the competences of the future to increase the flexibility and performance of employees; raising awareness among employees and employers in the partnership of the importance of lifelong learning in the field of the circular economy with a long-term environmental, economic and social impact; bringing together the members of the partnership and promoting the transfer of good practices in human resources development; helping enhance the competitiveness and innovation of the Slovenian economy; and contributing to addressing the relevant gaps in competences in real work environments and the further development of such competences.



The KOC Circular Economy partnership involved 27 companies whose long-term goal was to introduce a circular business model

The joint training sessions developed in the project office with the staff from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina and the Cham-



ber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska targeted core skills and competences which they coordinated with the partner companies. Due to the diversity of the industries and partners involved, the identification of a topic that would cater to the needs, interests and preferences of the majority of partners occasionally posed a challenge. The thematic clusters covered by the joint training sessions were: circular business models, digitalisation and digital literacy, introducing changes in the business environment, material and energy efficiency, the use of different materials, waste management and the preparation of secondary raw materials. The selection of these clusters aimed to ensure the highest possible participation of employees from Slovenian companies seeking a successful transition to a circular economy.

The project period was also marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a significant challenge for the partner companies, as it was for many others in Slovenia and worldwide, as they focused on the activities needed to implement occupational safety and employment preservation measures. During this period, the project office observed an increasing need for im-

proved digital literacy among employees, and more interest in the skills that build on those in the fields of strategic orientation, change management and leadership. Rapid repositioning of the priority competences enabled further staff development by the partner companies and the use of the newly acquired knowledge and skills as a support tool to overcome the challenges raised by the pandemic.

Given the complexity of the topic, such as the transition to a circular economy model, and the various challenges confronted within the partnership, the competence centres were more than welcome since they offered the partners the activities and content tailored to the wishes and needs of the employers, and represented an excellent support link in the design and creation of new strategies, eco-design and other elements necessary for the transition from a linear to a circular business model. The project office believes that its systematic approach to human resources development and cooperation with the partners improved the competencies, productivity, creativity and innovation of the partnership's employees and enhanced the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy.

KOC Food 2

The KOC Food 2 Competence Centre for Human Resources Development was set up to integrate the knowledge and skills of three sectors: the agro-food, chemical and paper, and paper processing industries.

The knowledge hub was in the field of food contact packaging. On one side are manufacturers of packaging (chemical and paper industry), while on the other side is the agro-food industry as a user of the packaging produced. The complexity of the challenges in these industries led them to come together to form a common Competence Centre for Human Resources Development. The partnership consisted of 35 companies, i.e. 17 large enterprises, 11 medium-sized enterprises and eight small enterprises. KOC Food 2 was closely linked to the work of the Strategic Research and Innovation Partnership for Priority Area S4 Sustainable Food Production (SRIP FOOD). This enabled the partner companies to directly connect with the activities in the five focus areas of SRIP FOOD (raw materials and the sustainable use of resources; smart process planning and process control; advanced equipment and technologies for food production and processing; hygiene, food safety and quality; and food, nutrition and consumers).

The competences developed in the partner companies were associated with professional skills, marketing, knowledge of legislation, sustainability and eco-design, soft skills and knowledge transfer. When it comes to investing in employees, the project office also promoted equality by instructing partner companies to invest in all employee profiles – from senior management staff to production workers.

The ties between the companies were also apparent in joint training sessions, in particular with a training package entitled the Food Contact Packaging Academy delivered to the companies by the project office. The six-day academy of more than 20 experts from various institutions, companies and universities shared the latest knowledge in packaging-related fields. It proved very relevant and useful and was repeated in 2022. We hope to continue the activities under the academy after the end of the KOC 3.0 programme. This training was selected as an example of good practice, and was presented at an Edutainment event where the future of competences and training was discussed. It was also presented as an example of good practice in the KOC project at the annual conference of the Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund in Laško in 2022.

In cooperation with SRIP FOOD, a Human Resources Development (HRD) Committee was established during the lifetime of the project to strategically address human resources in the agro-food sector. The committee continues to meet regularly to deal with the human resources challenges faced by agro-food companies.

Despite the challenges and ambitious objectives, the constant encouragement, information and individual approach to the partner companies and the consideration of their needs resulted in a satisfactory result for the partnership. All stakeholders expressed their wish for further similar activities that Slovenia and the European Union could offer through the European Social Fund.

“KOC Food 2 project has connected businesses with research and educational institutions. Cooperation between them contributed to improved synergy, concrete solutions and implementation of new products.”

Matej Kirn, Head of the KOC Food 2 Competence Centre for Human Resources Development

The graphic features a green horizontal bar at the top. Below it are logos for 'Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije', 'Evropski sklad za regionalni razvoj in podjetništvo' (European Regional Development Fund), 'REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA MINISTRSTVO ZA DELO, INICIJATIVE SOCIALNE ZADANE IN ENAKOSTI', and 'EVROPSKA UNIJA SKLAD ZA REGIONALNI RAZVOJ'. The main logo is 'KOC HRANA 2' with a stylized 'K' containing a fork and a spoon, and '2' with a gear. Below it is the text 'Kompetenčni center za razvoj kadrov'. The central text reads '3S panog do novih kompetenc'. Below this is an illustration of a production line with icons for a fork, a plate, a fork, a beaker, a cube, a machine, and a head with gears. A green bar at the bottom contains the hashtags '# znanje', '# sodelovanje', and '# razvoj'. At the very bottom are logos for 'Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije' and 'ppgz' (Zbornica kmetijskih in živalskih podjetij), and logos for 'Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije' and 'Združenje kmetijske industrije', and 'Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije' and 'Združenje papirne in papirno predelovalne industrije'. A small text at the bottom of the dark bar reads 'Projekt KOC HRANA 2 sofinancirata Republika Slovenija in Evropska unija iz Evropskega socialnega sklada.'

KOC ICT

The KOC ICT project brought together 30 high-tech companies providing advanced solutions to the domestic and world markets.

During the project implementation, 266 training sessions related to the development of soft skills were held, and 203 training sessions focusing on the development of professional skills were delivered. In total, 385 training sessions were held and 2,273 inclusions were achieved.

The competences strengthened most within the project were: ICT skills, cybersecurity, leadership competences, soft skills, sales skills and others. After the declaration of the COVID-19 epidemic, they scaled up soft skills training. In an unpredictable situation, they reacted quickly and took advantage of online training sessions that would otherwise have taken place abroad, and would therefore have been harder to attend.

It was the first of all the KOC to organise a HACKATHON in 2020 – Without People, only Computers are Left – for the KOC ICT Consortium partner companies. They were seeking answers to the human resources challenges of today. They focused on the following issues:

how can we be (better) when looking for new staff, how can we (better) motivate teams, how can we (better) reward teams and individuals, how can we build (more) accountability and ownership, how can we build a (better) mentoring system.

They designed a continuous training programme of HR training meetings. The meetings focus on HR, and are aimed at sharing best practices between partner companies and external experts. Project partners learn about modern HR practices, which also help them upgrade their own HR systems. These meetings are also designed to bring together HR professionals from partner companies.

A video was produced to inform the public with a collection of highlights from the training sessions, outlining the project objectives and results. Available at: <https://www.koc-ikt.si/predstavitev-projekta>.

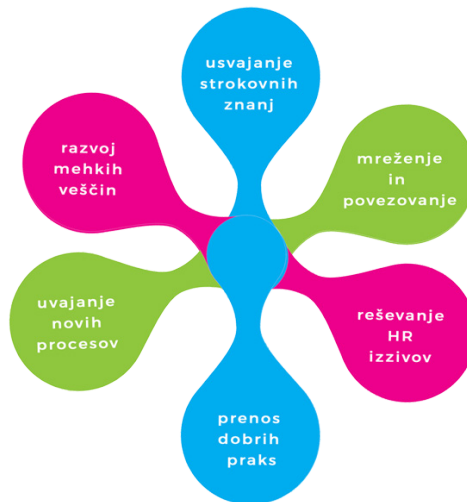
“Technological areas are an extremely fast-developing sector. That’s why it’s vital for companies operating in this sector to invest in the development of our employees and thus contribute to better performance. Participation in the KOC project is important for our company for two main reasons. The effect



was twofold; our cooperation enabled us to co-finance and thus participate in a number of useful training courses crucial for our development. On the other hand, regular networking with partners allowed us to get familiar with and learn

from the diverse good practices of other companies.”

Katja Dolinar, Head of People and Culture at Cosylab d.d.



KOC Tourism II



Despite all the difficulties, the partnership held training sessions in specialist and soft skills, thus successfully pursuing the project's objectives together with its partners.

Given the project's objectives, the partnership wanted to continue promoting the results of the Competence Centre for Sustainable Tourism I within which it had established a basic competence model for the sector and a national training centre for staff to ensure the project's consistent quality and sustainable re-

sults. Soft skills training sessions were held in parallel, which had a positive impact on understanding and working in companies, resulting in lasting wellbeing and good relationships among employees.

With the aim of bringing together partners in the field of human resources development, the second online professional KOC conference was organised: The future of competence development to guarantee guest satisfaction – the impact of pandemics and digitalisation on





competence development in tourism. The focus was on strengthening digital competences in the hospitality and tourism sectors. A number of speakers from different fields of work presented themselves and shared their impressions on the topic.

Competence improvement mainly focused on change management and pro-

cess organisation, tourism expertise, strengthening sales skills in tourism and soft skills. The training also addressed the strengthening of managerial competences, employee and customer relations and digital marketing.

KOC Learning Minutes – publication of short training videos on specific topics in hospitality and tourism.

KOC INOVATIS

The Competence Centre for Human Resources Development for Innovative Buildings – KOC INOVATIS was designed and set up within the third generation of competence centres to accelerate the reduction of the shortage of key competences in the workforce of the companies in the “Smart buildings and homes including wood chain”, to strengthen the ties between companies, to promote the exchange of good practices in human resources development and promote a lifelong approach to training. This helped improve the qualifications of the staff in companies, and the competitiveness and

innovation of employees, companies and the Slovenian economy.

The KOC INOVATIS partnership (2019–2022) built on the partnership of the Competence Centre for a Sustainable Future (2013–2015) and the Competence Centre for Human Resources Development in Modern Sustainable Construction (2016–2019) and brought together 28 partners (23 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and five large enterprises).

The project’s objective was achieved, i.e. the setting up and functioning of the



KOC INOVATIS Competence Centre within which the skills in specific posts in companies involved in the partnership improved.

They identified 20 key competences and developed and conducted a joint training programme. They enabled partners to gain insight into key areas and thus be more motivated to take up in-depth training in these fields.

Targeted training sessions were the key activity to develop selected key competences. The project had a target of at least 1,500 entrants to training, specialisation, additional qualifications and retraining programmes, which was exceeded, resulting in more than 2,500 participants in more than 550 training courses.

All indicators representing the criteria for project performance evaluation were met and, in many cases, even exceeded. The partners gave a very positive assessment of the project and its achievements. Many partners indicated very tangible improvements supported by the project.

Upon the completion of the project, an expert meeting entitled Smart Buildings and Ideal Living Environments was held, which was attended by teachers of secondary technical schools and other teaching staff of secondary and vocational education in this field, experts from the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, and other experts from relevant educational programmes (electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science and informatics, mecha-



tronics, civil engineering, environmental protection and nature conservation, etc.). Based on specific training sessions in the field and with the help of external experts, they drafted an elective module at the level of secondary professional education for different programmes.

KOC INOVATIS met the expectations of the companies. They were supported in acquiring knowledge and skills and could attend numerous and varied training sessions, but the main contribution was the knowledge gained with the possibility of further upgrading it. KOC stimulated them to invest in their employees through training more than they otherwise would have been able to.

“In our opinion, the Competence Centre project is one of the best projects to promote competence development in companies. There are at least two aspects in support of continuous project imple-

mentation. The co-financing of training allowed us to cooperate and network with companies with which we shared costs and could therefore afford to engage top experts for training.”

Dean Besednjak, Kronoterm, d.o.o.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the KOC project. By being involved in it, we acquired the necessary skills in leadership, cooperation and networking through various training sessions, workshops, meetings and guidance. These benefited us in terms of changes in the workforce within the company and inter-departmental networking. Our employees are happy to take language courses, which means we have put in place a good communication structure and can penetrate foreign markets.”

Tjaša Tušar, M Sora, d.d.



KOC AS



The Health and Medicine Competence Centre (KOC AS) was the first KOC to focus on companies active within elderly care (active ageing). The partnership brought together 34 companies – 21 residential care homes, 11 elderly care providers and a provider of digital solutions – to form a partnership that delivers a large part of elderly care services. They covered the whole of Slovenia.

Active and healthy ageing was centred on the challenges of dementia, care, and treatment, and was the main focus and challenge of the partnership. Active ageing also relies on the skills of management and operational personnel who make it possible through various forms of care and support. Residential care homes and home care service providers were important resources for achieving the target, as well as an opportunity to create new jobs and develop new services.

One of the project's objectives was to address the shortage of staff in the social care sector and tackle turnover, which creates a challenge for the partners to provide fast and quality induction training for new staff.

The main cooperation activities were:

- Integration into training programmes, transfer of practices within the sector,

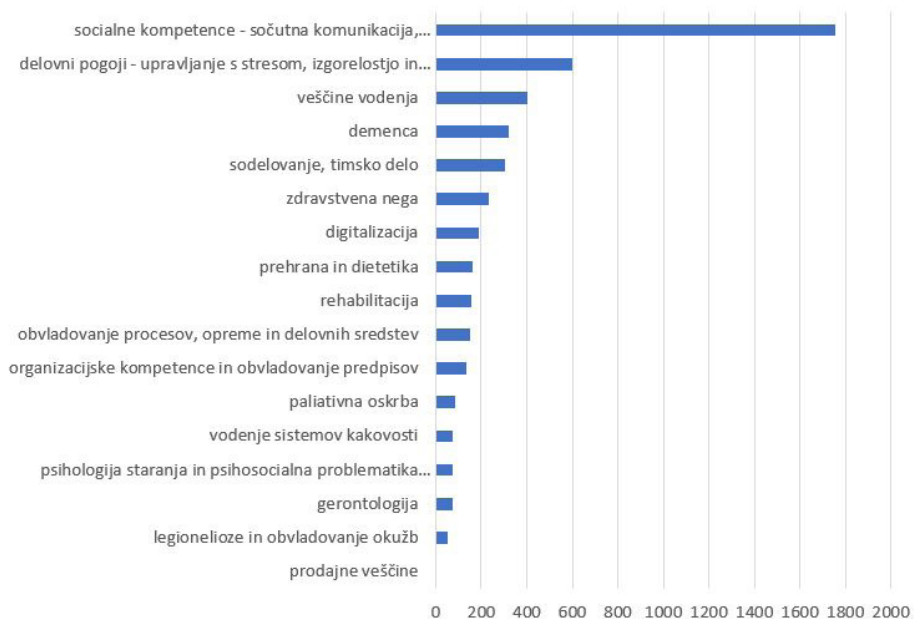
the promotion of project activities;

- Training programmes were tailored to the needs of staff represented in all partners in key posts (paramedics, nurses, carers, physiotherapists, cooks, palliative care specialists, home care providers, etc.) acting jointly in the interest of improving the lives of the elderly;
- At the partnership level, there was an increase in the transfer of knowledge and experience, and the upgrading of existing working practices in different workplaces;
- The project certainly had an impact on both the staff (through their skills, attitudes and competences) and the end-users of the services – the residents and their relatives.

They also developed social skills – compassionate communication, conflict management, working conditions and stress management – as well as strictly professional competences, such as infection control, rehabilitation and nursing and the palliative care of residents.

The need to integrate social skills became apparent in employees since they were exhausted and on the verge of burn-out. Training and a short break from work

Št. vključitev po kompetencah



was a way of rewarding them. The social skills thus gained also helped them cope better with stress, burnout, etc.

During the lifetime of the project, more than 500 training sessions were held, of which 19 were joint sessions focusing on dementia, nursing, compassionate communication and digitalisation, and infection control.

This was followed by the training in the field of management, especially on how to manage staff during an epidemic. More than 130 providers took part. KOC AS exceeded its inclusion target by about 100%. Out of a target of 2,451 inclu-

sions, the project managed to achieve more than 4,800 inclusions of 2,033 employees in the partnership, despite the epidemic. Most of inclusions related to social competences. In addition to the achieved measurable objectives, they developed very good relationships, helped each other, successfully spread awareness of the importance of lifelong learning and thus laid solid foundations for further cooperation.

The added value of the project was the building of competences that health professionals do not usually acquire, although in practice these competences prove to be essential. Special mention

should be made of competences and skills in dealing with people, coping with changes in work environments, emotional intelligence and empathy. A wide variety of content made it possible for partners to reduce the gap in the level of care development and draft programmes for new competences. The selection of competences supported the partners' key objectives: ensuring quality of care, reducing infections and injuries, and increasing the level of independence.

All partners were very satisfied with their participation in the project. As a result of their involvement in the KOC AS project and the co-financing, the partners had the opportunity to train a large number of staff involved in high-quality in-house training with outstanding lecturers. Training programmes were tailored to the needs of staff in key posts, which had a

positive impact on both staff and residents, and ultimately on their families. The involvement in the project was certainly an opportunity, a possibility and a motivation to improve the quality of work, the efficiency of processes and interpersonal relations.

"Without the co-financing and support from the KOC AS project, we would not have been able to 'afford' all these high-quality in-house training sessions and excellent lecturers alongside the not-for-profit work we do. The learners recognised this, expressed a high level of satisfaction and evaluated the content and delivery of the training positively. Thank you for all your support, counselling and coaching. We look forward to our cooperation in the future."

Romana Kavčič, DU Idrija



KOC MAT 2.0

KOC MAT 2.0

The KOC MAT 2.0 project brings together 11 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and 22 large enterprises, all of which are active in three areas within SRIP MATPRO: the metalworking industry, multi-components and coatings, and ICT. The partner companies employ more than 6,000 people. At the start of the project, they presented, together with the partners in SRIP MATPRO, a list of 20 competences whose development was the focus of the project.

The primary purpose of KOC MAT 2.0 was to bring together companies in the field of employee competence development, to carry out joint training sessions in priority areas (efficient material development, digitalisation of processes, automation and robotisation, and the improvement of process and product quality), thereby raising the core competences of employees and ensuring growth in value added per employee, revenue volume and jobs in the metalworking and multicomponent industries.

By increasing competences, they acquired the knowledge and skills to introduce the systems of production management and technological development. The main activities and areas of cooperation were: the organisation of training sessions to present and transfer the existing practices in the fields of digitalisation, automa-

tion and robotisation; the development of a new, permanent training programme; cost optimisation through the organisation of joint training sessions to acquire the necessary competences of employees in key posts; and the participation of partners' representatives in the preparation of occupational standards.

The deliverables and outputs of the project were: increasing the skills of employees, reducing skills shortage in the fields of process digitisation, automation and robotics, and ensuring the programme sustainability by linking it with secondary schools and faculties, among others. The primary project objective was achieved through the development and implementation of a new training programme in the field of digitisation and automation (expert in project introduction and management in the field of digitisation and automation of production processes), which strengthened both specialist and soft skills. The programme consisted of 50 hours of training and 10 modules. Two modules involved cooperation with Siemens and its presentation of the deployment of technology solutions in companies. Employees from all partner companies took part in individual modules.

During the project implementation, they managed to exceed all the indicators.



Together with the project partners, they delivered almost 200 more training sessions than planned. The partners opted for cheaper training sessions than planned, which led to a higher number of training sessions delivered and more inclusions than planned. Despite the epidemiological situation and the ban on live training, the number of inclusions exceeded the target by 44%, or 888 inclusions. At the same time, 1,480 employees received training, representing a quarter of all employees in the consortium companies. All partner companies were involved in the training programme. Various training courses developed key competences in lean manufacturing, and technical expertise, managerial skills, sales and procure-

ment skills, assertive communication, and competences in digitalisation, sustainable development and the circular economy.

At the end of the project they found that competences related to technology, production processes and procedures were most frequently the focus of training sessions.

The project contributed to the introduction of new concepts and approaches to materials development and increased innovation, resulting in improved employee motivation and a higher value added per employee. The development activity and competitive advantages of companies have increased.



An important contribution of this project was that the training of large companies was also co-financed, and the KOC MAT 2.0 consortium partners also want large companies to be able to participate in such projects in the future.

in the fact that we had group training opportunities with other companies where we exchanged experience. Investing in education and motivating employees to be trained is crucial if we want to perform well as a company.”

“I see the project added value primarily

Denis Špelič, Alcad d.o.o.



KOC LOGINS



The KOC Logins project office brought together 31 small, medium-sized and large enterprises operating successfully in logistics for many years.

The project delivered 537 training sessions to 1,938 employees, with the majority aged 30 to 54.

The participants of training sessions gained knowledge and skills in the area of key competences identified in the partnership – most of the training programmes provided by the companies to their employees were associated with logistics and transport and related leg-

islation and regulations. In addition to these competences, employees developed soft and financial-accounting skills, sales, marketing and managerial skills.

Special mention can also be made of the extensive and well-attended training courses for developing employees' digital skills or the training needed to facilitate the digitisation of business processes. Logistics is highly regulated, in certain areas at a global level, and thus keeping up to date with changes in legislation and continuous training are mandatory.

Employees attended short one-day training sessions as well as longer and more



complex ones. Foreign language courses are certainly worth mentioning among the longer training courses, as, especially in logistics, the mastery of foreign languages is a highly sought-after competence. Training sessions were attended by both senior and junior staff.



Mag. Branko Lotrič

2020 was a landmark year in many respects. In particular, because companies had to face a completely new situation they had never experienced before. Partner companies have embraced the new online training system and see many advantages, such as time and cost savings, and easier scheduling of workers for training.

A joint online training session with KOC Energy was conducted to be better equipped to cope with the new situation. It aimed to support the managers of the partner companies in their efforts to stabilise the situation and prepare for the best possible way out of the crisis. How managers influence their colleagues, external partners, customers and the broader environment through their behaviour and conduct is crucial in such times. During the interactive, workshop-oriented training, Bojana Florjančič taught the participants practical methods and tools for successful management of people in crisis, and Miha Bešter touched upon the question of how a systematic approach can reduce the adverse consequences of a crisis.

“Employers need to be aware of the fact that their employees represent the greatest added value when they possess a broad range of skills, are knowledgeable, have technical and soft skills and can communicate. The consortium’s main objective was to reduce mismatches between the competences developed by employees and the required level of the development of each competence. It is important that the companies included in the project are not in competition with each other, but strive for a common approach to HR development within the industry and the circulation of knowledge, and at the same time ensure the transfer of good practices in the introduction of HR development improvements between organisations in the industry.”

Branko Lotrič, Director of B&B, izobraževanje in usposabljanje d.o.o., project applicant



Barbara Pogačar Zupan

“Our involvement in the KOC project has brought a lot to our company. The joint training sessions organised by the KOC Logins project office provided us with useful content and the opportunity to network and share experiences and good practices with other companies in our sector.

For us, HR managers, participation in the KOC project and the funds obtained mean, in particular, a more powerful bargaining position vis-à-vis the management, as the additional funds allow us to organise more in-house training and education activities in various fields. At Kuehne + Nagel d.o.o., we organised managerial workshops, language courses, stress management workshops, participation in purchasing and sales conferences, and numerous other training events to develop the soft skills of our employees. The knowledge and skills we have gained are useful for the company’s development and increasing employee satisfaction and commitment.”

Barbara Pogačar Zupan, Kuehne + Nagel d.o.o.

KOC Energy brings together 30 partner companies in the fields of electricity generation, marketing, distribution and management, renewable energy sources (RES), self-sufficiency in electricity supply, high-efficiency co-generation of heat and power (CHP), energy storage, design and management of innovative smart electricity supply systems and energy efficiency optimisation systems.

Energy supply is one of the key challenges of the future. The challenges of the energy sector are associated with optimal electricity supply in the long term while pursuing the objectives of decarbonisation and energy self-sufficiency in the face of growing electricity demand. Energy efficiency measures, increased use of renewable and low-carbon sources, and the development of advanced energy systems and services play an important role. The main task related to the future development of the energy sector in Slovenia is to ensure a balance among the three basic pillars of energy policy which are inextricably intertwined: climate sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness of energy supply. Only companies with employees who are constantly learning will be able to meet the challenges of the future and the associated changes. The main purpose of the project was therefore to identify the future compe-

tences of employees in the sector and to increase investments in the development of key competences of employees. KOC Energy aims at the networking and long-term cooperation of companies in the energy sector with the goal of creating a common approach to developing the human resources needed for the challenges of the future, achieving greater competitiveness of employees and companies, allowing a single voice in the market and establishing a dialogue with the public.

The project office held two expert consultations with the participation of experts from partner companies and representatives from the Jožef Stefan Institute (CEU), the Distribution Academy of Elektro Maribor, CER, the Slovenian Photovoltaic Association and the Energy Directorate. Relevant media were also informed of the events.

They also partnered with the Circular Business Academy, which brings together international experts to develop a training



programme on the transition to circular business models for companies in the energy sector.

A Letter of Intent was signed with the B&B College of Sustainable Development, committing to work together towards a long-term business and professional cooperation. They will continue the cooperation to pursue shared objectives and interests in the fields of energy management and energy industry development.

One of the main cooperation activities of the partnership was joint training planned according to the wishes of the partner companies.

"KOC Energy took us on the path of training which we needed to equip our employees with all the skills and competences necessary to achieve business results on the one hand, and personal growth and employee satisfaction on the other. A valuable lesson learned is that the skills and competences of co-workers are a complex area. These consist mainly of up-to-date technical skills to implement the new technologies needed for distribution companies to implement the green transition commitments, and soft knowledge and skills such as leadership and communication to transform distribution companies into modern energy companies with a focus on sustainable development, in which care for employees and business relationships with customers are paramount. It is therefore important that KOC Energy helped us carry out various training courses

to equip our employees with the competences they will need to be the future facilitators of the green transition."

Peter Kaube, Project Director, Elektro Maribor d.d.



Gregor Kustec

"Participation in the KOC Energy project was extremely important for our company since it offered additional opportunities to deliver first-rate professional training sessions that we previously had found difficult to finance. As a company active in the provision of consultancy and training services to clients and the development of information systems, we need up-to-date knowledge for our work, which we were able to acquire through the KOC project. We have noticed that the implementation of additional, more extensive training sessions facilitates knowledge transfer and improves our product development and day-to-day project work. Because of positive experiences and results, we believe that participation in similar projects is essential and extremely beneficial to any company, regardless of its size."

Gregor Kustec, Director, ENEKOM, d.o.o.

KOC TOP



The KOC Top Competence Centre brings together 50 partner companies. The main aim of the project was to ensure the intrinsic motivation of employees for lifelong learning and their digital and cultural literacy to effectively acquire the competences of the future so that, aligned with the company's vision and values, they will enable their company to survive and thrive in the global market.

The main objective of the project was to ensure the participation of at least 2,000 employees in most beneficial training courses to improve their key competences. The KOC-TOP project delivered 415 training sessions with 1,662 people and 2,908 inclusions. The participants were of both male and female, from all age groups and all levels of education.

All 11 joint training sessions were open to the public and the partners, and also promoted the competence centre and its activities. Six new training programmes and one external training programme were tested as part of joint training sessions, while knowledge exchanges involved a large number of experts.

Among the new training programmes, the following are worth highlighting:

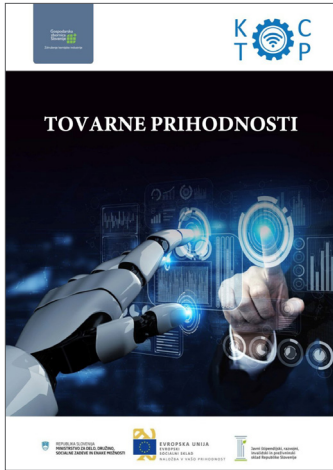
- Competences 4.0: Strategic management of technologies and human resources in the factories of the future

- Digital transformation in practice
- Social responsibility in the factories of the future
- Ensuring greater resilience of a company in the face of disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic
- Artificial intelligence for digital transformation
- Psychological resilience
- Industrial and process safety school and platform

Seven of the eight publications were in journals, presented at international conferences and entered in the Cobiss system, and one was in a newspaper. The Factories of the Future Development Programme with practical guidance and steps has been published in the Factories of the Future brochure: https://www.mps.si/documents/179/KOC-TOP_e-brosura.pdf.

In an effort to ensure the project's sustainability and given the wide interest, further support has been ensured for the factories of the future through concrete programmes facilitating the speed and quality of the development of smart factories in Slovenia. In cooperation with similar projects, an expert decision support system for RESPO training selection was developed during the project implementation.

All key objectives of the project were achieved, and the majority of them were also



exceeded. The provision of information on the project focused on the key stakeholders of the factories of the future, taking into account the objective of sustainability of the project activities after completion of the project. To this end, several projects were prepared with various international consortia, some of which have already been adopted and followed by their implementation.

By raising the employees' competences, the project results also have beneficial effects on the broader social environment and sustainable development, in particular on the sustainable development goals (SDG 4) with regard to education, and indirectly on other SDGs. Moreover, the project has had a positive impact on social responsibility and the level of environmental care as a result of numerous training sessions in these two fields. A wide range of areas was covered with regard to enhancing the knowledge of digitalisation in companies, from training courses for the more sophisticated use of extended software packages to intensive



Petra Janežič

workshops on digital lean manufacturing.

The activities foreseen in the application were successfully implemented, and the objectives were attained. The response of partner companies to the usefulness of the competence centre regarding the improvement of their competences was also very positive.

"Gorenje Orodjarna's participation in the KOC Top project resulted in the preparation of a good catalogue and the implementation of a training plan with a competence model for soft skills. The project carried out various professional training sessions where we promoted, above all, the strengthening of competences for the digitisation of processes, automation and lean manufacturing, as well as soft skills. Training courses involved different professional profiles: sales engineers, project managers, quality engineers, production workers, and so on. The KOC Top project gave us the opportunity to deliver far more training courses in a shorter period than the company would have done without the co-financing."

Petra Janežič, Head of Strategic Development, Gorenje Orodjarna, d.o.o.

Information

We created a unique **business gift**. It is an illustration of a bee by the renowned painter and illustrator Žarko Vrezec. The attitude towards bees is something unique among Slovenians and therefore represents the added emotional value of the gift, while at the same time it is a metaphor for the coexistence between workers or employees and those responsible for their success. This symbiosis in nature and the business world at the same time led to the thought we added below the illustration: "Employees are like bees, you have to invest in them to be successful".

Undoubtedly, the **Let's Get Creative web conference** held on 14 September 2021 was one of the major events of the project in 2021. The aim of the conference was to show, together with first-rate domestic and international guests and examples of good practice, how creativity can be improved and how it can also be achieved through intergenerational cooperation.

First, Janja Milič Velkavrh from Agilia warmed up the atmosphere with a presentation of agile techniques that will surely help participants to plan innovation processes.

Together with her guests Valerija Marenčič from Adacta and Mitja Jereb from PM,



business media, she presented two excellent examples of good practices in the implementation of agile techniques in these companies. This was followed by an active but relaxing break with Maja Kosmačič and 15 minutes of exercise and relaxation.

The exercise was followed by an interesting round table with representatives from the Šoštanj thermal power plant, Lineal and Ypsilon Institute, who presented their experiences and examples of good practices for achieving greater creativity and innovation through intergenerational cooperation.

Next on the programme was a virtual interactive game with participants divided into six virtual groups. They worked in teams applying creative thinking and seeking products and services that would be commercially interesting for the challenges of a modern HR service in 2030.

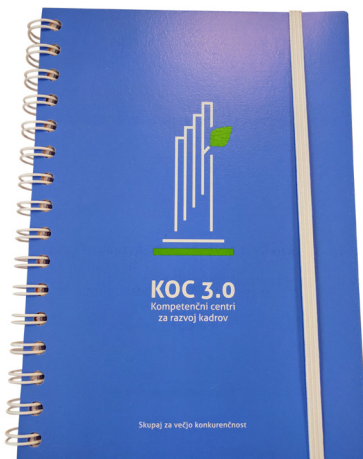


After the lunch break, Dragana Prijanovič from the Olos Institute gave a lecture on an excellent tool, Points of You®, developed by the Israeli couple E. Shani and Y. Golan, which allows participants to search for random associative stimuli through stories, photos and music to open up a broader perspective, which is one of the prerequisites for boosting and reviving creative thinking.

The conference was closed by the American expert, Ryan Jenkins, CSP® (Certified Speaking Professional)™ who is an internationally-recognised keynote speaker, virtual trainer, and author of books and articles on the topics of leadership, generational differences and the future of work. He is a co-founder of Sync Learning Experiences, a company that focuses on one-to-one leadership development workshops, and is also the President of the TopRock.org platform, a digital university where students can get a degree by learning on their smartphones. Ryan is an expert in the fields of working with different generations and the leadership of millennials and Generation Z, the future of work, reducing loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging at work.



The KOC programme was also presented at the Fund's conference entitled **"Knowledge. Opportunities. Development. Changing the future through life-long learning"**, which took place on 19 and 20 May 2022 in Laško, Slovenia. The conference featured examples of good practice and the achievements of all the Fund's programmes co-financed by the European Union.



Competent Slovenia

In the era of globalisation, the European Union's economies continue to face new challenges. And in the future, all working-age citizens of the European Union will need a broad range of core competences to be flexible enough to adapt to rapid changes in a dynamic world.

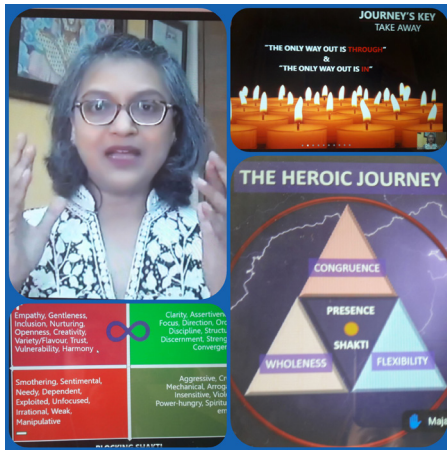
Through funding from the European Social Fund and the budget of the Republic of Slovenia, Competent Slovenia aims to provide free access to modern business knowledge and skills to those who want to achieve their full potential. Competent Slovenia has been designed for all employees in the Slovenian economy who see workshops on a particular topic as an opportunity to develop their careers, especially managers and HR professionals, and all those responsible for employee development. It promotes the development of soft and entrepreneurial skills in the areas identified as competences of the future. It takes the form of workshops and training sessions held throughout Slovenia in cooperation with various local stakeholders.

The interest in the Competent Slovenia training sessions during the KOC 3.0 project was exceptional. We organised more than 230 training sessions and attracted more than 4,200 participations.



Some of the high-profile training events organised by Competent Slovenia during this period are presented below.

Nilima Bhat presented her rich experience in managing global companies and advising multinationals such as Tata Consultancy Services, Etsy, Societe Generale Bank, Microsoft, Vodafone and the YPO Group in an online lecture titled "The Heroic Journey of Leaders for the Future". The power of leadership, or Shakti Leadership as she calls it (embracing both feminine and masculine power in business), means focusing on a permanently innovative business scenario with the goal of not only surviving but also succeeding. This direction and this path requires a great deal of resilience and inspiring energy, which we can only draw from "Shakti" – the infinite source of power within us that fully represents us and fuels our creativity and changes. If you have accepted this as a "call to adventure", you have offered yourself the opportunity for an exponential transformation and



to the Hansen Beck Method”, consisted of five intensive full-day workshops where participants learned about the role of a leader, the establishment of leadership integrity, effective communication with colleagues, speaking and chairing meetings, leading in times of change, motivating, increasing personal performance, and more. To secure effective knowledge transfer, participation in all five modules was mandatory. The meetings were held over a period of three months.

the chance to discover within yourself the “elixirs” for you and your business.

A cycle of **Bojana Florjančič’s** workshops entitled “Training for CEOs, Legal Representatives and Board Members according

We have decided to present the well-established Franklin Covey method of improving performance, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”. The method has been selected by the world’s top 20 educational institutions in the field of lead-





ership programmes for nine consecutive years. The five sessions of the licensed e-learning course were delivered by Uroš Kozina, Head of Trainers at Franklin Covey Adria. The e-training was based on eternal, unchanging principles and proven effective practices on how people's behaviour can be changed for the better.

Jef Staes, an authority on learning processes and innovative organisations, was our guest at the "Managers and Heroes" workshop. The problem he perceives and lectures about is that generations born in the so-called 2D world find it harder to adapt to the rapidly changing 3D world. One reason is a school system that provides content piece by piece but not the

whole, thus encouraging discipline and intelligence rather than passion and talent. Learning is a physical process that is to be two-way (receiving and giving). There is a limited possibility at school and work to give feedback, which is important for connecting synapses.

Jef Staes therefore encourages so-called destructive ideas (with a positive connotation) that change the world – such as Red Monkey ideas. These are confrontational ideas that disturb the beliefs and daily routines of people, teams and organisations. They are seen as opportunities by some, but often a "threat" to the vast majority. As an example, Staes used the launch of a vacuum cleaner without a

filter bag. This was a brilliant idea, but it was a loss of business for filter bag suppliers. This also explains why “we fail to learn and innovate fast enough”.

Timothy Armoo explained the importance of innovative marketing. In a three-hour lecture entitled “Generation Z: How to win their hearts” he presented innovative ideas from his rich experience on how to gain new customers more effectively through a variety of new communication channels.

At the age of 24, Timothy Armoo is already CEO of Fanbytes, a successful online video advertising platform. It helps global brands such as Apple Music, Sony, YouGov, Warner, and Universal Studios,

as well as some government institutions, to get their messages across to mostly young people under 30, the so-called Generation Z.

Timothy Armoo also presented his three main principles to win the hearts of Generation Z:

1. Enable people to become the stars of their own show
2. Create narrative content
3. Touch their culture

He claims that any brand can appeal to young people – what matters is the approach used or the way of presenting it to them.

One of the best personality coaches in

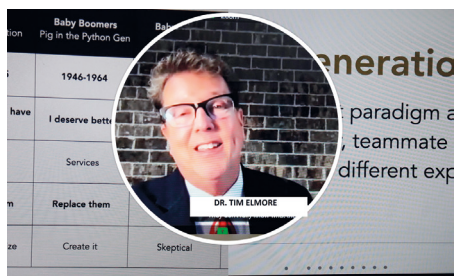




Europe, **Werner Katzengruber**, recognised as the number 1 personality coach in Germany, gave a workshop on Leadership or Manipulation.

He presented the Transolution method that is an excellent tool for improving interpersonal relationships in both private and professional life. The Transolution method involves a wide range of new knowledge and skills, models and techniques that can be applied to create a successful future. The Transolution method presented by Werner Katzengruber at the e-workshop is primarily a mental model, a cognitive construct combining two levels or realities. The first is called

the first-order reality and concerns hard facts, figures, and data – what really exists. The other reality, or what he calls the second-order reality, involves emotions. These emotions provoke people to respond again, and the repetition of a certain behaviour forms patterns. Patterns are not only generated here and now, they also have a past. So we are active within these two realities, but also within the past and present, and we can look at how these two spaces, the space of experience and the space of knowledge, influence the future. It's all about change. But it is not just about feeling better or differently, or even doing things differently, it is about making these things measurable.



The collaboration with international lecturers continued with **Tim Elmore** from the USA, the founder and CEO of Growing Leaders, an Atlanta-based, non-profit organisation created to develop emerging leaders. Since the establishment of Growing Leaders, Tim Elmore has spoken to more than 500,000 students, teachers and staff on hundreds of campuses across the US and elsewhere. He is a leading expert in intergenerational cooperation, and held a webinar for us in September entitled "Generational Diversity in the

Workplace". To promote the event, we once again decided to place an advertisement on the RTV Slovenia website, which resulted in 101 participants taking part in the webinar. This interactive and engaging workshop provided different generations with knowledge on what members of each generation value and appreciate, how best to communicate with them, and what leaders should and should not do to connect with each employee to work together as a successful team.

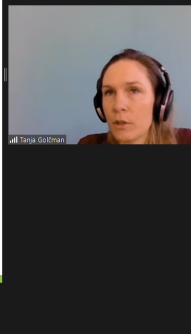
As part of a series of social media advertising workshops, we organised several online training sessions to provide the participants with digital marketing knowledge and skills.

The first workshop was conducted by **Saša Špiler**, and introduced participants to the benefits of Instagram advertising.





Možnosti ciljanja (Audience Attributes)



ing and how to start advertising on this platform (advertising via Instagram or Facebook Ads Manager). Similarly, the second workshop on the topic of using YouTube and YouTube advertising presented the advantages of advertising on this platform. The lecturer **Tanja Golčman** presented the relevant procedures from the first step onwards: how to start advertising on YouTube (introducing the Google Ads platform, YouTube channels, and account linking), then the types of video campaigns and various formats and the connection to the sales funnel through a practical demonstration of how to structure campaigns, to the selection of audiences and the creation of “custom” audiences. The participants also learned about the advantages of Facebook advertising and the first steps to start advertising on this platform (Facebook pixel,

Business Manager, Ads manager, events). The lecturer Saša Špiler outlined campaign objectives and links to the sales funnel, and presented how to structure campaigns and select audiences, as well as how to set up campaigns (practical demonstration).

We also added a workshop on using LinkedIn and LinkedIn advertising to the series. The participants were informed of why and how to advertise most effectively on LinkedIn and what the advantages are.

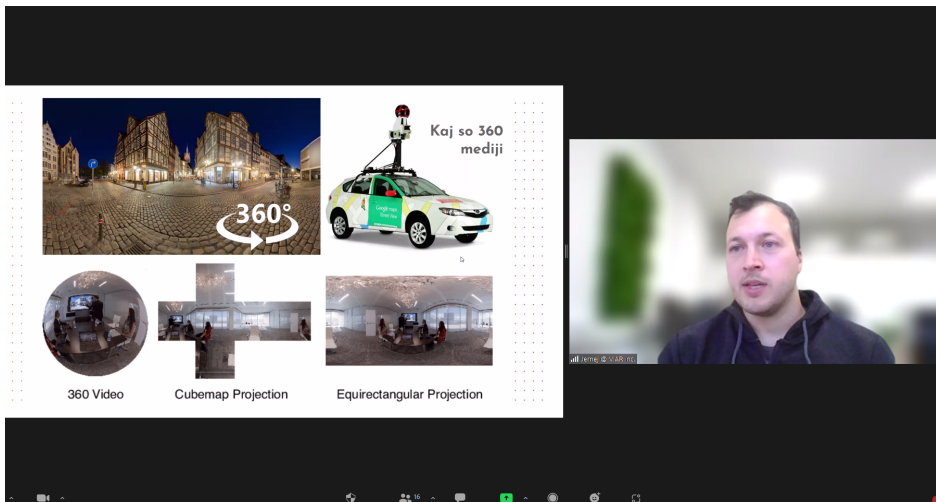
To increase the visibility of companies and brands, we added a 360-degree photography workshop and the application of virtual reality for educational purposes (onboarding, training, presentations, etc.). First, it was explained what 360-degree

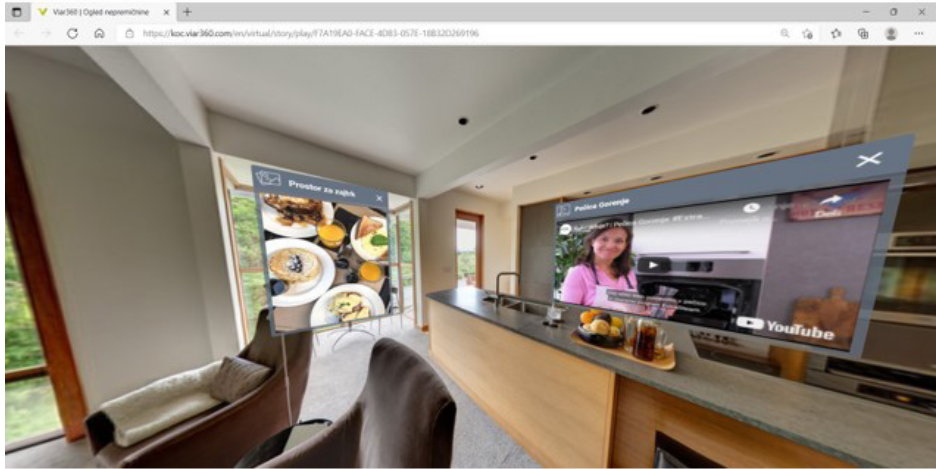
media are, and what they enable us to do. These are more than just traditional panoramic images, as they allow us to move around the virtual space and see it in its entirety. This gives us a better picture of the space we want to show, which makes such media suitable for business advertising and positioning. Platforms such as Facebook, Google Street View (where people can not only walk the streets, but also enter buildings) and YouTube 360 allow such 360-degree media, the latter offering maximum promotional reach.

The participants were shown domestic and foreign examples of 360-degree presentations that can be used in presenting spaces to potential clients or visitors (e.g. tourist accommodation, co-working spaces, real estate, congress tourism, gaming and entertainment, recreational facilities, industrial and manufacturing plants, etc.).



The participants learned how to prepare a video speech. After an overview of the basics, such as what can be recorded and what the purpose of recording is, the second step was the organisation of recording. We talked about choosing an appropriate background, light and sound, as these are the prerequisites for effective content delivery. Suitable content editing





software was also mentioned. The participants were shown how to edit the video themselves. The last part was dedicated to the presentation and overview of the video content, namely what is important when preparing content.

They also acquainted themselves with the use of virtual reality for educational purposes. The workshop showcased examples of good practice in applying virtual reality, such as a presentation by KKW Brokdorf from Hamburg, the examples of the induction of new staff at Samsung, the employment of virtual reality in employee onboarding (e.g. a storekeeper), and the use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) in technical skills training (e.g. using a forklift). This allowed the participants to recognise differences between CGI and 360-degree videos as virtual reality. Virtual reality can also be employed in soft skills training, role-playing, communication and sales training, and so on.

- **Vojska** - trening in simulacije
- **Marketing** - podpora prodaji, izkustveni marketing (nepremičnine,...)
- **Entertainment** - igre (največji trg VR)
- **Izobraževanje** - uporaba v izobraževalnih institucijah, uporaba v podjetjih

Uporaba VR





KOC 3.0

Competence Centers for Human Resources Development

Dunajska cesta 20, Ljubljana

e info@sklad-kadri.si

t 01 43 41 081

www.srips-rs.si

- ☎ Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad RS
- 🇸🇮 Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad Republike Slovenije



Public Scholarship, Development,
Disability and Maintenance
Fund of the Republic of Slovenia



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

The project is co-financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the European Union under the European Social Fund.