

# MAPPING TRADE UNION ONLINE EDUCATION – FINAL REPORT

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# 1 Background and introduction

## 1.1 Scope of the investigation

The development of e-learning is becoming increasingly widespread in contexts that differ greatly in terms of their needs, constraints, resources and target audience. E-learning is assuming an ever-wider meaning that goes beyond the concept of the supply and transmission of content through digital technologies, and is coming to be seen more and more as an important component of the overall system of knowledge management, based on a development of skills that makes use of the processes of communication, interaction and collaboration between participants.

In the field of European trade unionism as well the use of online learning environments is in the middle of a phase of powerful growth, further accentuated by the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, as evidenced by the number of scenarios, often heterogeneous and with different levels of structuring, that are being practised by the various European trade union organisations.

The Di Vittorio Foundation, at the request of the ETUI, developed this research project to describe the current state of play, in terms of models and approaches, arising from the various e-learning initiatives conducted by trade unions at European level and to identify their key dimensions.

The project had the aim of mapping the experiences developed in the contexts of European trade union organisations and seeks to bring out aspects such as the types of platform used, the people involved, the characteristics of the users, the themes of the proposed contents, the types of tools used to steer the content, the proposed training models and methods of integration with traditional teaching, the use of collaborative learning tools and the methods of evaluation employed.

## 1.2 Methodology

The development of the project involved the following phases of activity:

1. Background analysis of trends and the evolution of e-learning through literature and website research

2. Construction of the survey tool
3. Testing the tool on a sample made up of the representatives of the TUC (UK), UGT (Spain), LO (Sweden) and CITUB (Bulgaria)
4. Release and validation of the definitive survey tool
5. Delivery of the survey tool to the sample of reference
6. Data analysis and systematisation
7. Report

### 1.3 The survey tool

The questionnaire, after the testing phase with the subjects indicated by the ETUI, was structured in sections aimed at bringing out:

- The technological aspects of the platforms used
- The professional figures involved and their training background
- The structure of the courses in terms of projects, duration, means of access and details of the proposed contents
- Characteristics of the users (role in the union, age, educational level...)
- Diversification of the contents and languages depending on the users
- Methods of delivery and integration with traditional teaching
- Type of proposed content (videos, tutorials, presentations, webinars...)
- Proposed training models
- Methods of interaction and collaboration between users and between users and staff
- Evaluation tools used
- Methods of certification of skills

The questionnaire was developed using open questions, single and multiple choice, with an estimated duration of about 30 minutes, with filter questions that allowed respondents to vary their path within the questionnaire on the basis of their experiences.

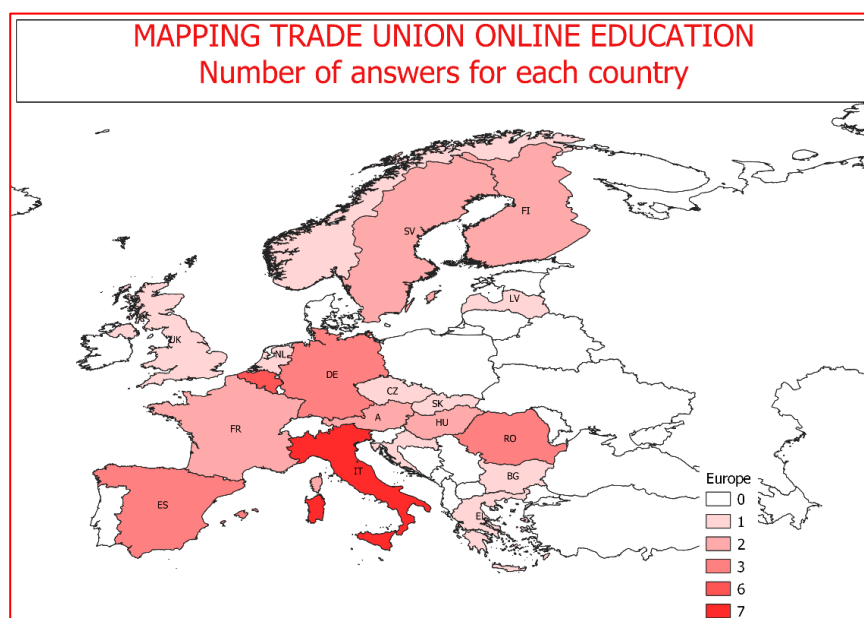
*In the results shown for the multiple-choice questions, in which respondents have the possibility of choosing more than one option, the total percentages indicated for each answer might not total 100%.*

## 2 Sample size

### 2.1 Answers for each Country

Number of responding organizations: **41** - Number of belonging countries: **19**

Country	Number of organisations taking part
Austria	2
Belgium	6
Bulgaria	1
Croatia	1
Finland	2
France	2
Germany	3
Greece	1
Hungary	2
Italy	7
Latvia	1
Netherlands	1
Norway	1
Romania	3
Slovakia	1
Spain	3
Sweden	2
The Czech Republic	1
UK	1
Total	41

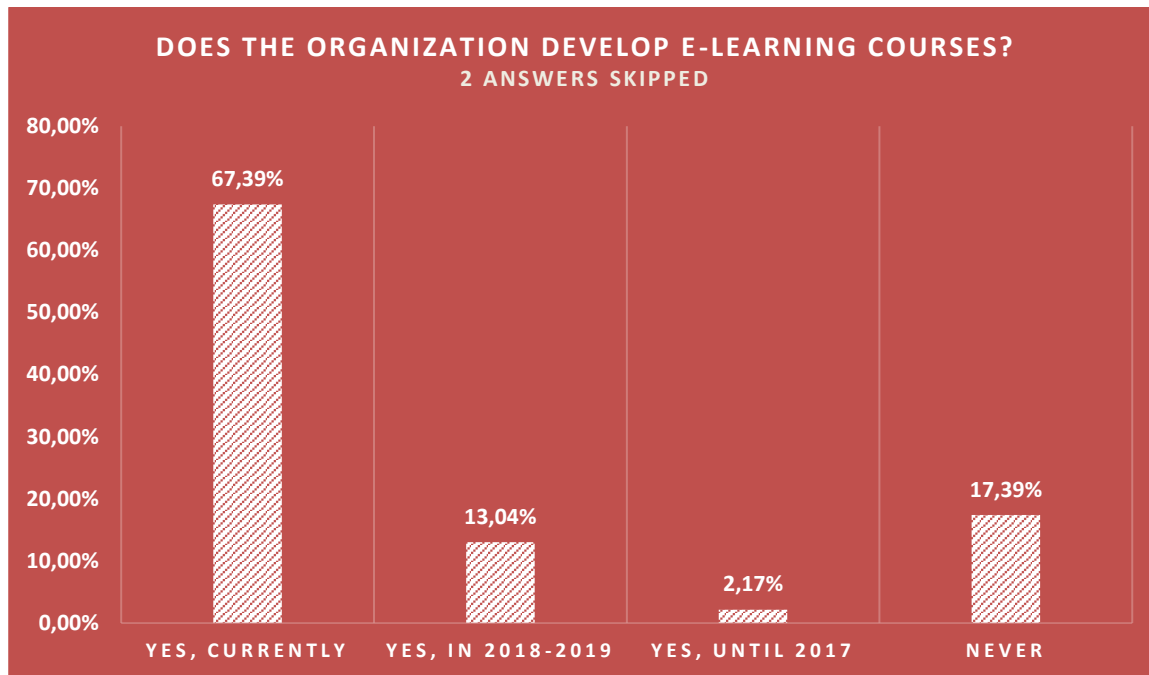


## Organisation details

Country	Organisation
Austria	Austrian Trade Union Federation
	ÖGB/GPA-djp
Belgium	ABVV-Metaal
	CSC
	CSC ACV
	CSCBIE
	EFFAT
	Vlaams ABVV
Bulgaria	CITUB
Croatia	Sindikata metalaca Hrvatske-Industrijski sindikat
Finland	Ammattiliitto Pro /Trade Union Pro
	Työväen Sivistysliitto TSL ry
France	CFDT
	CGT
Germany	Bildungszentrum Oberjosbach NGG
	EVA gGmbH
	IG BCE
Greece	INE GSEE
Hungary	LIGA Trade Unions
	Szakszervezetek Együttműködési Fóruma (SZEF)
Italy	CGIL LOMBARDIA
	CISL
	FILCTEM CGIL
	FIM-CISL NAZIONALE
	Fondazione Giuseppe Di Vittorio
	UIL
UILTEC	
Latvia	LBAS
Netherlands	FNV
Norway	Fellesforbundet
Romania	BLOCUL NATIONAL SINDICAL - BNS Romania
	Cartel ALFA
	CNS Cartel Alfa
Slovakia	KOZ SR
Spain	CCOO
	Unión General de Trabajadores de España (UGT-E)
Sweden	IF Metall
	Landsorganisationen i Sverige
The Czech Republic	The Czech Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions
UK	Trades Union Congress (UK)

## 2.2 Organizations involved in e-learning courses

The questionnaire envisaged an initial filter question for interviewees relating to the involvement of the organisation in e-learning activities, to direct respondents to sections appropriate to their respective experiences.



67.39% of respondents say they are currently taking part in e-learning activities and most of the questionnaire was based on that sample.

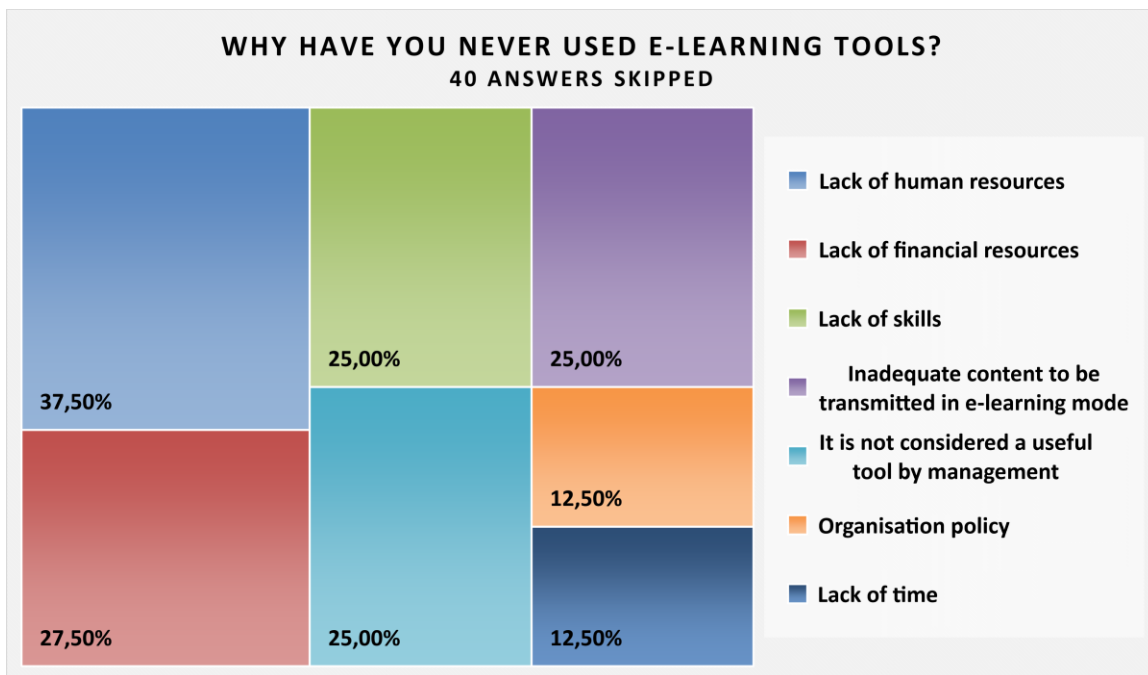
For organisations that no longer or have never engaged in e-learning, the research highlighted the causes and main obstacles to the development of such activities.

The results show that 15.21% discontinued activities in the field of e-learning (13.04% in 2019), mainly due to lack of economic resources and specific indications from their users, who, from the results of research carried out, showed a preference for traditional training carried out *Face to Face*.

...  
 “Training needs surveys showed our members did prefer F2F training”  
 ...

The lack of human and economic resources along with the need for greater skills and the impossibility of conveying certain content in ways other than those involving being physically present, are instead considered the main reasons for the 17.39% of respondents who have never experienced e-learning courses training.

...  
*“Inadequate means for TU members”*  
 ...



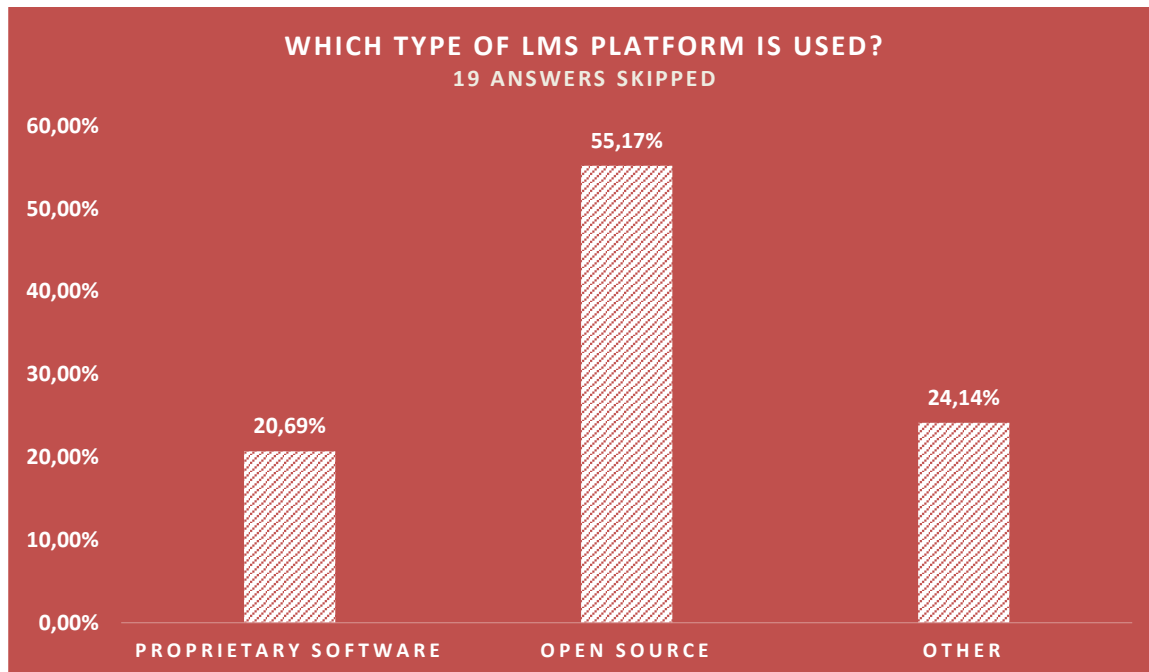
### 3 Technologies used

#### 3.1 Platforms

The main features of online training programmes are based on delivering content and collaborative tools through the use of multimedia and interactive channels, and on the fruition by users of the services offered without spatial-temporal constraints, with the support of a range of communication tools.

To provide the services depending on the various interactive modes, the e-learning system uses learning platforms/environments that enable the use of content through technologies that the internet provides for online teaching. The most common are the Learning Management System (LMS) platforms which, in addition to being produced by copyrighted software, are also widely available from open-source systems. They are essentially websites with additional features dedicated to teaching, with options tailored to support teacher/student interaction.

Most of the responses showed a widespread use of open-source platforms, but proprietary software featured as well and, marginally, applications that are not full-blown structured Learning Management Systems, but software for webinars (e.g.: ZOOM).





The main advantages of the highlighted LMS were reported as ease of use and customisation of existing functions, which results in easy handling both for the administrators and the users. Not to be overlooked in relation to the open-source platforms are the economic and ethical aspects, degree of usability, modular structure and technological reliability.

...

*“Material is saved and can be accessed at any time”*

*“A chance to track and keep a record of participants”*

...

In the few cases when the contents are produced in a language other than that of the country of origin the preferred language is English.

Particular reference is made to the ability to save material with the possibility of accessing it at any time later, the need to keep track of participation, to produce attendance registers and monitor that participants have the proper tools to take part in the training.

The wider diffusion of open-source platforms therefore represents a consolidated trend for most of the organisations involved in e-learning activities, also beyond the European trade unions, and is very important both because the number of users is directly proportional to the possibility of interaction between them, and because solving technical problems and any software criticalities becomes much easier if millions of other users are sharing the tools.

## 4 Personnel involved

### 4.1 Staff

Creating and manage learning environments on the web involves a very complex planning process that requires the involvement of various professionals both technical-specialised as well as experts in training planning, active teaching methods and content.

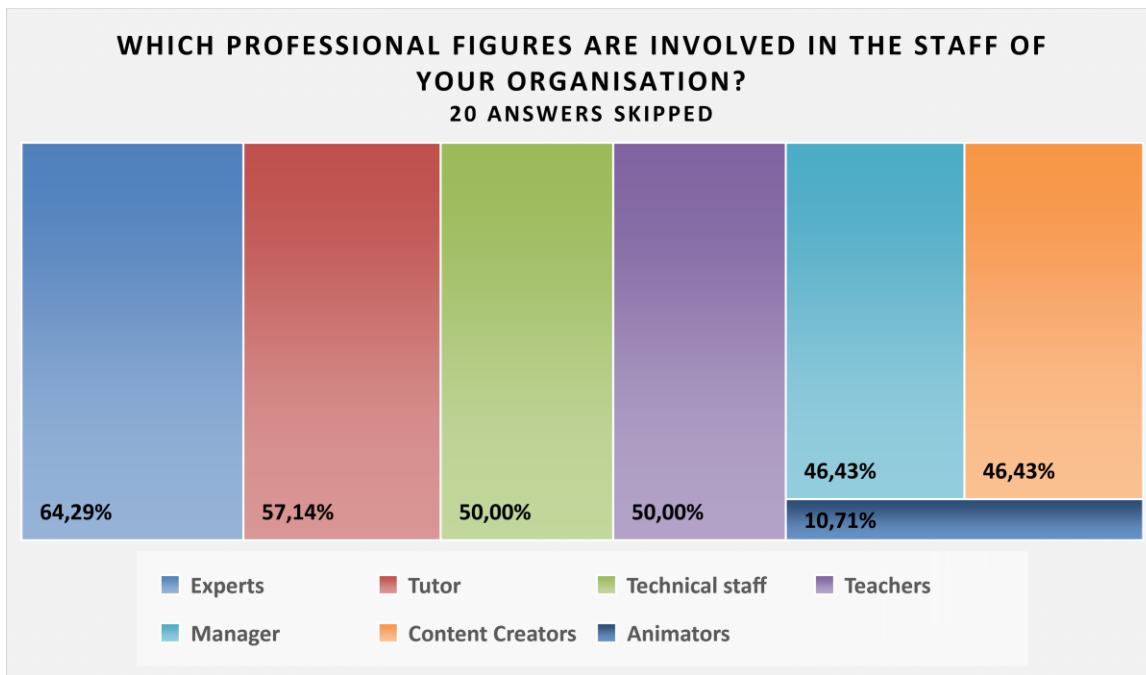
The respondents highlighted that the personnel involved represented mainly traditional figures such as experts, tutors and teachers, accompanied and supported by figures who develop the technological aspects, such as software engineers, graphic designers and content creators.

Alongside the traditional figures of teachers/experts, therefore, we find that of the process tutor/ animator who represents a point of reference for the learner, assisting and supporting them, also monitoring the various stages of learning through the “tracking” system. They play a role as well as mediators in the group setting and serve as “animators” in the virtual classroom, encouraging the learners in the discussion through appropriate measures on the forum.

In addition to skills related to training and supporting learners and the classroom, what emerges in the design and management of an e-learning project is the need for professionals with clearly defined skills for the development of the project as a whole, the construction of the most suitable content to use and the adoption of appropriate methodologies.

These figures can be defined as follows:

- System administrator;
- Experts in didactic planning;
- Development teams that develops and implements training content and includes experts who can develop and engineer the technological structure, and create the multimedia version of the content.
- Technical team: which is made up of those who manage the technical aspects (basic hardware and software and LAN) of the e-learning project.



However, resources from outside the organisations are used frequently.

...  
*“we are making the most of our own resources at the confederation level but we will use also sources from professional company”*  
 ...

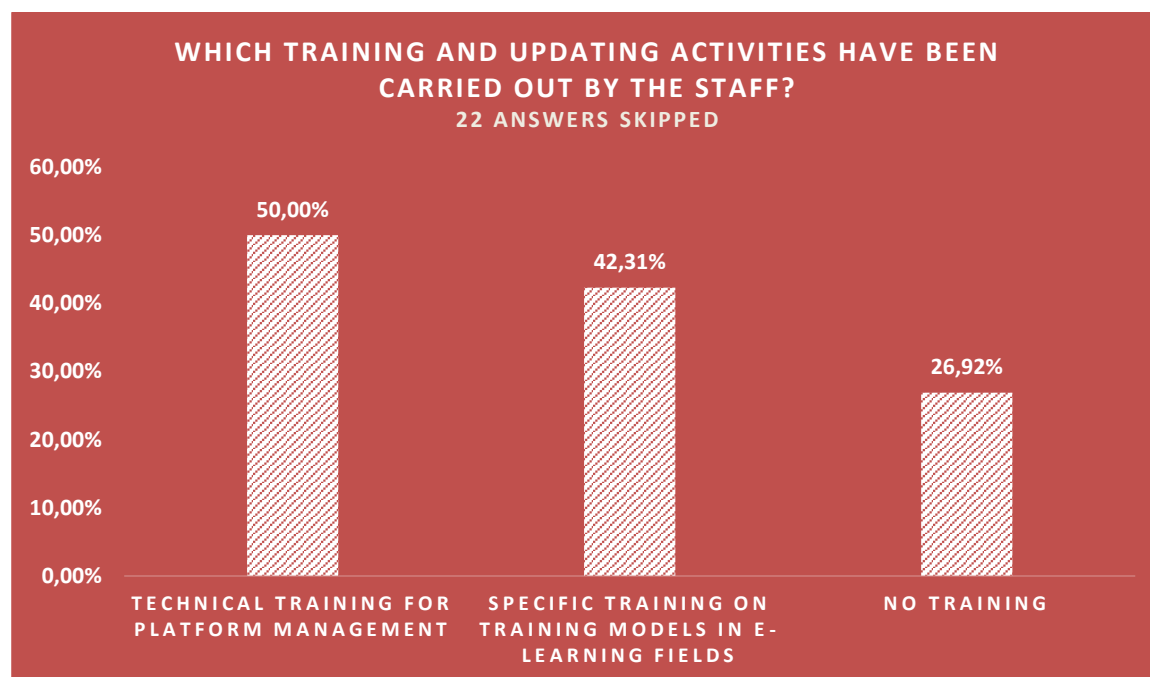
## 4.2 Training

75% of staff attend training and refresher courses on topics mainly dedicated to the technical- management aspects of the platforms and training models in e-learning mode.

The use of constantly evolving technological platforms, capable of being integrated with ever-more innovative applications, requires training updates by the technical staff involved.

The figures of trainers (designers, teachers/experts, tutors) whose skills differ and expand with respect to those that are the objectives of a traditional training course, are instead oriented to deepening the methods of planning, the transmission of contents or tools in online modalities and the development of virtual learning communities.

Also worth noting are educational events for works councils related to the COVID-19 crisis and a demand for the establishment of virtual communities for trainers for the European trade unions on the creation and management of e-learning content, in order to share best practices and exchange experiences, methodologies and content.



...

*“Creating and managing e-learning community for trade union trainers”*

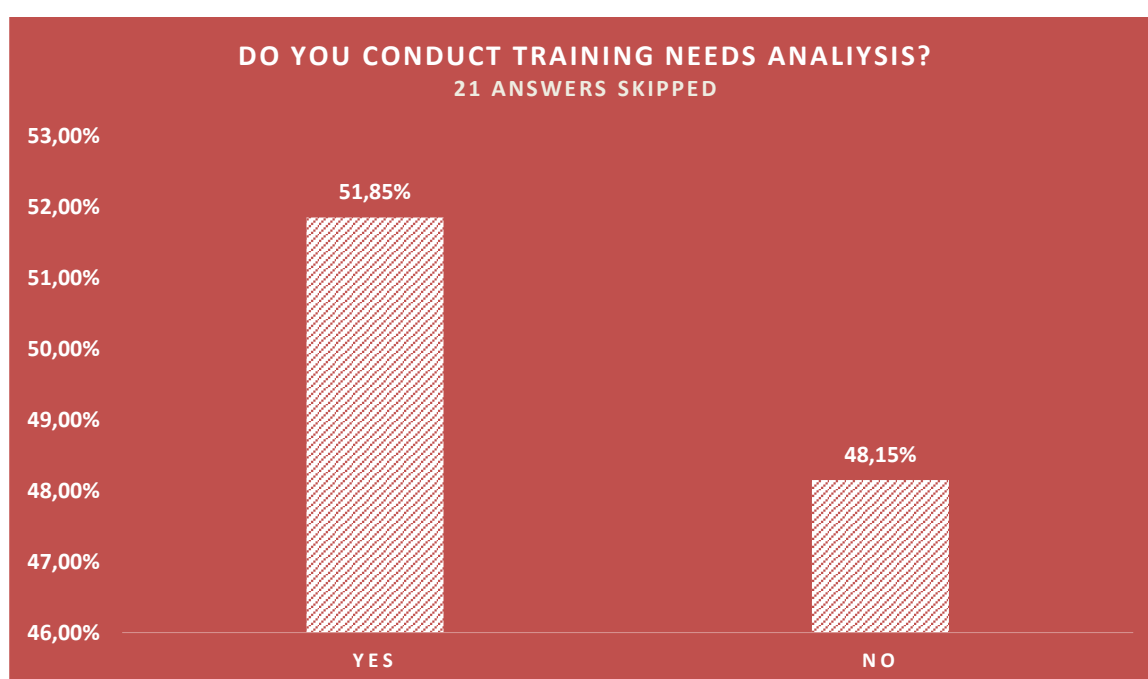
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## 5 Courses

### 5.1 Stages of planning and needs analysis

In designing courses, the percentage of respondents who carry out a structured analysis to assess needs is 51.85%.

They use both the just in time approach for each new initiative of online training and the realisation of training plans in the short to medium term (annual or biannual) adapted to the needs of specific target groups.



The approach used to conduct needs analysis is not specified, but participants usually take it on through a training needs analysis for the professional and personal development of users, involving all levels of trade union organisations, including the regional and sectoral offices and the end users.

The tools most commonly used for needs analysis are questionnaires, interviews, surveys and workshops.

In some cases the needs analysis already carried out for courses involving the physical presence of participants is remoulded and adapted for the transfer of courses to e-learning mode. This approach was

used in the research period when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted and prevented training activities involving participants being physically present.

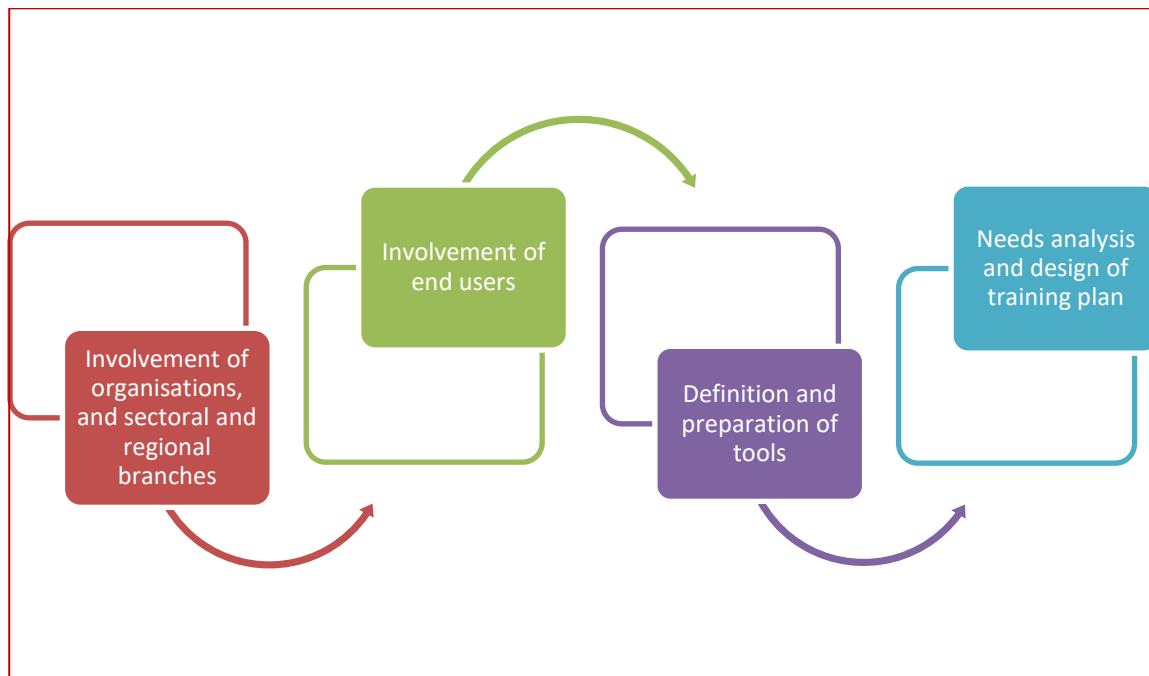


Figure 1 – Process of training needs analysis

The factors that characterise the planning of training interventions, such as the surveying of needs, the context in which it is carried out, the objectives to be achieved and the profile of the users therefore also remain as fixed points in planning an e-learning intervention.

In the construction of an e-learning project it is important to pay particular attention to the type of teaching materials to be provided in terms of elements and structure, of presentation methods in relation to the intended users and of the media channels through which it is planned to disseminate them.

The didactic model chosen must ensure different procedures of use, multimedia capability and interactivity, without prejudice to the use of non-interactive teaching materials, also in a multimedia format, which can be consulted, but with which the user does not interact.

The communication project has a central role in the process of constructing an e-learning intervention, in the same way as the nature and dimensions of the contents themselves, and consists of the aspects related to the proposed graphic model, to the definition of the methods of interaction between the players involved (users, trainers, media) and the communication style that is appropriate to the type of content to be presented.

## 5.2 Course structure and attendance procedures

With regard to the structure of the courses in terms of participants, duration and timing, the answers cover a very broad spectrum depending on the type of courses, with a slight prevalence of courses created for a limited number of participants (up to 20 and between 21 and 50) and lasting between 20 and 40 hours, developed over periods ranging from 6 weeks to 6 months.

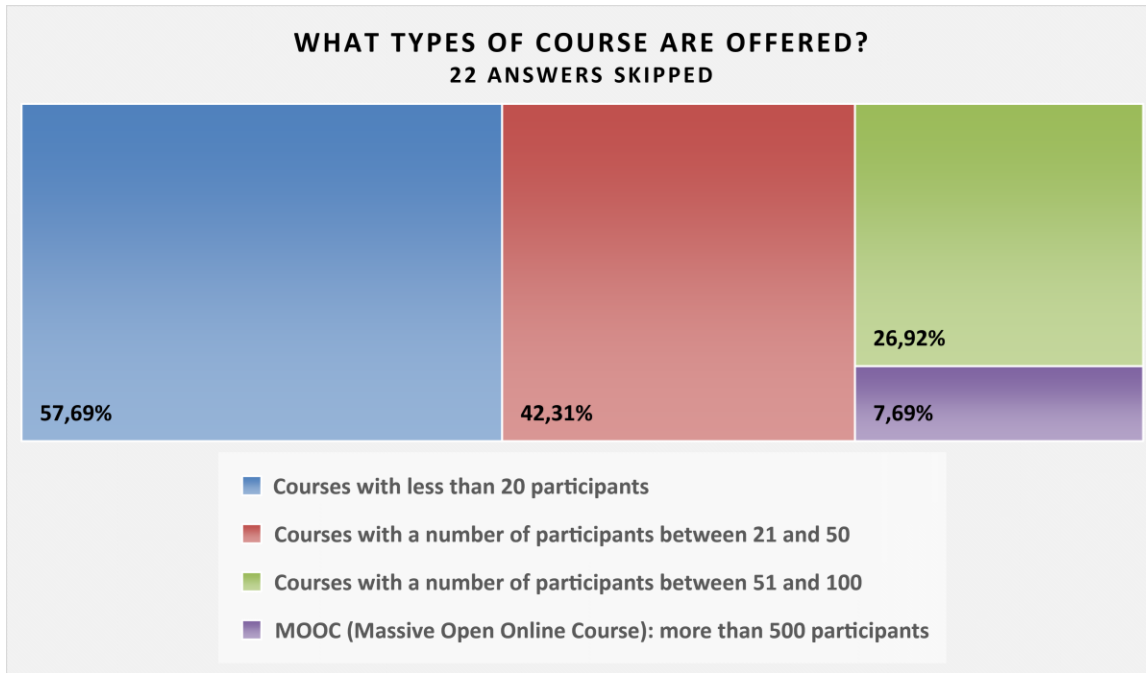


Figure 2 – Standard of courses offered

We also have to take note of micro training sessions consisting of asynchronous learning modules that vary from a minute and a half to 15 minutes to an hour.

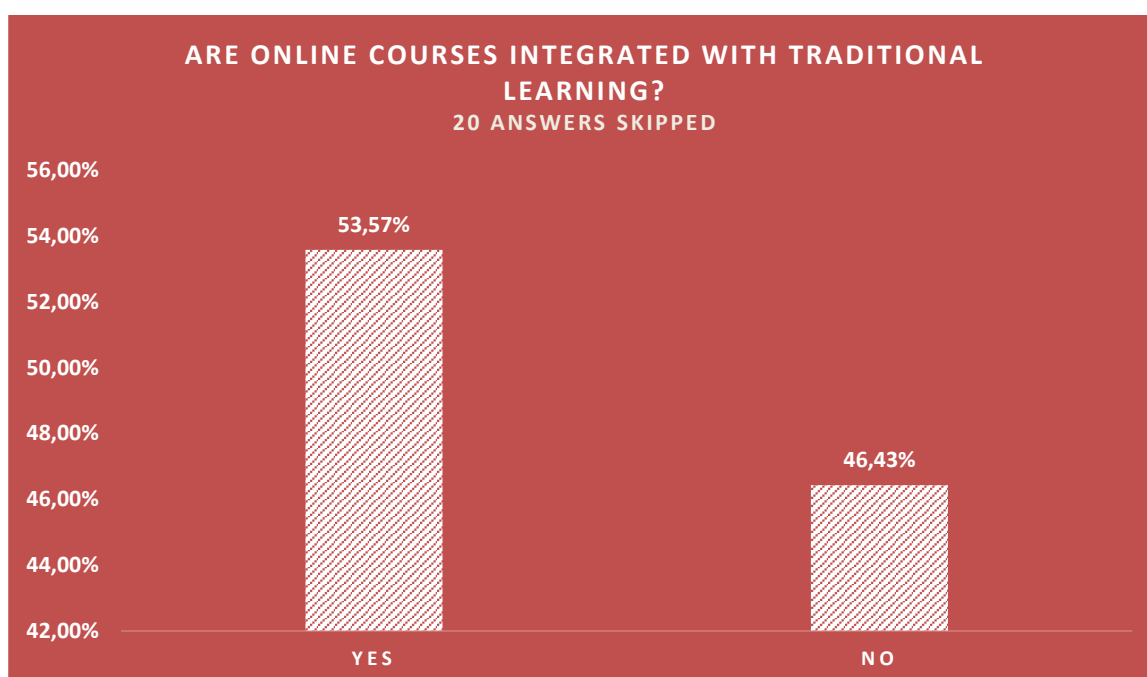
Applications instead that allow the organisation of webinars are very popular, which provide for a period of between 45 minutes to 2 hours, and are usually used for the benefit of audiences with a number of participants that exceeds 500.

The workload for participants also varies depending on the course, guaranteeing users, in the case of courses developed in an asynchronous mode, the choice of when to connect and participate, through the availability of self-consistent modules.

For more than half of the respondents, on-line courses are carried out in a mixed mode which alternates e-learning sessions with traditional activity sessions carried out in person, on both specialised and transversal contents.

From the open responses it emerged that the use of distance-learning tools and methods, for some respondents, was very often limited to the opening and closing meetings.

Considering that the research continued throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations had fully suffered the effects of this and had to adapt to the restrictions, through an update of training content to be transmitted exclusively online.





Specifically, the transversal contents mainly cover content related to digital skills, conflict management, time management, change management, training trainers, communication and negotiating techniques. Also noteworthy are courses on the management of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

...  
*“How to deal with trade union pressure during covid-19?”*  
 ...

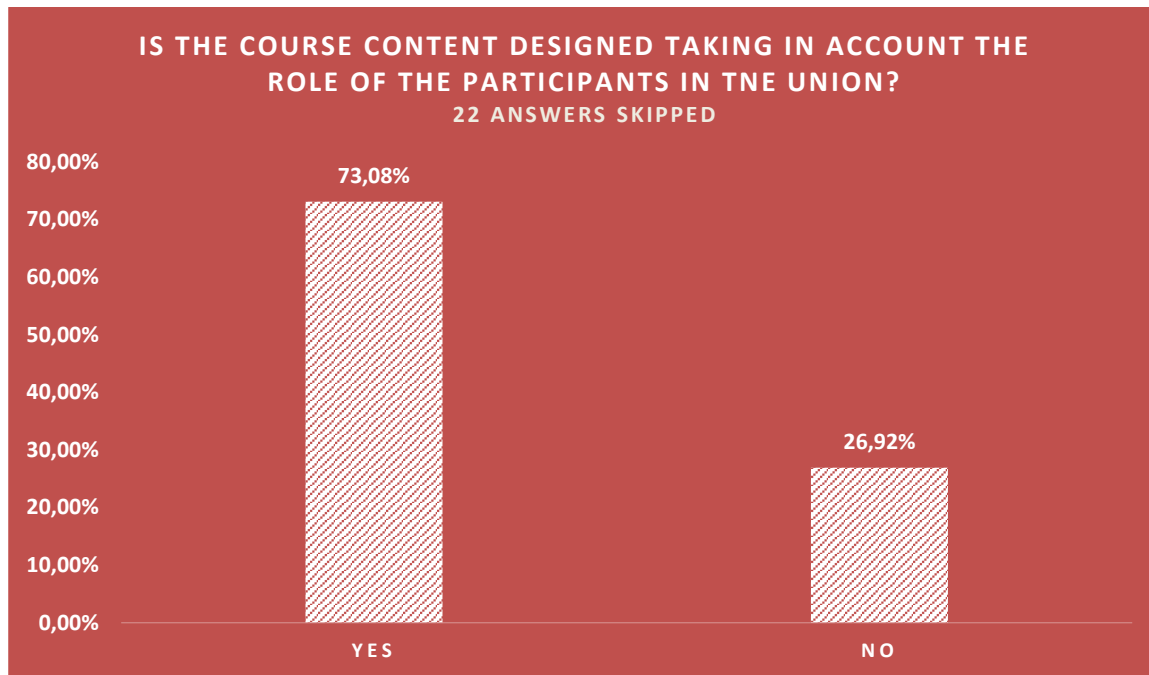
The specialised contents are discussed in courses devoted to collective bargaining, use of social media, union campaigning, union organising, democratic principles, economic and organisational analysis, international trade union work, and the role of the works councils.

...  
*“negotiation skills, use of social media, union campaigning, union organizing, economic and organizational analysis, international trade union work, internal union structures and democracy, role of works councils”*  
 ...

Mention was also made of training sessions on human rights, multiculturalism, conflict resolution, industrial relations, project management, and the financing of state functions delegated to municipalities for education, healthcare and social activities.

### 5.3 Entry requirements and access to courses

Each course has a specific target audience and access requirements are defined which depend each time on the implementation framework of the training plan, starting from the requisites related to the technological aspects that require at least an e-mail address and the possibility of being able to use a PC workstation, a microphone, speakers/headphones, a camera and having a good internet connection available.



For half of the subjects interviewed, access requirements linked to their representative role are envisaged for the participants. The courses are differentiated for users belonging to political or technical areas.

...

*“Participants have to be trade union member. For most courses they have to be active in trade union or works council”*

*“all courses focus on equipping union activists in their union work (with new skills, knowledge and attitudes). Courses focus on specific types of union activists and are adapted to their needs”*

*“Courses differentiated by technical and political area”*

...

In principle, the entry requirements stipulate that participants have to be least active members or trainers in the trade unions and/or EWC for which is necessary on occasion the approval of managerial staff

(supervisors). The course objectives are adapted to the learning needs of the participants. For some courses, a pre-course employment is a requisite.

Most courses focus on providing a toolbox for secretaries, activists, delegates and newly elected representatives, negotiation team and strike committee members, in their union work with new skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Finally, there are specialised courses dedicated to specific figures or professional qualifications, such as, for example, those on legal procedures intended exclusively for judges in employment tribunals or courses on tax issues for the services providers.

Course fees and entrance tests for participants are rarely applied.

### 5.4 Resources used for content

The resources used in the courses refer to tools and applications that are useful for the production of content, the activation of collaborative methods, study and evaluation. They refer in particular to tutorials, screencasts, interactive whiteboards, archives, areas for sharing materials and information and evaluation tools (tests).

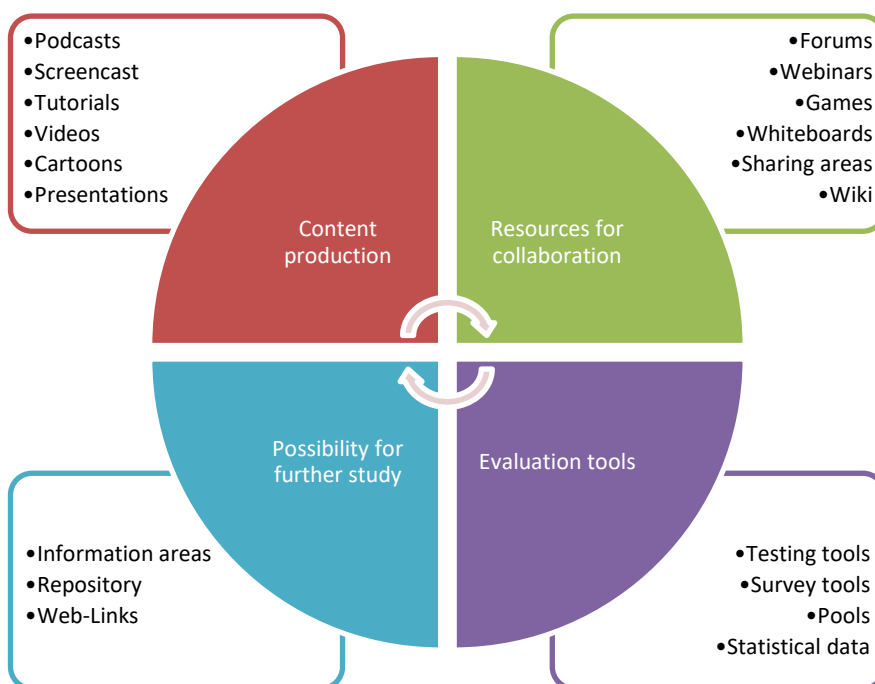


Figure 3 – Resources grouped by areas of use

Noteworthy is the use of webinars (interactive video lessons at a distance) and podcasts (digital audio files) that have the advantage of being accessible anywhere, require no physical classrooms, can be followed simultaneously by many users and be recorded for later use.

In the construction of an e-learning project what emerges, therefore, is a particular attention to the type of teaching materials provided in terms of elements and structure, of the means of presentation in relation to the users for which they are intended, and the media channels which are expected to be used to share them.

In the definition of content architecture, the didactic model highlighted provides different procedures of use, multimedia and interactive, providing, however, for the use of non-interactive teaching materials in multimedia format, which can be consulted.

Some respondents also referred to interactive and multimedia educational games that require critical thinking and stimulate problem-solving skills.

Animations, films, graphics, interactive games, webinars, podcasts and simulations in 3D stimulate interactivity and lend themselves well to consenting the variation of information offered on the basis of the choices made.

In this way users can be encouraged to request and receive timely feedback, confront real situations represented in virtual reality, learn, mainly through the learning by doing technique, and access modes of evaluation for what has been learned.

For the production of these resources, personnel from within the organisations are used, while external personnel are used for more complex resources such as games, cartoons, podcasts and webinars.

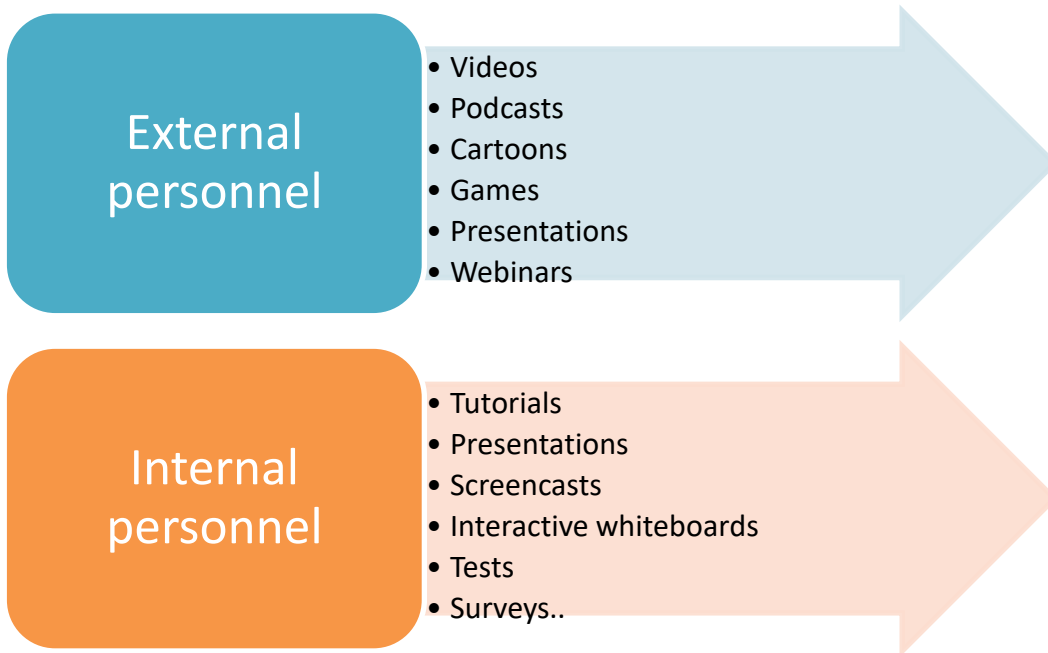
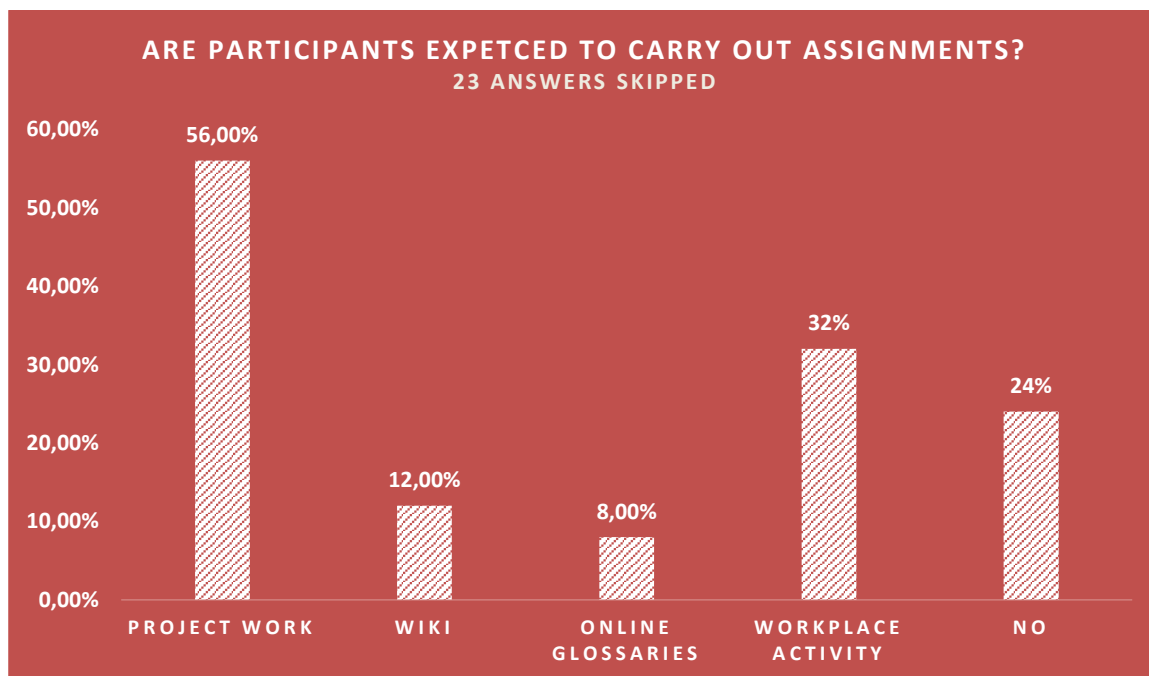


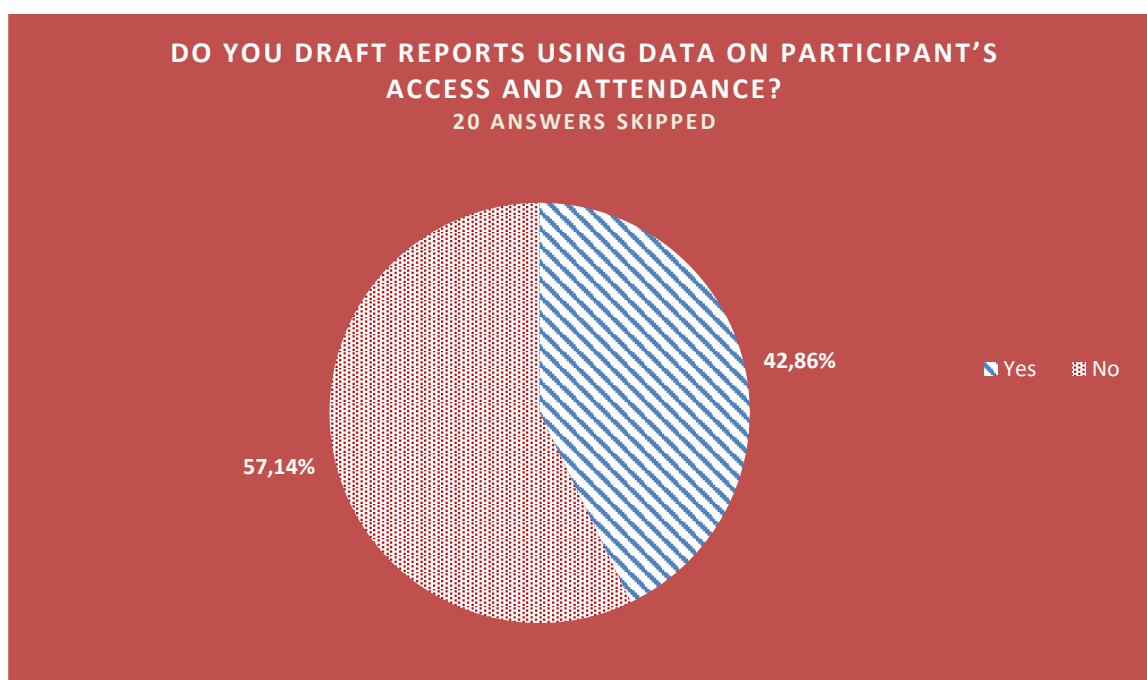
Figure 4 – Staff dedicated to the production of resources for e-learning

The most commonly used tool in the courses for the assignment of tasks appears to be project work, in working groups as well. Participants are also asked to read and reflect on the materials proposed and on specific texts by topic.



Although logging access and the attendance of participants is not considered a priority, the platforms allow the collection of data which, when processed, is used to justify the absence of the negotiator from their workplace.

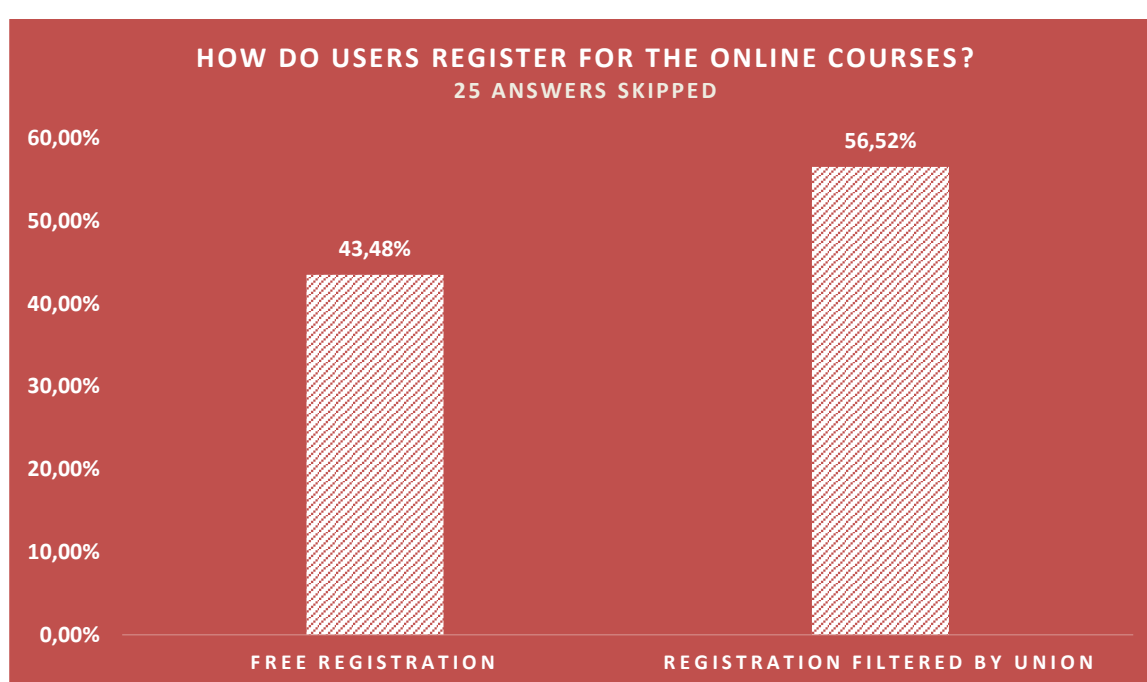
The report produced by the platforms can also be used to monitor access and performance in order to obtain an optimal frequency also with reference to the implementation of specific tasks, projects and evaluation questionnaires.



## 6 Participant profile

### 6.1 Recruitment and characteristics

In 56.52% of cases the registration of participants is largely filtered by the trade union organisations they belong to, with differentiated roles. They have to meet specific requirements, depending on the implementation framework of the training plan, for example: working in the private sector or being members of trade unions.

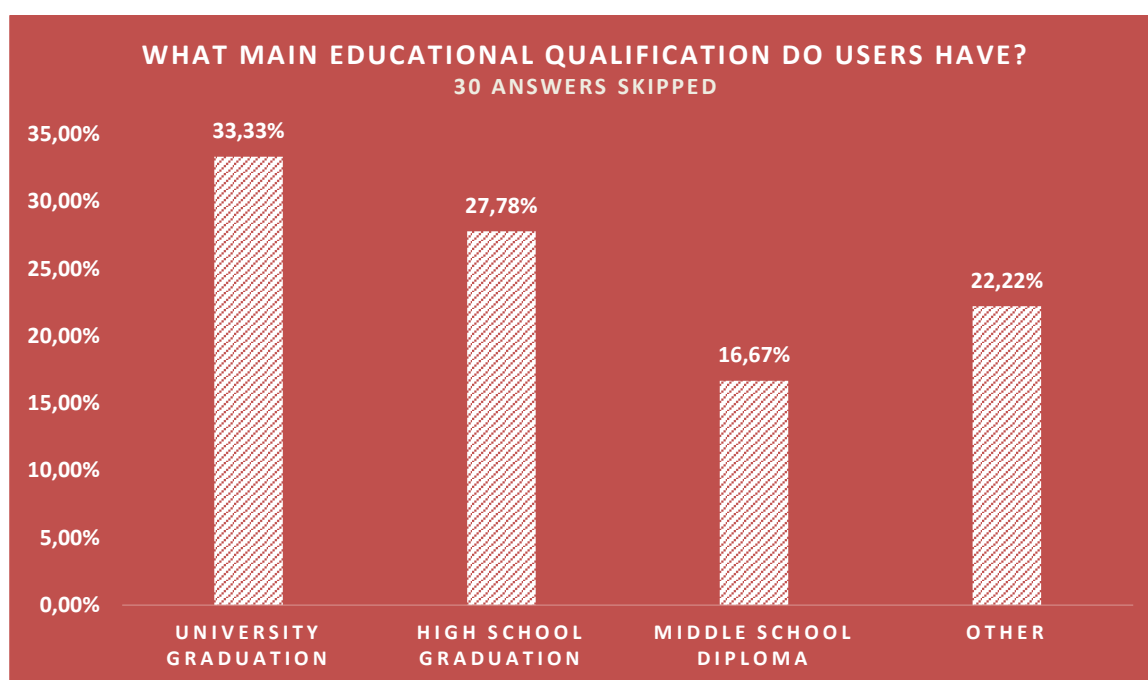


The shorter and entirely online contents are generally open to everyone even if a one-time registration is still required via the Learning Management System, using an online application.

The roles of the participants in training refer to union management, officials, union representatives, tax return assistants, health and safety reps, union members, clerks.

The most represented age range, when known, was 30-49.

An indication emerges of taking part in transversal courses during free time and specialist courses (e.g. in labour law) during working hours. These are participants with educational qualifications beyond diploma level.



## 6.2 Training and assistance

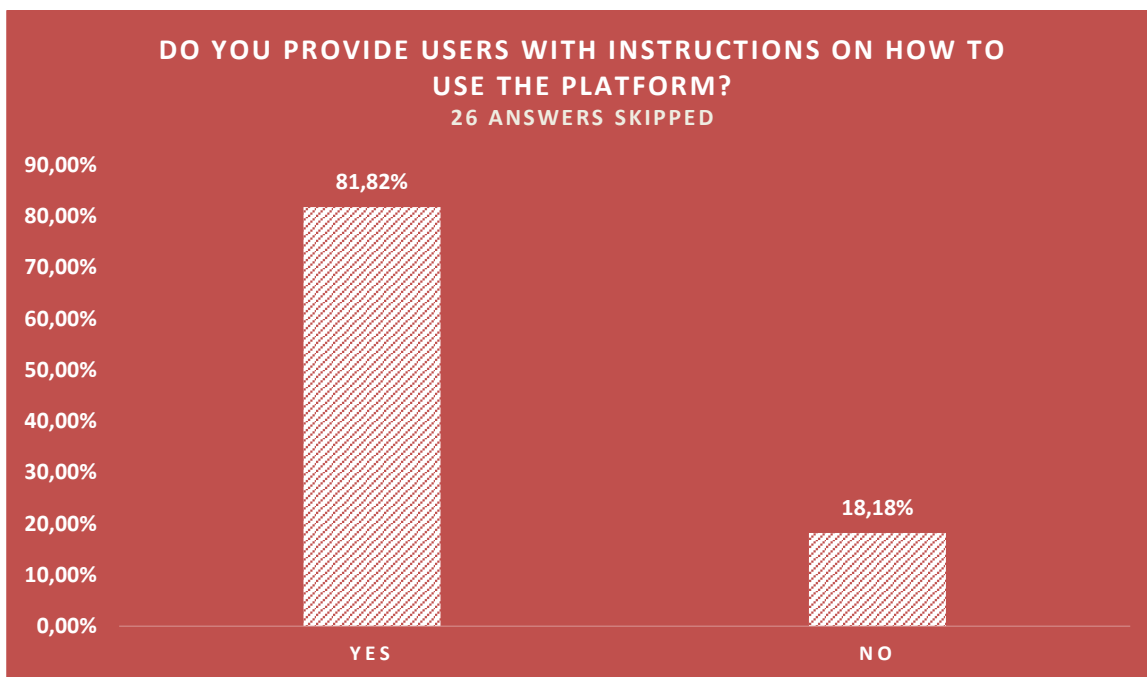
Most of the interviewees are provided with basic access instructions for participants for the use of the platform tools, also through the production of tutorials or written guides, with the possibility of seeking clarification from the tutor.

Access training is considered one of the main activities, to be developed during the first session.

There is also an IT tutor who supports trainers and all parties involved in technical issues as well as educational ones. Also important is the indication of guides with ethical instructions in the approach to communities, to be provided to participants.

Access training appears to be successful given the fact that there are generally no more than 3 requests for assistance per course.



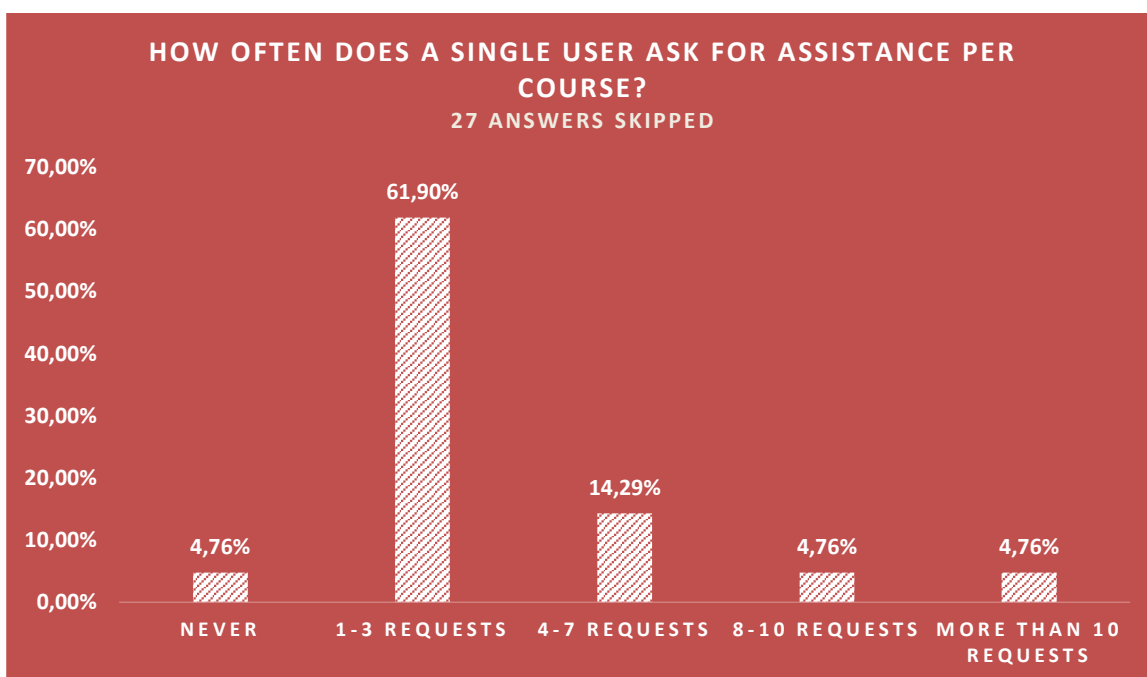


...

*“We provide technical and ethical instructions”*

*“We send a FAQ together with the invitation”*

...

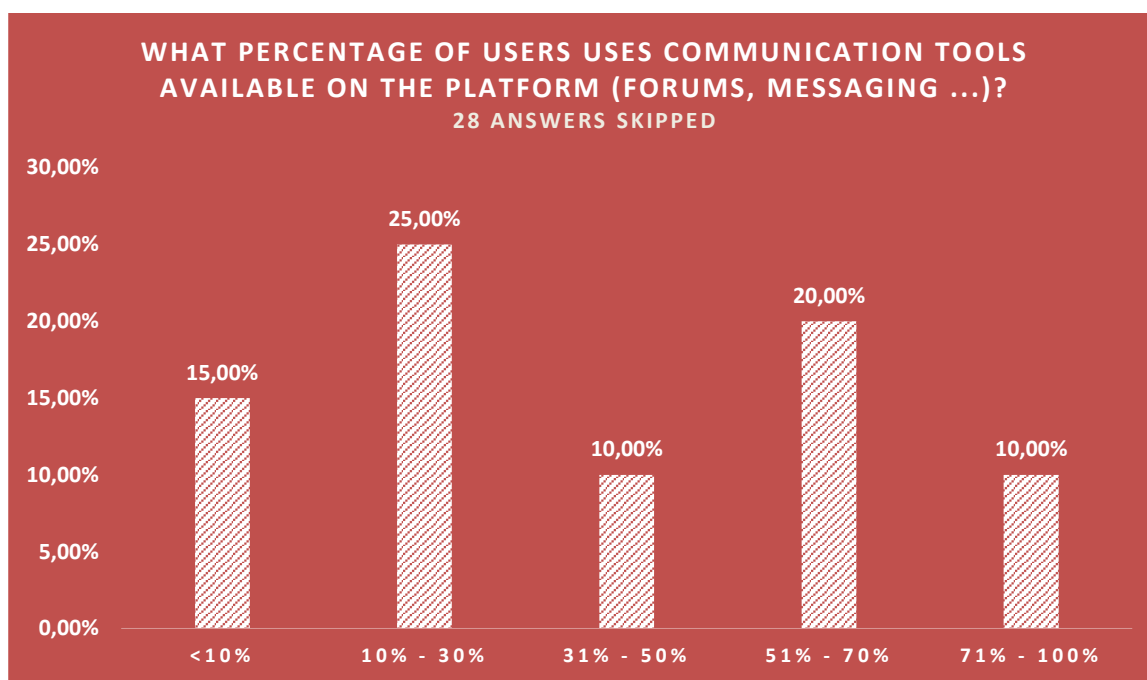


### 6.3 Interactions, communications and assistance

The percentage of users who use the platform communication tools has a very wide distribution and does not suggest an evident polarisation. However, it is important to point out that for more than half of the interviewees, 30% of the participants are active in forums and messaging.

These data represent an element of value where an online learning community is to be created and therefore requires careful planning that takes into account the peculiarities of e-learning tools.

For example, the forum, intended as a discussion area on specific issues, requires for its activation and functioning, the development of a well-structured plan of communication and interaction, with the involvement of teachers and tutors able to activate a virtual community that meets online, and respond promptly to requests and questions posed by the participants.



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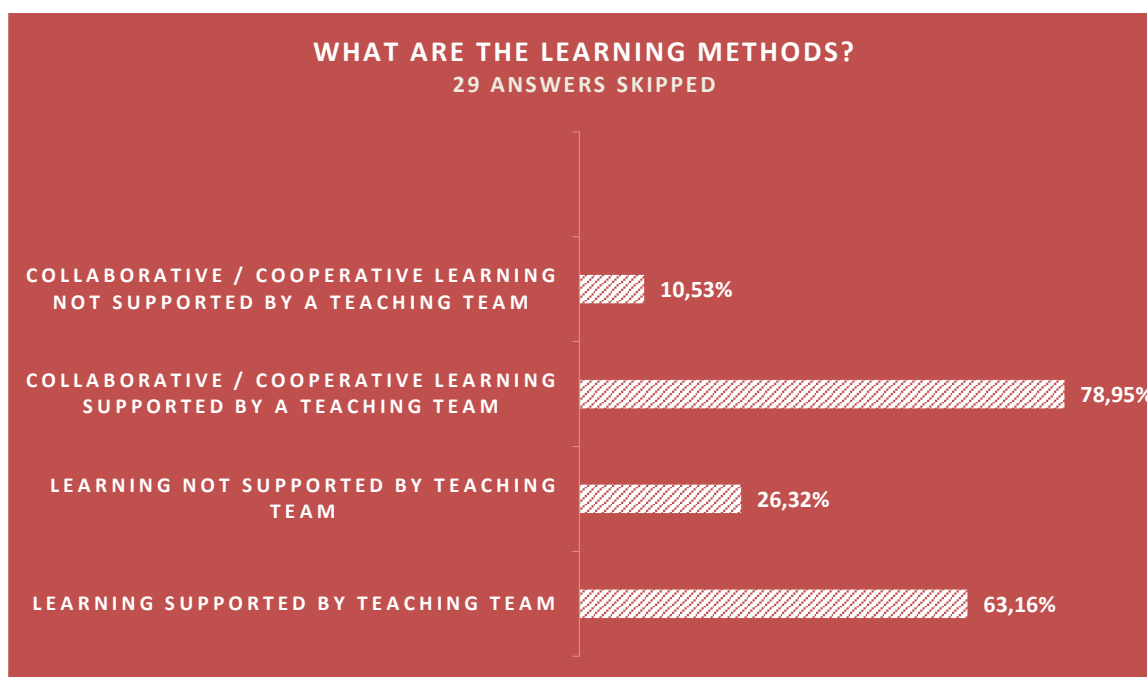
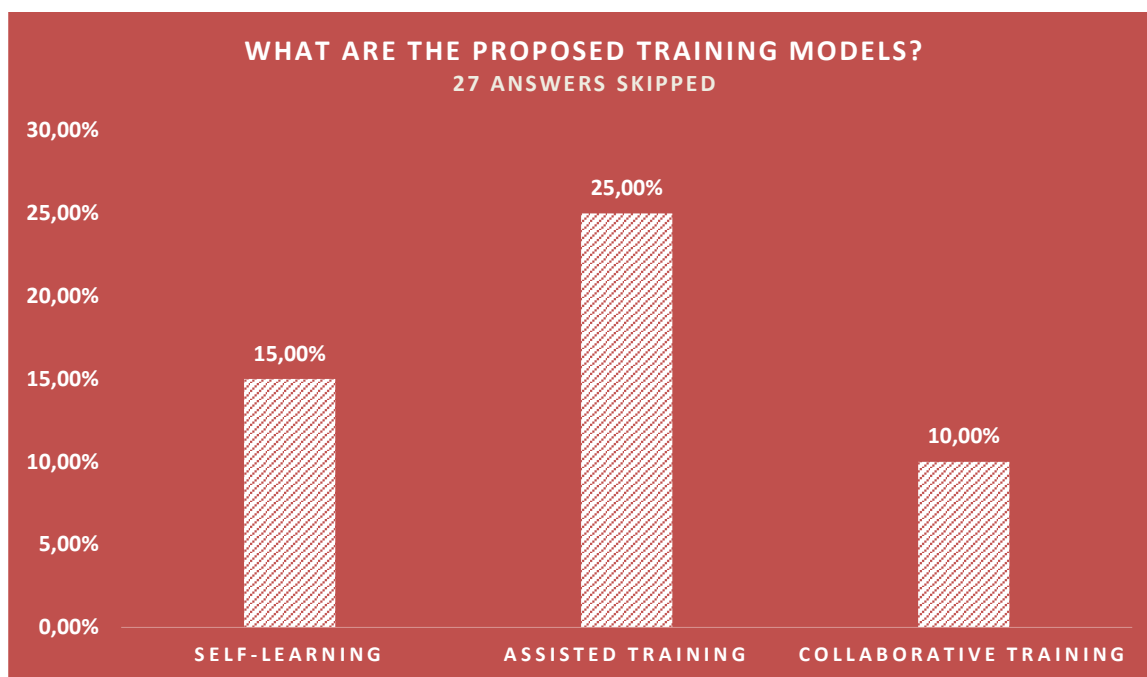
*“For some courses, participation within the forums is mandatory”*

...

## 7 Approaches to online learning

### 7.1 Collaborative training and self-learning

The training models applied are represented by various models between the two extremes (collaborative training and self-learning).

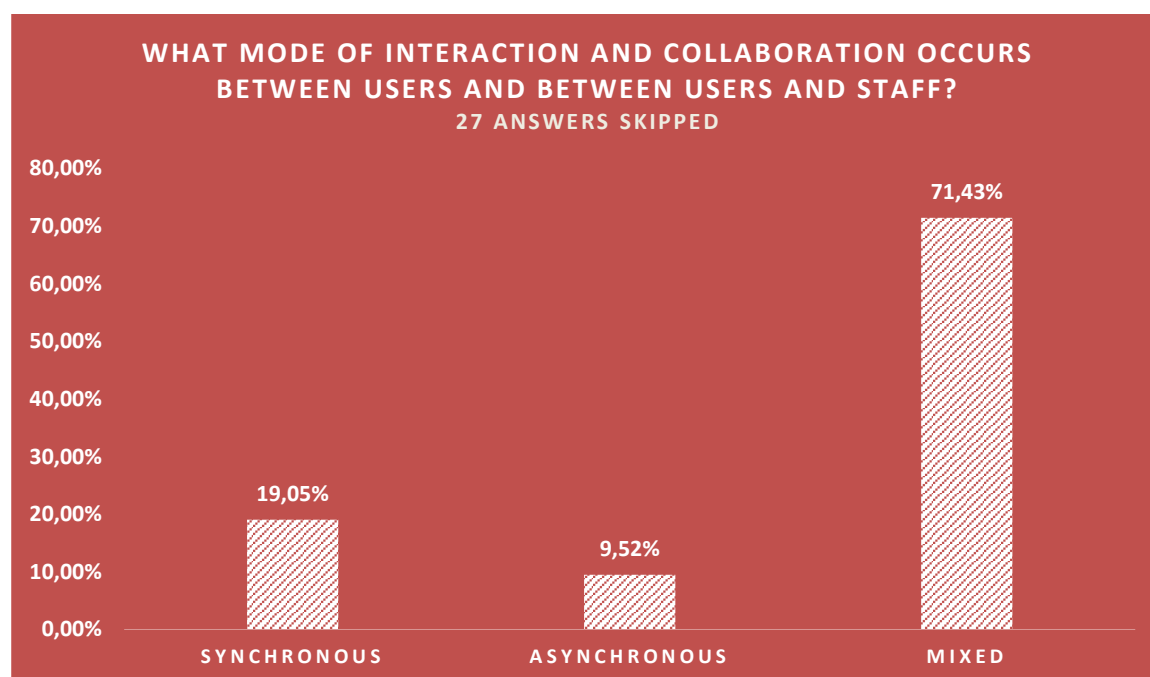


The self-learning approaches are based on the Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC), courses which were initially designed to replicate, in digital form, university lectures in which millions of users might participate, which generally have an elevated dropout rate, highlighting how important is the planning phase that has to define the most suitable teaching methodology, on a par with the choice of communication channels and contents to be developed, which has to be able to motivate, involve and stimulate the user to participate.

Collaborative training is always supported by trainers and is developed both in synchronous and asynchronous modes, through email, messaging, forums and videoconferencing.

The fundamental variable that differentiates the models is represented by the types of didactic mediation with the participants developed in various forms and measures from the didactic materials, teachers, tutors and exchanges between peers.

We find ourselves, therefore, dealing with the characteristics of the third-generation e-learning systems that recall both the technological dimension of learning on the net, as well as the social dimension of net learning, through the interaction of the participants in a real learning community which favours both the overcoming of the isolation of the individual and the enhancement of their relationships with the group.



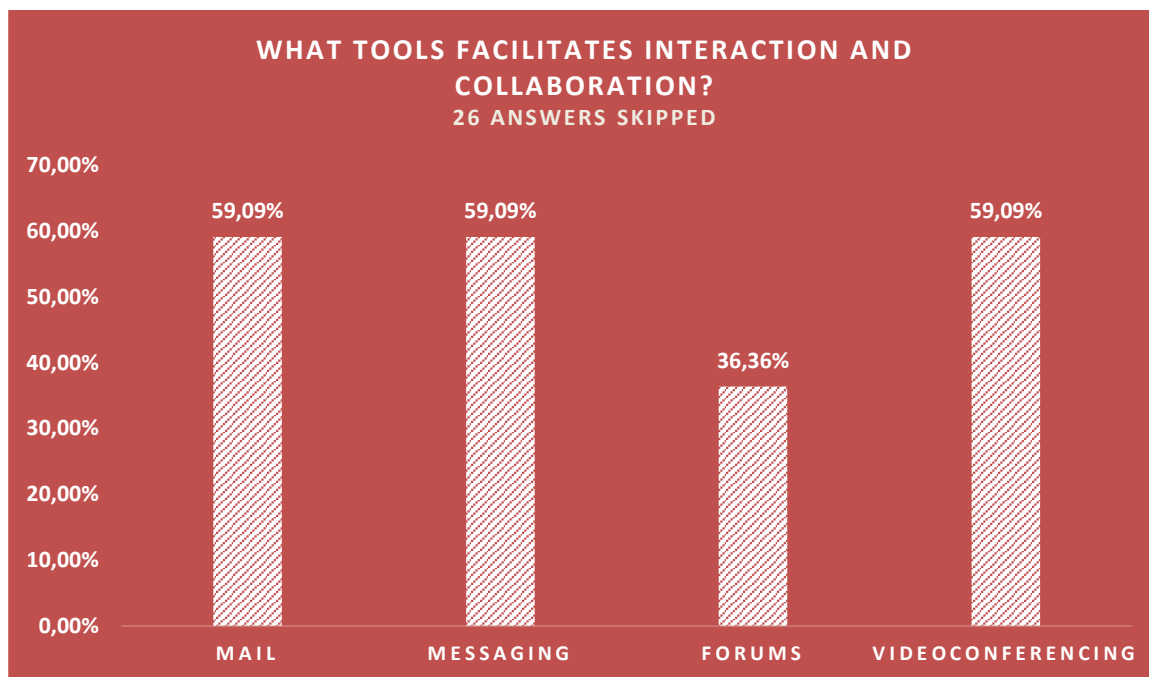
The delivery in synchronous mode takes place through audio/videoconference communication in which trainers and participants are present simultaneously and generally involve an intervention by the

teacher/expert, followed by question sessions with the participants, or interactive moments using specially designed materials such as digital whiteboards, surveys or didactic games.

The research shows that the synchronous mode is frequently associated with the asynchronous mode through which environments are provided that deliver digital materials, granting the user the freedom to explore different content in a short time by building personalised paths, guided by their own interests and goals, freeing themselves from the constraints of a structured and pre-established training path.

Respondents highlighted that on the net there are many software, commercial and open-source tools which are based on the delivery of collaborative content and tools through the use of multimedia and interactive channels (such as the internet, television, video/audio, webinars, podcasts, etc.) and on the fruition by users of the services offered without spatial-temporal constraints, with the support of a plurality of communication tools, such as chat, e-mail, web references, forums, etc.

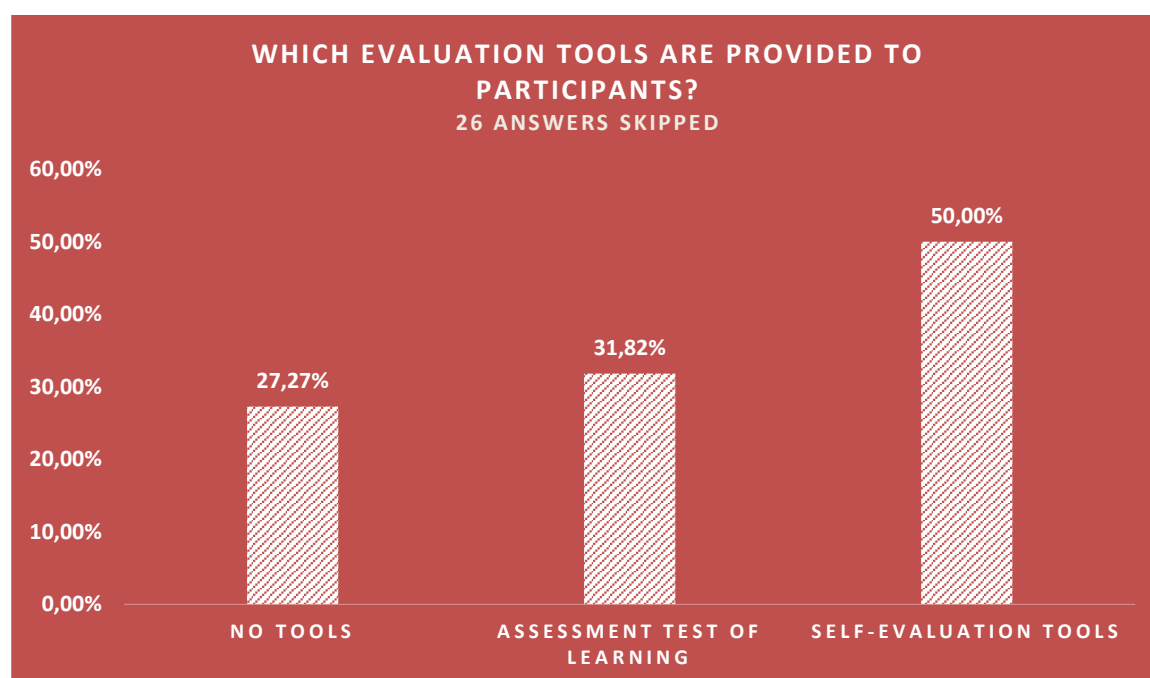
Good practices include the use of questionnaires, surveys and collaborative working groups.



## 8 Evaluation and certifications

### 8.1 Tests, certificates and validation

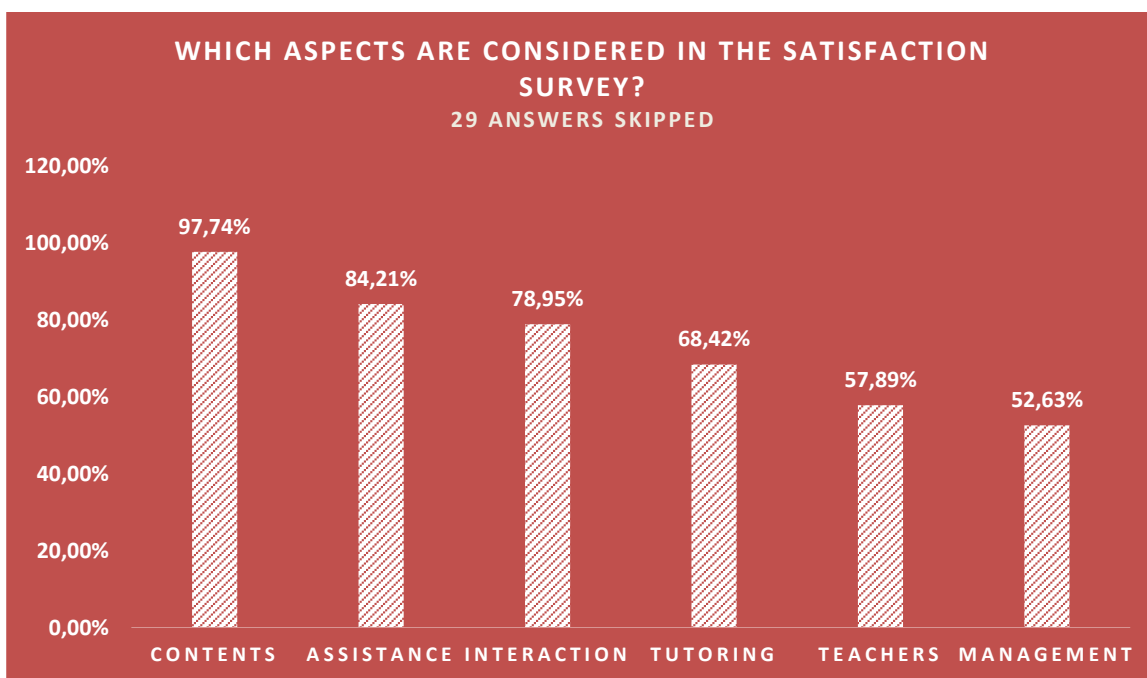
Participants are given (mainly) self-evaluation tests and evaluation tests of learning that lead to the acquisition of certificates of participation and achievement with recognition from the union.



The tests are assigned both individually and collectively, and passing certain tests also leads to the award of digital credentials.

With regard to the validity or recognition of certificates issued by e-learning courses there emerges a widespread practice of validation within the union, while locally recognised certifications and qualifications are issued locally (e.g.: UK, Flanders, Latvia), and for certain figures (VET courses and teacher training, health and safety courses)

Satisfaction survey questionnaires are often used, mainly regarding the content, assistance, interaction, mentoring and pedagogical methods used.



## 9 Criticalities

In the management of the platform, the staff involved highlight difficulties related to digital skills, the limited time to learn how to use the various functions and the need to use various and different platforms because none can be considered complete and exhaustive to use with the various opportunities necessary.

In interaction with the participants, difficulties arise that derive mainly from insufficient digital skills, poorly performing technological infrastructures and technical difficulties related to the internet connection. Technical problems also arise from the fact that users do not have administrator rights on their official computers.

In some cases the participants had difficulty in committing themselves to follow all the required rules in order to successfully complete the training.

In the management of groups there is a lack of tools and time to devote to participants who at times do not appear to be particularly proactive.

It is also considered important to regulate the timing of the interventions and the management of asynchronous modalities which influence the abandonment of courses.

Institutions that have never used e-learning tools or have stopped using them mostly highlight the lack of personnel and economic resources, but foresee development possibilities in the future (more than 60%).

...

*“The biggest problem is, that we have to use different platforms, because there is none which provides all opportunities we would like to use”*

*“The digital basic skills of all trainers aren't very high”*

*“Lack of specialized staff”*

*“Developing/enhancing the site is resource intensive”*

...

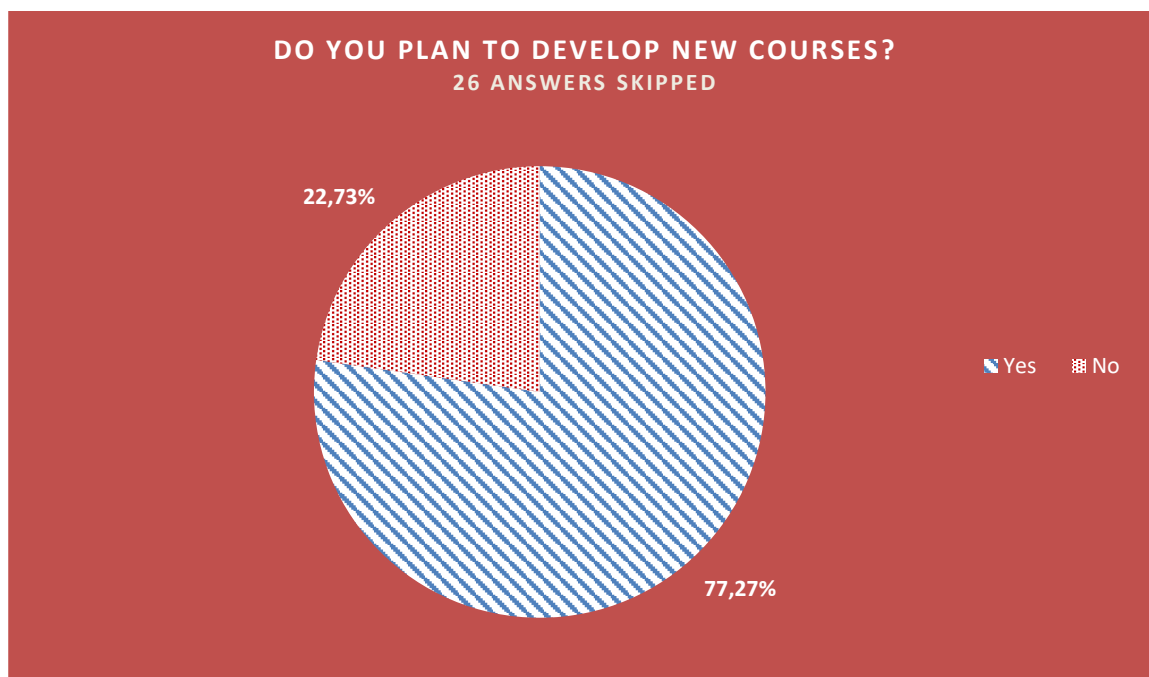


## 10 Ongoing strategies

Ongoing strategies for online training over the next two years include the transformation of various training courses from blended to online, updating the systems in use to offer courses in synchronous mode and create interactive courses that will improve people’s participatory skills.

The contents to be developed refer to courses relating to COVID-19 protocols, health and safety, digital skills, training trainers and social media, for which is foreseen the enhancement of collaborative and interactive tools and an in-depth analysis of webinar applications.

For this purpose, it is assumed that the staff involved in the use of digital platform management tools and the construction of on-line courses, integrated with specialists in the development of e-learning courses (pedagogists and technicians), are up to date in their training. At the same time it is deemed necessary to upgrade the hardware and software technological resources in use.



Most organisations intend to develop new courses in the near future. The main contents of the scheduled courses refer to:

- Development of a strategic union training plan
- Training for young leaders
- Trade union campaigning

- Toolbox for the trade unionist
- Legal, health and safety training
- Training of trainers
- Online learning tools, learning platforms
- Working relationships
- English language
- Green Skills
- Digital skills; social media; blogging
- Project management
- Diversity and inclusion
- Planning e-training training; flipped classroom methodologies
- Tutoring to be provided in blended mode
- Courses on the management of COVID

The interviews show an intention to introduce methodological and instrumental innovations in the approaches to training in e-learning mode, especially as regards the adaptation to participatory and interactive methodology, using collaborative tools, interactive whiteboards, group work and mixed training.

Participatory and interactive learning also refers to the development of adequate educational content conveyed through online platforms such as Big Blue Button, Storyline, Rise etc. Participation, empowerment and networking are considered challenges within distance learning and represent a goal for future training activities.

...

*“Also collective action, empowerment and networking that have been focal points in Trade Union education are now challenges within distance training and it is a goal for our future education activities”*

...

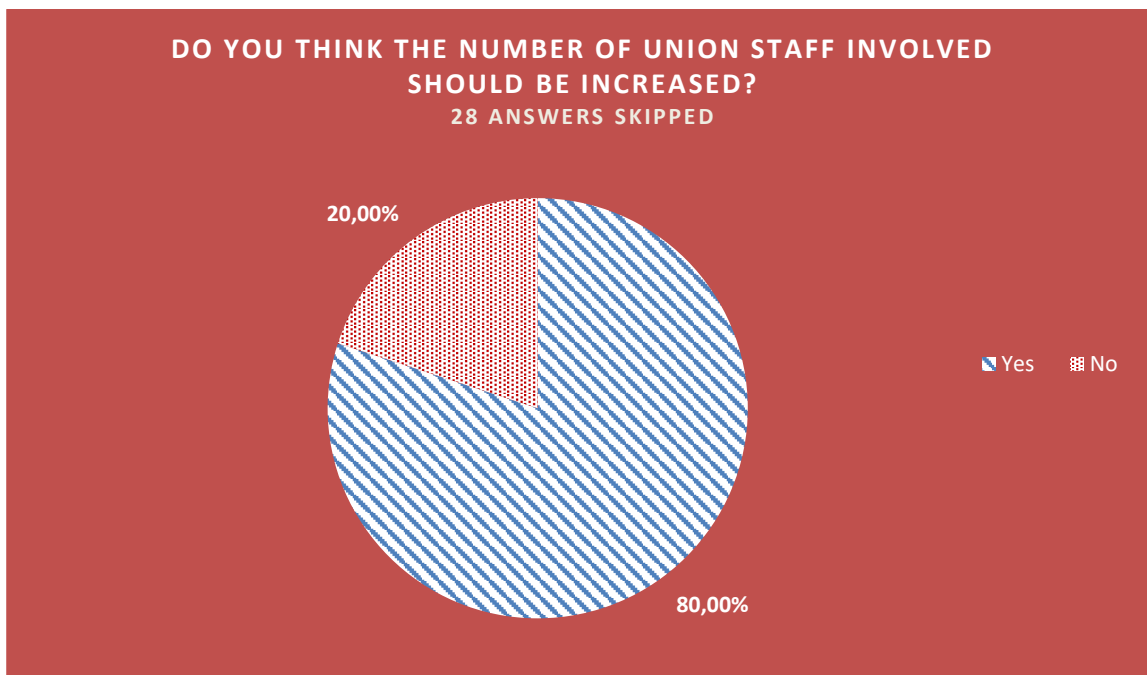
It is intended to further encourage the use of webinars and micro-learning, also investigating the tools for the production of content that will allow for more self-directed learning. The need to strengthen the support tools for participants in e-learning sessions is considered to be of great importance.

...

*“We are hoping to offer more truly blended courses. Flipped classroom approach, may suit us best. Courses offered wholly online, but facilitated support sessions provided to develop the learning”*

*“Enhance hardware and software tools for webinar and collaborating services”*

...



With regard to the composition of the staff involved, it is considered necessary to increase the number of ITC experts and developers accompanied by training for trade union trainers on online learning methods and the construction of content suitable for being conveyed on the Learning Management System, the management of collaboration and communication tools, and the use of digital platforms and online learning tools.

The opportunity to involve sectoral representatives is also reported for the purpose of a planning that is more consistent with training needs, and personnel able to analyse and process attendance and participation data for the development of the most effective training plans.

Interventions on personnel must be accompanied by adequate infrastructural and technical support, through the purchase of the most suitable equipment, online platforms for online learning activities, software and laptops.

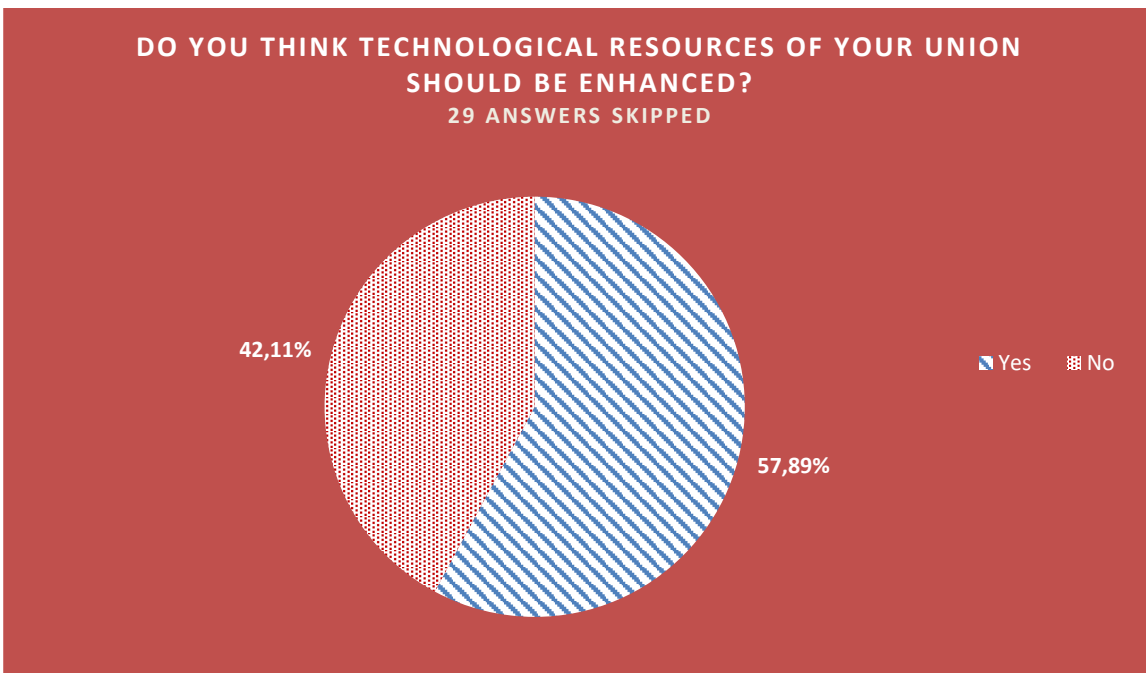
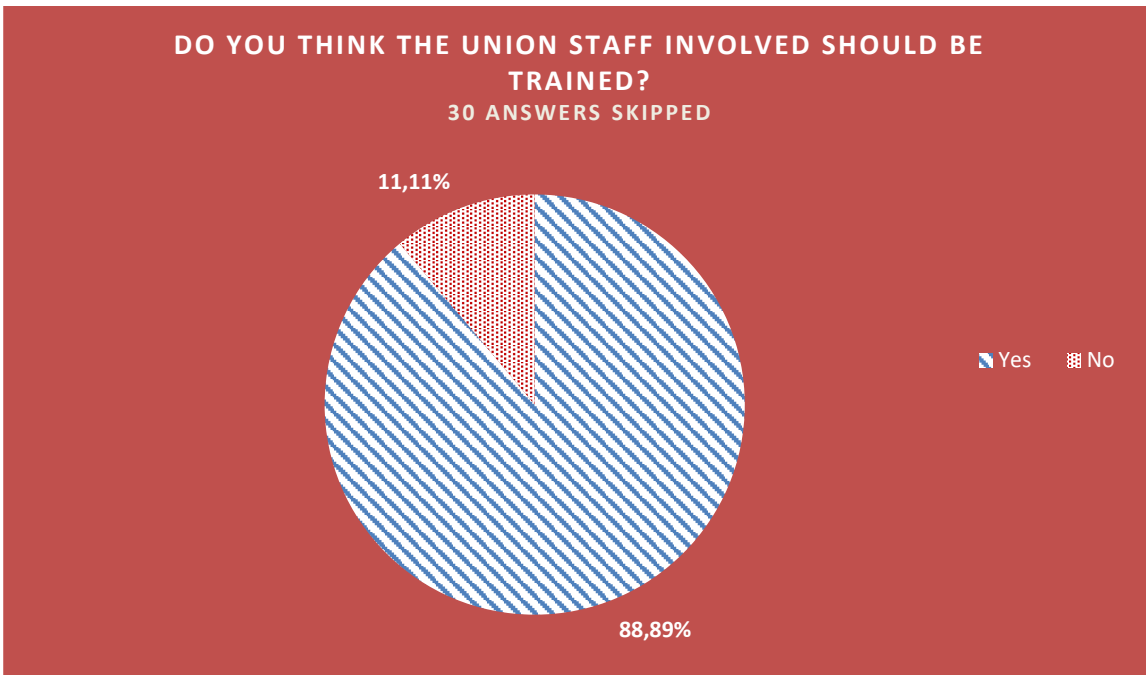
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*“Education and familiarisation of Union staff with on line learning (cultivating the relevant skills) is important, since a percentage (especially older in age) are not familiar”*

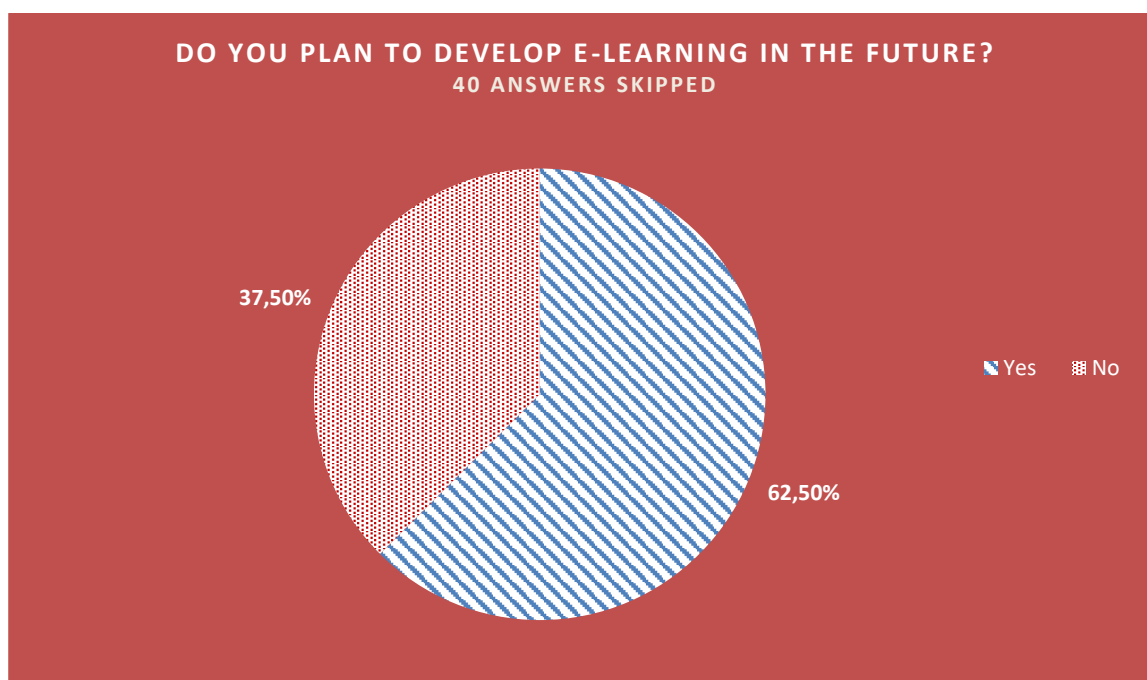
*“Sector representatives should be involved”*

*“We have a small dedicated team of e-learning development specialists. We would like to add someone that can analyse usage data, this will help inform future plans”*

...



For those who declared that they had interrupted or never participated in training activities in e-learning mode, it should be noted that 62.50% of the interviewees declared their intention to develop courses in the near future on health and safety in workplaces, social dialogue and negotiation, labour law, transversal skills, trade union rights, the European Union, employment policies, basic elements of the union and EWC elections.



## 11 Good practices

The interviews highlighted some good practices in the provision of e-learning courses such as the use of surveys during lessons to introduce a topic, working groups, and tag clouds in collaborative activities. The centrality of the participants and their experience has been used for the construction of the contents of e-learning training in cooperative mode, designed following a specific educational methodology that provides interactive and participatory learning.

In the sense of e-learning understood as online training, which recovers the social dimension of learning, the user therefore represents the focus around which to build the process of interactive and mutual collaboration between the parties involved in the process itself, to allow them to actively participate through integrated projects, the production of materials, the activities to be carried out, and exercises or projects to be developed within a specific period of time.

This role of content co-producer by users is helping to bring out an interesting phenomenon in the on-line continuous training courses in which we are witnessing the gradual disappearance of the boundary between trainers and users of e-learning content, given that the latter participate more and more in the construction of materials that can be used online from a perspective of “peer education” that uses “social mediation” learning methods, such as cooperative learning and mutual teaching (peer tutoring).

Collaborative working groups were activated using open-source applications and various digital communities were created for union trainers in e-learning mode, using digital organisation methods. A group of 12 union leaders follows a 20-hour specialised course and two-hour videoconference on the subject of the governance of vocational training contracts.

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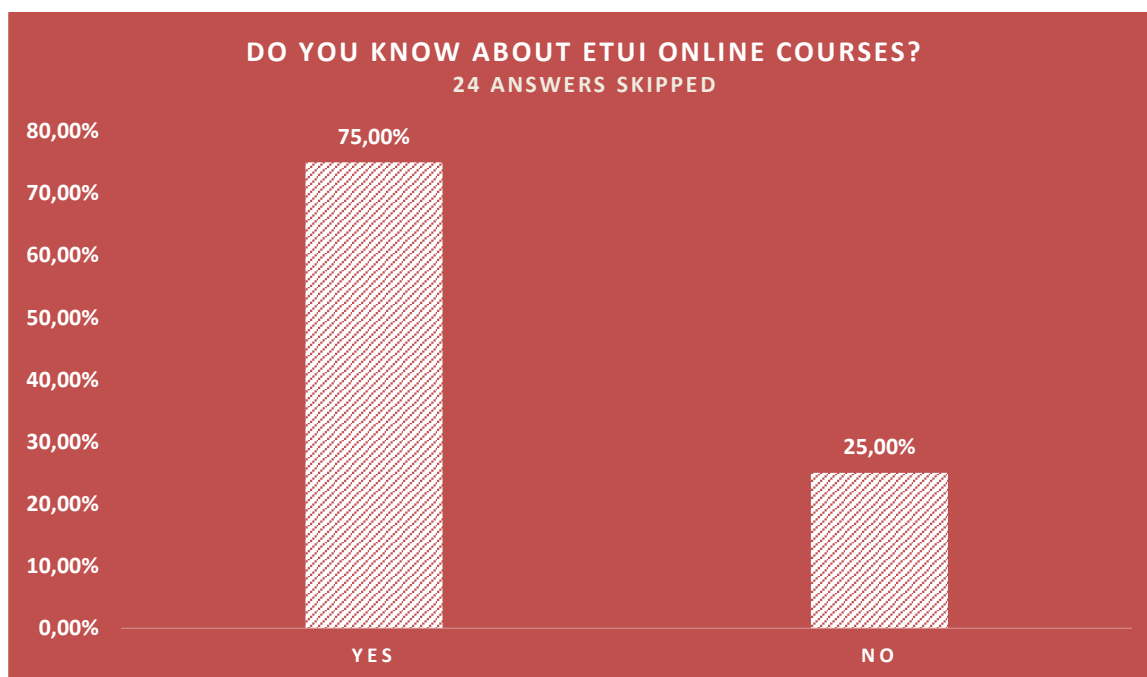
*“The content of the e-learning training has been designed following a specific educational methodology (interactive and participatory learning, utilising the participants experience)”*

*“We 're using our new LMS Howspace as "community house for e-trainers". See: <https://www.howspace.com/>”*

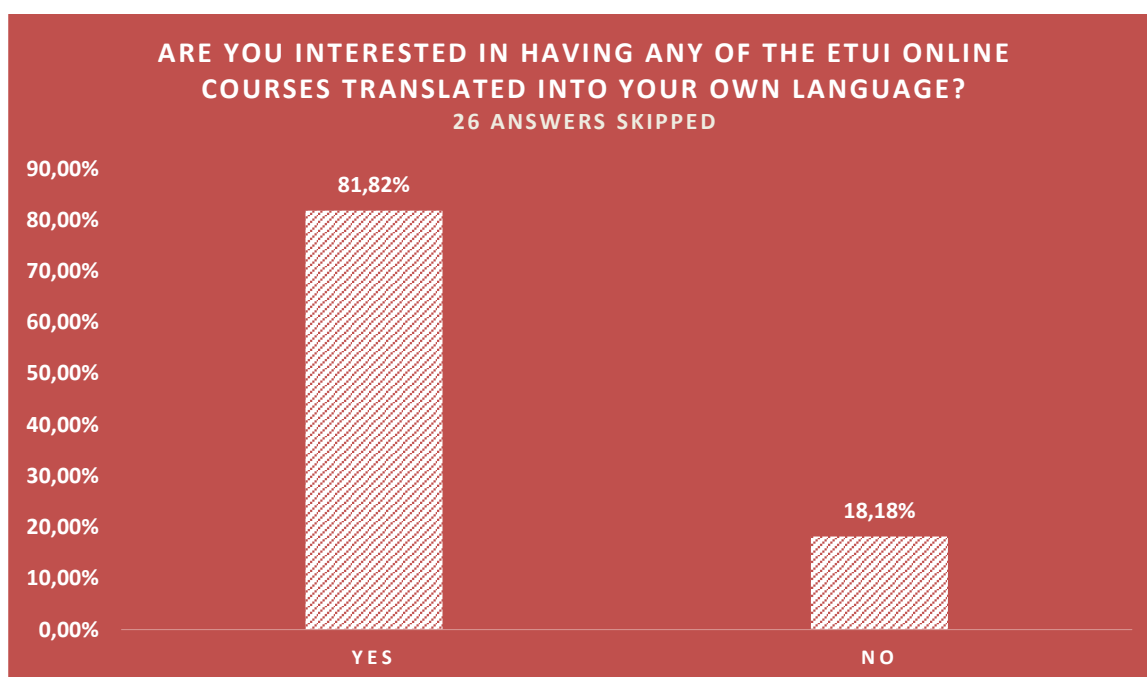
*“We now concentrate on offering the best online learning experience that utilises the best online tools and no longer try to deliver versions of our classroom programme.*

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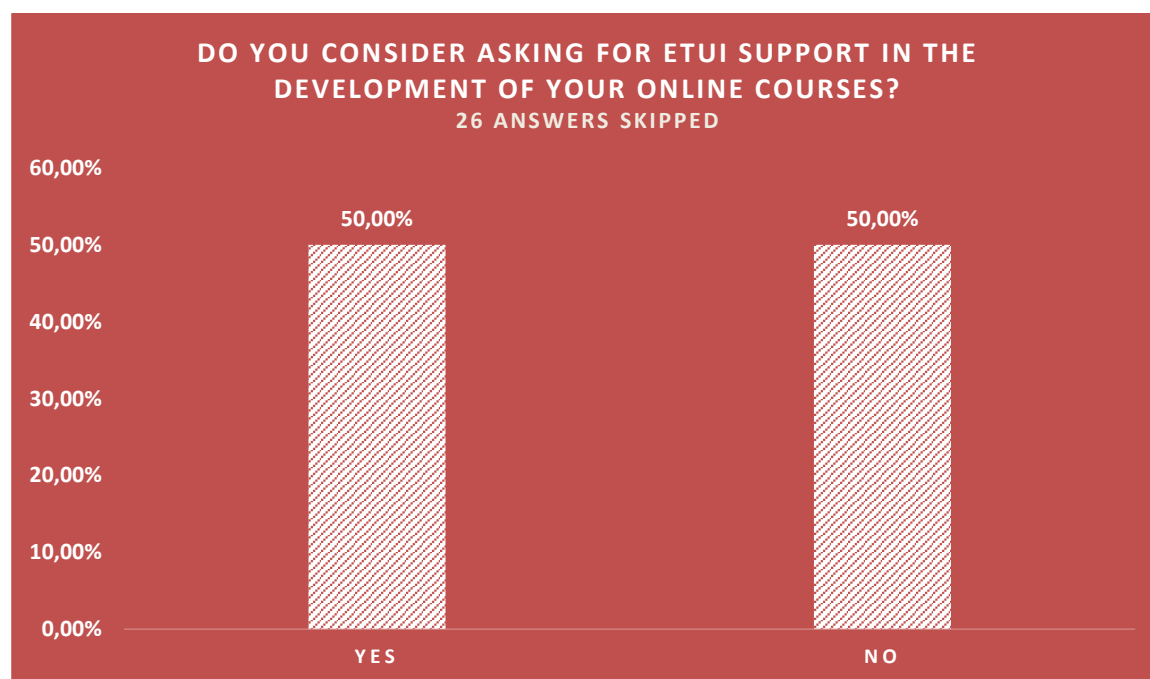
## 12 ETUI



75% of respondents know about the ETUI courses, particularly those relating to European Work Councils, English language, European citizenship, project management, the European Union for trade unionists and tutors for online courses.



Project management, EWC, the European Union for trade unionists, working conditions, labour law, trade union rights and social dialogue courses also need to be translated into other languages (Spanish, Dutch, French, German), considering the difficulties encountered by participants who are unfamiliar with English.

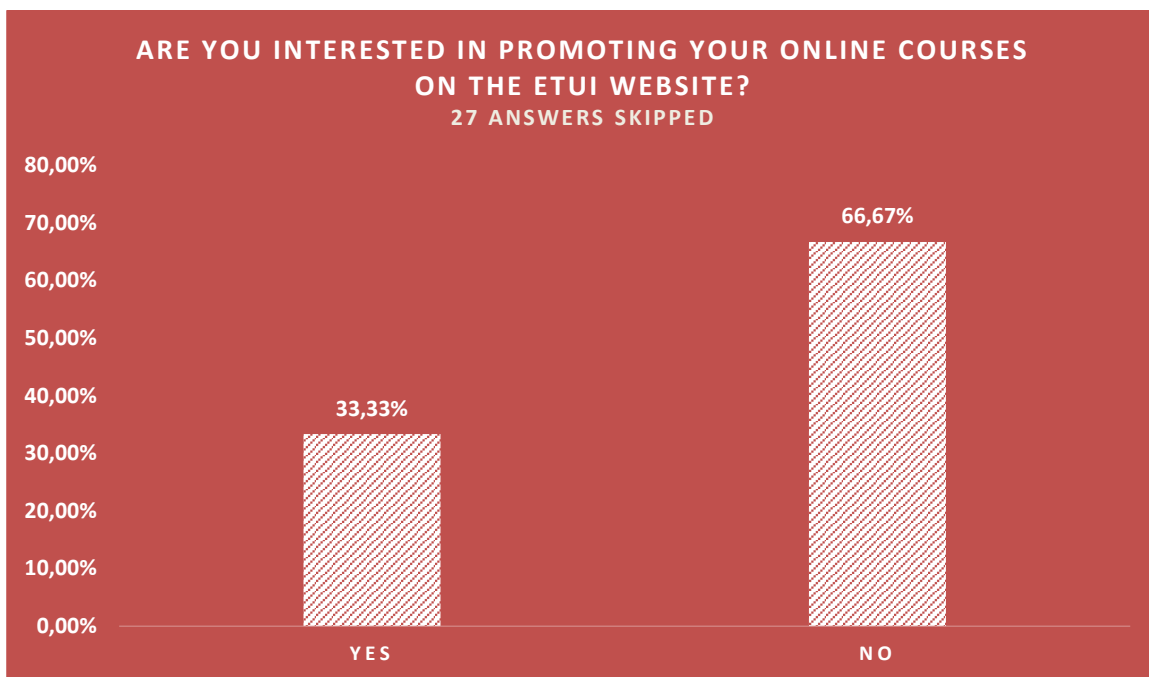


There is an interest in obtaining support from the ETUI on tools, contents, learning objectives and the development of online training strategies, in particular to deepen blended training methodologies.

There is also a demand for the exchange of know-how and teaching materials (methodological issues, content design, interactive online methods, etc.) in areas of common interest such as: vocational training, health and safety, privacy, sustainable development, the circular economy, energy saving, labour law, trade union rights, social dialogue and communication tools for union representatives.

One-third of the interviewees declared themselves in favour of promoting their courses on the ETUI website (e.g. smart working) and wish to be kept informed about any proposed training activities.





## 13 Conclusions

From a transversal reading of the results of the research what emerges as how e-learning, although not yet seen as a central element of training, seems to be gradually becoming regarded as a strategic element for innovating and organising training bodies.

The type of answers recorded, in fact, describe a framework in which the involvement of the structures in the research seems limited, but, also because of the historical period following the COVID-19 pandemic, it stressed the need to develop this methodology in future strategies.

The high percentage of non-answers to most of the questions dedicated to methodological approaches, to the technical-managerial aspects of the platforms and to the production of training content accompanied by sometimes contradictory answers, confirms an ongoing process of training and awareness that is still growing.

Didactic innovation in the courses appears to still be in its infancy. The introduction of didactic technologies within the training courses continues to follow a traditional logic.

The environments for online education are used in an instrumental way and mostly in support of traditional classroom activities and not to initiate courses of collaboration and knowledge-sharing between the players involved in training. The type of communication used is mixed, both synchronous and asynchronous.

At the level of the introduction of LMS platforms, there is a widespread tendency to use open-source platforms that guarantee ease of use and customisation which translates into easy management for both administrators and users.

There is clearly a demand to strengthen the teaching team. The tendency to insert system figures alongside the teacher indicates a desire to overcome the traditional training models centred on the teacher to arrive at new ones that see the teacher as part of a very complex planning process that requires the involvement of various professional figures, both technical-specialist as well as experts in planning training, active teaching methodologies and content.

The collaborative aspects of online training are designed to mainly use e-mail, forums and messaging, thus not enhancing the potential of multimedia and interactive channels (such as the internet, TV, video/audio,

webinars, screencasts, podcasts, etc.). This results in limited user participation in the communities involved and low levels of peer interaction.

The use of tests and questionnaires is frequent, and also designed for the evaluation of learning, required for validation and recognition mainly within the union. To support the training outcomes, reporting tools are used to monitor activities.

The reasons for dissatisfaction with the environment of online and web education are dependent for the most part on problems of a management nature to do with the educational and organisational complexity brought about by the introduction of new technological solutions related to teaching. It is no coincidence that the elements on which the interviewees request training interventions concern the methods of planning online training interventions, the type of content to be conveyed, the interactive methodologies and the type of assistance provided to users of the platform.

Collaboration plays a key role in the field of teaching. Creating forums for discussion, groups and blogs allows individuals to interact, collaborate and exchange content, thus rendering the environment creative and inspiring.

Methodological learning approaches bring out different models from the research: in self-learning, assisted or collaborative training:

- The types of self-learning are based on the delivery of content with limited support from the tutor, and is aimed at individual learning.
- Assisted training includes alternating moments of individual study and moments of interaction with teachers/experts with whom discussions, exchanges and clarifications take place.
- The collaborative mode is activated when elements of sharing and collaboration are developed between participants, mediated by the trainers, based on communication activities and oriented towards building connections between group members.

The strategies for the future foresee a strengthening of the staff of trainers both from a numerical and a skill point of view, the introduction of methodological and instrumental innovations in approaches to training in e-learning mode, and solutions to stimulate the participatory and interactive methodology.

The role of the ETUI is referred to in the last part of the questionnaire as a strategic player in supporting training agencies in this delicate phase of change and transition.