

Good morning, everyone,

It is a pleasure and honor to be here in the final B-WISE Conference here at the European Economic and Social Committee. I want to extend a warm welcome to our colleague Giuseppe from the EESC, the project partners, Ms Geleng and colleagues from the European Commission, EASPD, ENSIE members, and all stakeholders joining us today. Thank you for being here to celebrate the progress we've made together and discuss the road ahead.

The B-WISE project, as many of you know, is at the heart of ENSIE's mission. At ENSIE, we are deeply committed to promoting social and economic inclusion by supporting Work Integration Social Enterprises, or WISEs. These organizations play a critical role across Europe by creating job opportunities for individuals who face significant barriers in the traditional labor market. They empower individuals, build skills, and foster resilience, all while contributing to local economies and social cohesion.

The B-WISE project aligns perfectly with this mission by focusing on equipping WISEs-and the people within them-with the skills necessary for today's evolving workforce. Through this initiative, we address a crucial challenge: ensuring that workers with diverse needs and their colleague have access to training that meets their specific skill requirements. This includes not only soft skills but also digital skills, which are increasingly essential in the modern economy. As we know, these skills are not just about employability; they are about enabling full participation in our communities and our economy.

Today, we'll hear from many inspiring voices about how the B-WISE project has impacted the WISE sector across Europe. Together, we have developed training programs and tailored curricula that provide practical tools and resources to boost employability for workers with support needs. Through these efforts, we are building pathways to employment and skill-building that can be scaled and adapted across different regions.

The B-WISE project also serves as a model of collaboration, bringing together diverse organizations with unique strengths. For this, I'd like to thank the European Commission and its directorate and EACEA, who have supported us every step of the way. I also extend my gratitude to the EASPD for their partnership, guidance, and dedication to making this initiative a success. And, of course, a heartfelt thank you to all our project partners whose hard work and commitment have been essential to achieving the goals of B-WISE.

Let us use today to not only celebrate our achievements but also to engage in open dialogue. We will discuss how we can continue to strengthen the WISE sector, meet emerging skills needs, and advocate for policies that support work integration social enterprise (e.g.: WG under the Partnership for Skills). I look forward to hearing your insights, sharing in the knowledge you bring, and continuing our shared commitment to creating a more inclusive, skilled workforce.

Thank you once again for joining us today. Let's make this a day of meaningful exchange and shared vision.

Patrizia Bussi
ENSIE Director