

WELDNET NEWSLETTER | Issue #2 | September 2026

12 months of progress across five European Centres of Vocational Excellence

SKILLS & VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Competitions Put Young Welders at the Centre

Spain: FEMEVAL Sparks First Regional Welding Award

WELDNET partner FEMEVAL took the project to the [33rd BIEMH International Machine Tool Biennial](#) in Bilbao (02-06 March 2026) connecting with Valencian companies and following key trends in automation, digitalisation and the energy transition. In addition, Spain will be the partner country at [HANNOVER MESSE 2027](#) (05-08 April 2027), giving WELDNET a strong platform at next year's edition. FEMEVAL also supported the 1st Isidoro Zorzano Engineer Welding Award, organised by training centre Xabec near Valencia, where vocational students competed in TIG and MIG-MAG welding. The first competition of its kind in the Valencian Community!



Serbia: 47 students, 3 Welding disciplines, 1 Ecosystem

On 22 May 2026, MIND Park in Kragujevac hosted the practical rounds of the 30th [National Competition of Mechanical Engineering Schools of Serbia](#), where 47 students went head-to-head in MAG, REL and TIG welding. Independent experts from the Serbian Welding Society (DUZS), a member of the [European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting](#), judged the practical samples. REDASP and Serbia's WELDNET ecosystem partners used the occasion to run a joint WELDNET-WELDIFY Ecosystem Session alongside it, drawing more than 50 representatives from schools, industry and government, including the Office for Dual Education and the National Qualifications Framework.



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BUILDING REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS

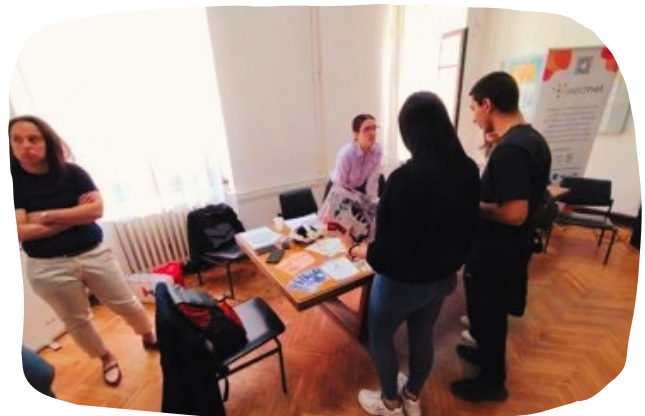
Turning Local Networks Into Lasting Partnerships

Serbia: Mapping Strengths, and Where to Grow



WELDNET partners in Serbia (Helixconnect, REDASP Sumadija and Pomoravlje, AMM Manufacturing, MIND Group and Secondary School “Knez Aleksandar Karadžić”) came together to map the national skills ecosystem for circular automotive manufacturing, material joining and predictive maintenance. Early findings: strong leadership, organisational capacity and public-private cooperation, with clear room to grow in accessibility, internationalisation, green skills and digitalisation!

The ecosystem push continued on 15 May 2026, when the same Kragujevac school held its fifth Internal Employment Fair: around 250 final-year students, 11 local companies and representatives of the National Employment Service met face to face, with WELDNET's objectives and activities front and centre.



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BUILDING REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS

Turning Local Networks Into Lasting Partnerships

Romania: Certification Meets Circular Skills

In Western Romania, ISIM Timișoara is weaving regional partners into WELDNET around two pillars: [Circular Material Welding](#) and [Predictive Maintenance Systems](#). Throughout February 2026, ISIM used its professional Non-Destructive Testing courses (Penetrant, Magnetic Particle and Visual Testing) to show industry partners how circular and predictive approaches turn quality inspection into a strategic tool for resource efficiency. Participating companies are now moving to the next stage: validating circular welding and maintenance protocols on their own production lines: positioning the region as a European leader in the Industry 5.0 transition.



INCLUSIONS & STANDARDS

Setting the Standard for Inclusion: The Seals of Excellence

One of WELDNET's key contributions to the European VET landscape took shape this year: the drafting of our Guide for Awarding Seals of Excellence. It answers a demanding question: how do we recognise, fairly and comparably, organisations that genuinely support the inclusion of persons with disabilities, refugees and members of minorities? The answer is a structured certification scheme with clear criteria, verifiable evidence, and three levels of distinction: bronze, silver and gold.



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What the Guide delivers

- Transparent eligibility rules covering inclusion policies, a designated coordinator, accessible premises and reporting capacity.
- A four-stage evaluation process — application, screening, independent assessment and committee decision — typically completed in two to three months.
- A standardised grid across five domains: accessibility, inclusion policy, personalised support, staff training and social impact.
- Digital certificates with QR-based verification, three years' validity, and entry into a public register.
- Special distinctions for innovation, community partnerships, personalised support and participatory governance.

Aligned with the European Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Skills Agenda and the EQAVET quality framework, the scheme is coordinated by ISIM Timișoara, which trains evaluators, manages evaluation rounds and safeguards quality and ethics. Partners bring regional reach, run information sessions and connect certified organisations with employers. The Seals will be piloted across WELDNET's five regional ecosystems in the coming period, turning recognition into a practical driver of inclusive vocational excellence.

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DISSEMINATION & VISIBILITY

Putting WELDNET on Europe's Biggest Stages

Centre Stage at Manufacturing Day 2026

WELDNET took part in the Project Expo at Manufacturing Day 2026 in Vienna, the flagship annual event of EIT Manufacturing during the ViennaUP festival. Drawing more than 500 participants from over 50 countries, with a keynote from MIT's Prof. David A. Mindell, WELDNET shared a platform with sister projects PreMETs and WELDIFY to explain how the three initiatives combine forces to prepare tomorrow's workforce.



CESOL connects innovation and skills



On 18–19 June 2026, CESOL joined INSPIRE, [the 33rd International Welding Conference](#) in Budapest, where experts debated digitalisation, sustainability, additive manufacturing, robotics and hydrogen technologies: all directly relevant to WELDNET's mission of building future-ready skills in Circular Material Welding and Predictive Maintenance Systems. The conference gave CESOL a chance to spot emerging skills that will feed directly into WELDNET training design.

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CERTH takes WELDNET's work International

At the [8th Conference on Sustainable Mobility](#) (CSUM 2026) on 1 July, CERTH's Dr. Afroditi Anagnostopoulou presented "An AI-Enabled Educational Framework for Upskilling Workforce in Sustainable Mobility and Green Manufacturing," built on WELDNET methodologies and combining AI-supported learning analytics, micro-credentials and personalised, work-based learning pathways.

WELDNET in print

WELDNET also reached Austria's industrial engineering community through a [feature in WING Business Magazine](#), published by the Austrian Association of Industrial Engineers, exploring how the twin transition is driving demand for skilled professionals and innovations such as learning factories: exactly what WELDNET's Centres of Vocational Excellence are built to deliver.

LOOKING AHEAD

TU Wien to host CIRP CMS 2027

WELDNET partner TU Wien will host the [60th CIRP Conference on Manufacturing Systems](#) (CIRP CMS 2027) in Vienna, 12–14 May 2027, under the theme "Deep Tech Manufacturing Ecosystems." The conference offers academics, research institutes and industry a platform to discuss advances shaping sustainable, adaptive and human-centred production.

Registration opens **11 January 2027**

Sponsoring opportunities: <https://cms2027.com/sponsoring/>

JOIN WELDNET TODAY!

Be part of the movement driving excellence in welding!



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