



AILEEN

centres of vocational Excellence in aerospace & defence for advanced manufacturing

Newsletter #3

Covering the period of June 2025 to March 2026

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Advancing Defence Skills in Additive Manufacturing

Additive manufacturing (AM) is set to transform European defence logistics and production, but its **success depends on a workforce equipped with the right skills**.

To address this need, the **AILEEN project delivered the pilot course “AM for Defence” (SW20/26) at AM Village 2026**, supporting the development of critical competencies for EU defence.

Over two days (18–19 March), 15 participants from Ministries of Defence and industry engaged in an intensive training programme led by Novaindef, IDONIAL Centro Tecnológico, and FAN3D.

The course focused on:

- Material selection for mission-critical applications
- Design standards and metrology
- Turning digital designs into high-performance components

This initiative highlights the importance of collaboration within the AILEEN CoVE ecosystem. By building specialised AM skills, AILEEN continues to strengthen Europe’s defence capabilities and industrial resilience.

AILEEN Training Catalogue is Now Online

The [AILEEN Training Catalogue](#) presents a comprehensive, structured, and future-oriented training offer designed to strengthen skills in advanced manufacturing for the aerospace and defence sectors. It brings together **cutting-edge technical knowledge, hands-on application**, and internationally recognised qualifications, developed in close collaboration with industry and education experts.

The catalogue guides learners through a **clear learning journey**, offering:

- **Entry points for newcomers** to advanced manufacturing,
- **Upskilling and reskilling pathways** for professionals,
- **Specialist and expert-level courses** aligned with aerospace and defence needs.

Training is organised around **key industrial themes** such as production, inspection, quality assurance, digitalisation, and sustainability, with a strong focus on additive manufacturing and welding technologies. Learners can choose between flexible modular pathways or intensive learning formats, adapting training to their time, role, and career ambitions.

AILEEN also proposes **recommended learning pathways** tailored to specific professional profiles, including welders and operators, designers, engineers, inspectors, and NDT professionals all while keeping access open to the general public interested in the future of manufacturing.

Courses range from short introductory modules to advanced, **internationally recognised EWF qualifications**, ensuring relevance from shop floor to engineering and coordination levels. All training is delivered through a European network of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), reinforcing AILEEN's pan-European reach and impact.

Nomination of CoVEs



The AILEEN CoVE nomination process is well underway, and several Centres of Vocational Excellence have now been **successfully nominated**. These CoVEs are officially recognised as vocational centres of excellence for the next five years, marking an important milestone for the project and its partners.

This recognition reflects the strong commitment and dedication of the AILEEN partners to closing the skills gap and addressing workforce shortages in advanced manufacturing, brazing, welding, and inspection for the aerospace and defence sectors. It highlights the **quality, relevance, and long-term impact** of the work being carried out across the **AILEEN ecosystem**.

We are immensely proud of the CoVEs that have already achieved nominations and look forward to presenting those currently progressing through the process, with additional nominations expected in the coming months. Pictured is the very first CoVE to receive official nomination - the Belgian CoVE, setting the benchmark for excellence within AILEEN.

Become a Part of AILEEN – Set up a CoVE in Neighboring Counties

The **AILEEN** project enters **Phase 2** of its Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) nomination process - and this marks a **unique opportunity for new organisations across Europe, and outside the partner countries, to join the AILEEN ecosystem**.

Phase 2 will expand AILEEN with **up to eight additional CoVEs**, strengthening Europe's capacity to address skills shortages in **additive manufacturing, brazing, welding, and inspection for the aerospace and defence sectors**.

We officially launched this next phase at a **European kick-off event in November**, bringing together participants from across the continent. The energy was high as we explored how new CoVEs can contribute to - and benefit from - a growing, collaborative European platform.



Why become part of AILEEN?

AILEEN brings together **education, research, and industry** to ensure that vocational education and training is aligned with real industrial needs, future-oriented and innovation-driven, and recognised across Europe.

Through a **transnational ecosystem of Centres of Vocational Excellence**, AILEEN develops shared methodologies, training solutions, and tools that support high-quality, specialised VET in aerospace and defence manufacturing.

By joining Phase 2, you become part of an **active European innovation hub**, where course units, industrial case studies, and apprenticeship models are developed and tested simultaneously across multiple countries.

What is a CoVE in AILEEN?

Each AILEEN CoVE is built on a **triple-helix model**, consisting of:

- an **education or training provider**,
- a **research organisation**, and
- a **company or industry representative**.

This structure ensures that AILEEN's outcomes are grounded in **industrial relevance, scientific expertise, and skilled talent development** - turning CoVEs into engines for innovation and workforce readiness.

How to apply – simple and supported

Forming a CoVE is designed to be **straightforward and inclusive**:

- You can **start your application online**
- Existing AILEEN partners may assist you in **finding suitable local partners**.
- The process is open to organisations across Europe with an interest in vocational excellence and industrial impact.

Once accepted, your organisation gains access to:

- AILEEN specialised courses for Aerospace and Defence, including training materials and methodologies,
- a strong European network of **18 established partners**,
- enroll in a Capacity Building for VET Centres in Gijón
- and opportunities to collaborate, pilot, and scale training solutions at European level.

Be part of Europe's next generation of vocational excellence

This is your chance to help shape the future of advanced manufacturing skills, connect with leading European education, research, and industry actors, and contribute to a resilient, innovative aerospace and defence workforce. To learn more visit www.aileencove.eu or contact the AILEEN consortium via email info@aileencove.eu.

European Leagues Final

At the heart of AILEEN is a strong focus on **developing the skills of Europe's future workforce**. That is why it was especially exciting to see the best talents from across participating countries come together in Portugal in September, representing their national teams and demonstrating excellence at European level.

From 17-19 September, 21 students gathered at the ISQ premises for a series of presentations and skills competitions that highlighted technical expertise, innovation, and problem-solving in advanced manufacturing. **The event celebrated both individual achievement and the collective strength of vocational training across Europe.**

The overall winner was **Jaaren Van Ranst from Belgium**, who impressed the jury across all tests and was awarded a **3D printer** in recognition of his outstanding performance.



Behind every skilled learner stands a strong and connected teaching community

In AILEEN, **staff mobility is an integral part of our problem-based learning approach** for the aerospace and defence sectors, ensuring that education remains closely aligned with real industrial challenges.

As part of the project's staff mobility activities, educators from AILEEN's Centres of Vocational Excellence, together with experts from research institutions, gathered for an intensive four-day workshop at our partners facilities at MTC in Coventry, UK and ISQ in Lisbon, PT in January 2026. During the exchange, participants **worked directly with key technical and technological challenges** faced by these highly regulated industries, bringing practical experience and sector-specific expertise into the learning process.

A core outcome of the mobility workshop was the development, testing, and validation of Problem-Based Learning case studies. These **case studies will feed directly into AILEEN's shared Problem-based database**, strengthening future training and education pathways developed within the project. By translating collective expertise into concrete learning scenarios, AILEEN ensures that teaching materials are relevant, up to date, and rooted in real industrial contexts. This collaborative approach enables the **co-creation of high-quality, industry-relevant learning content** that directly benefits students and trainees across Europe.





National events continue bringing stakeholder together

Across the AILEEN network, national events are playing an important role in connecting education, research, and industry stakeholders around the future of skills in advanced manufacturing for the aerospace and defence sectors.

Throughout the project, each CoVE has organised national activities designed to raise awareness of the AILEEN initiative, strengthen local collaboration, and gather insights from industry and education experts. These events provide a platform to discuss emerging skills needs, explore new training approaches, and showcase how Centres of Vocational Excellence contribute to addressing the growing skills gap in highly specialised manufacturing fields.

In Denmark, for example, a national event brought together key stakeholders for a panel debate focusing on the future workforce in advanced manufacturing and the role of vocational education in supporting the aerospace and defence industries. The discussion highlighted the importance of close cooperation between industry, education providers, and research institutions to ensure that training programmes remain aligned with rapidly evolving technological and industrial requirements.

By hosting national events across the AILEEN partner countries, the project strengthens dialogue at both national and European level. These gatherings help build strong local ecosystems while contributing to the shared goal of developing innovative, industry-relevant vocational training pathways for the next generation of skilled professionals.



What will happen next?

- The consortium will gather in Ankara from 29th to 30rd April for the 6th project meeting
 - Best practices will soon be launched in our Excellence platform
 - Students are taking up apprenticeships as a part of the AILEEN project
 - More free courses are being developed
 - More national events will take place, follow your local partners or the AILEEN page on LinkedIn for more information
 - **Stay tuned for the 2nd wave of AILEEN training courses.**
 - Advantages of enrolling in the courses:
 - be among the first to experience AILEEN training,
 - gain future-proof skills for aerospace and defence,
 - and help shape a European benchmark for advanced manufacturing education.
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