National Report for older senior logistic workers

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Point of Contact	Venia Soumpenioti
Institution	RMR
E-mail	euprojects@rmr.gr
Phone	+30 2410 626242

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Contents

Introduction

The Erasmus+ project "DiRECT – Digital Skills for Senior Logistic Staff" tackles a key challenge. It focuses on the digital shift in logistics. It considers its impact on older workers, specifically those over 50. Automation is growing. E-commerce booms. Digital tools are used more. Logistics firms face a task to prepare their workforces for the future, but firms do not want to lose valuable experience.

Older employees bring expertise and practical knowledge. These workers often face new demands, however. They include digital warehouse management, GPS route planning, and cloud communication tools. Research reveals this group is not inherently averse to technology. They need targeted support and suitable training.

The project aims to create digital training resources. Training formats and support are also created. These developments specifically address the needs of senior logistics professionals. Practical content is important. Digital accessibility is also important. It takes into account appropriate teaching for different ages. The project shares best practices across Europe.

With this project, DiRECT boosts digital skills in vocational education and training. It secures skilled workers in the logistics sector. It also strengthens social inclusion for older employees amidst digital change.

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Greece

1. Field Research

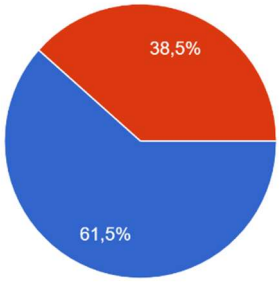
First, we would like to mention that the questionnaire was distributed in Greek and there is a question: “What is the subject of your work?” and 2 options are given.

The option: logistics company executive, and the option: trainer

When the respondent, depending on the target group, selects one of the two options, the corresponding question field is automatically opened.

- ***What is your mail occupation?***

  26 replies



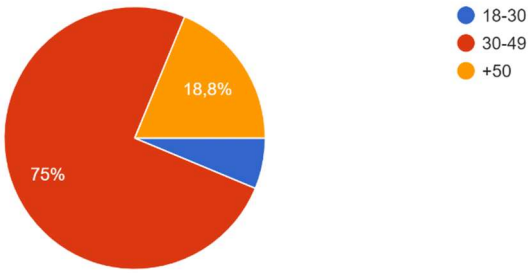
Logistics company executive/worker

Trainer

As we can see in the pie chart below, 61.5% of the respondents are logistics company executive and 38.5% are trainer.

1.1 Logistics company executive

- ***How old are you?***
  26 replies



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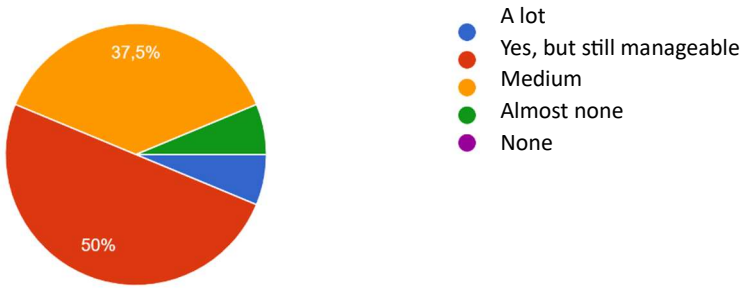
In this particular pie chart, the highest percentage, 75 %, are between the ages of 30-49.

- ***If yes, is your company facing a shortage of logistics professionals? - 16 replies***



We observe that 50% face a shortage of logistics professionals in their company, while in 37.5% this shortage is at a moderate level.

- **How do you think the situation will evolve in terms of logistics recruitment over the next 10 years? – 26 replies**

Within the next 10 years will become more difficult to find enough

There will be enough logistician staff

The staff shortage will delay the upgrading of the company

The 75% of respondents believe that the situation regarding logistics recruitment in the next 10 years will become more difficult to find enough logistics staff.

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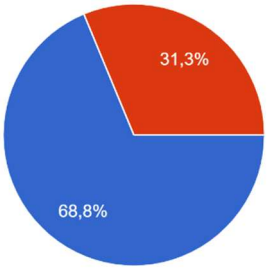
- **How important will digital skills be in the future? - 26 replies**

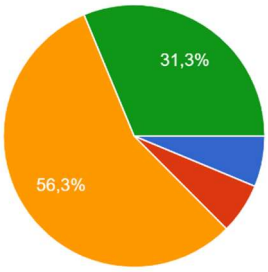


Quite important

Very important in the future

The 68.8% believe that digital skills will be very important in the future, while the rest also believe that digital skills will be quite important in the future.

- **How do you assess the digital skills of your logistics staff (50+ years)? – 26 replies**



Good

Very Good

Moderate

Bad

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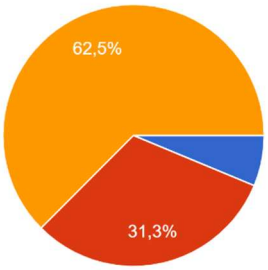
The digital skills of logistics staff (50+ years old) are rated by the company's executives as " moderate" with 56.3% demonstrating this, while 31.3% consider the digital skills of logistics staff (50+ years old) to be at a " bad" level.

- **How do you assess the expertise in your company in relation to new technologies in the logistics field? – 26 replies**



Good

Very Good

Moderate

Bad

The 62.5% rate their company's expertise in relation to new technologies in the field of logistics as "moderate", while it is worth mentioning that 31.3%, an unexpected percentage, rate their company's expertise in relation to new technologies in the field of logistics as "good".

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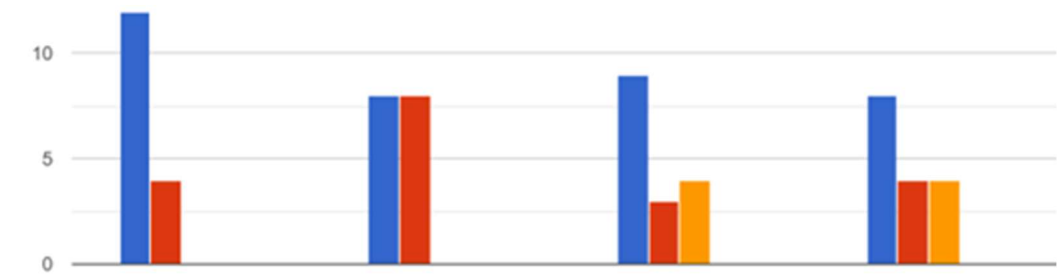
How important are the following basic skills for Employees in logistics – 26 replies

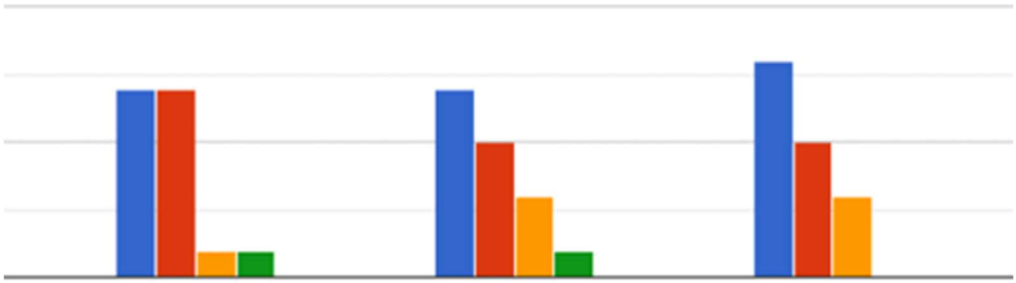


Very Important

Quite Important

Moderate important

Not important



The chart above showed that basic computer skills, basic software applications and Mobile Device Usage are considered very important basic skills employees in logistics.

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- **How important are the following technological skills for Employees in logistics – 26 replies**

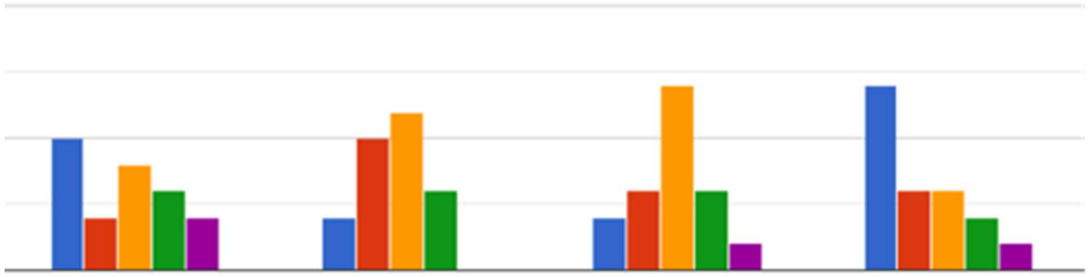
We observe that most respondents consider the following technological skills to be very important: 1. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), 2. RFID technology (Radio Frequency Identification), 3. IoT devices (remote monitoring and telematics)

Very Important

Quite Important

Moderate important

Not important



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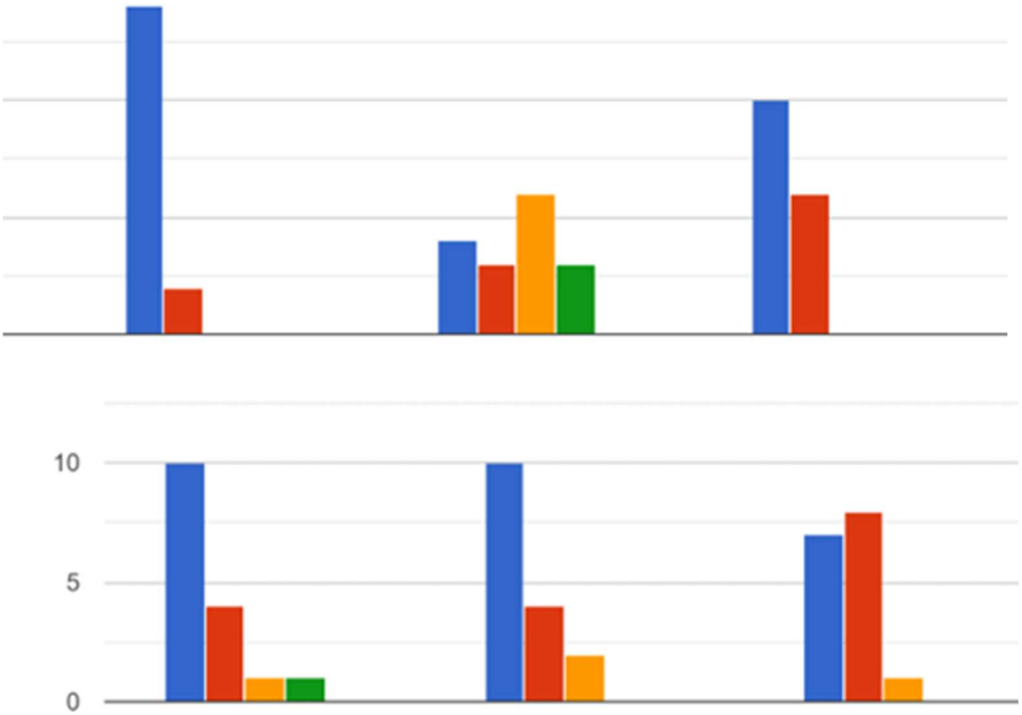
- **How important are the following systems skills for Employees in logistics – 26 replies**

Not important

Quite Important

Very Important

Moderate important



We notice with great variation that Warehouse Management System (WMS) - Warehouse Control Systems (WCS), is considered a very important system skill for logistics employees, as opposed to Yard management system (YMS), which is not considered important by respondents.

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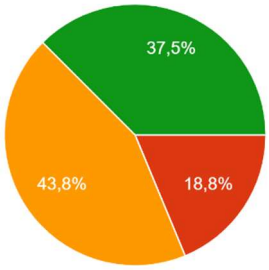
- **How would you assess education and training on "new technologies in logistics" in your country? – 26 replies**

Bad

Very good

Moderate



According to the above pie chart, the respondents assess the education and training on "new technologies in logistics" in our country, as "moderate" with a rate of 43.8% while very close is the rate of 37.5% which shows that by some the education and training on "new technologies in logistics" in our country, is considered " bad".

- **Do your customers require the use of sustainable and new technology services and if you had them would it be a competitive advantage for your company in the future? – 26 replies**

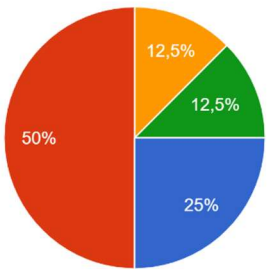
No

Probably No

Yes of course

Probably Yes

I don’t know



50 % of respondents indicated that their customers require the use of sustainable and new technological services and believe that if the company had them, it would probably be a competitive advantage for the company in the future.

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- **Would you be interested in training your employees over 50 in new technologies in the sector? – 16 replies**

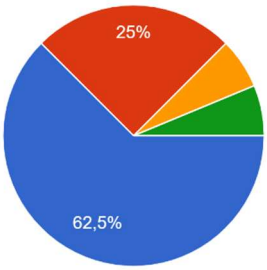
No

Probably No

Yes of course

Probably Yes

I don’t know



The highest percentage of respondents (62.5%) were interested in training their employees over 50 years old in new technologies in the sector, free of charge. It is worth mentioning that 25% of the respondents were also quite interested in training their employees over 50 years old in the new technologies of the sector free of charge.

Well, overall, 87.5% are interested in offering free training to their employees in the logistics industry to acquire digital skills.

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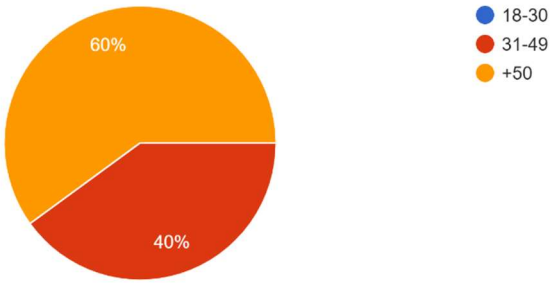
1.2 Trainer

- **How old are you? – 10 replies**



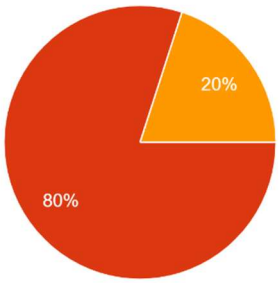
We observe that 60% of respondents are over 50 years old, while the rest 40% are between 31 and 49 years old. The respondents belong to the age target group of the project.

- **How do you think the situation will evolve in terms of logistics recruitment over the next 10 years? 10 replies**

Within the next 10 years will become more difficult to find enough

There will be enough logistician staff

The staff shortage will delay the upgrading of the company



VET trainers in logistics believe that the situation in terms of logistics recruitment over the next 10 years will become more difficult to find sufficient logistics staff. In particular, this perception is supported by 80% of respondents.

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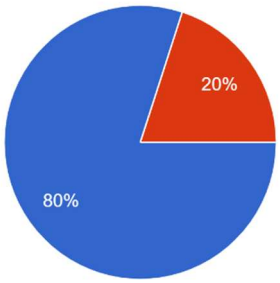
- **How important will digital skills be in the future? 10 replies**

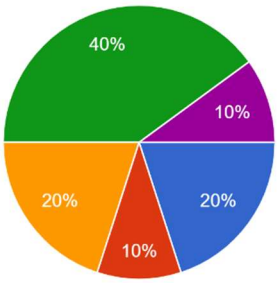


Very Important
Quite Important
Reallyimportant
Not important

The 80% of respondents consider that digital skills will be very important in the future, while the rest 20% consider the development of digital skills to be quite important. It is worth mentioning that there is no respondent with a different perception.

- **How would you assess education and training on "new technologies in logistics" in your country? 10 replies**

Good
Very Good
Moderate
Bad



The 40% of respondents rate education and training on "new technologies in logistics" in Greece as " bad". There is also 10% who consider it "very bad".

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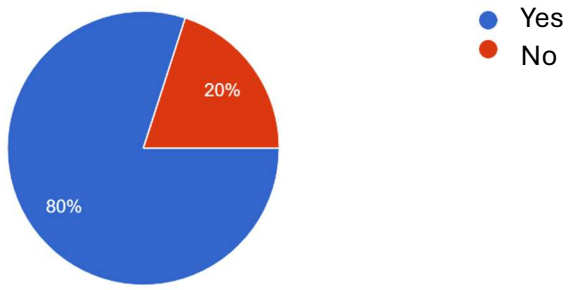
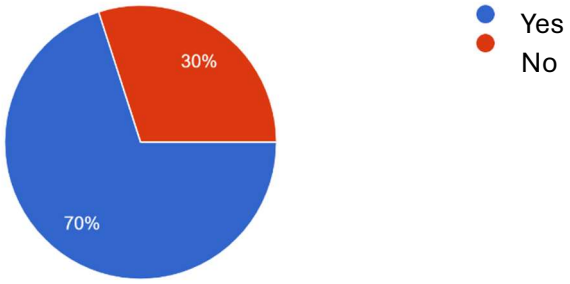
- **Do you have trainees over the age of 50? - 10 replies**



The80% of respondents answered that they have trainees over 50 years old, which indicates the need to develop digital skills for this age group.

- **Do you incorporate in your training programmes the new technologies applied in the logistics sector? - 10 replies**



|The 70% incorporate in their training programs the new technologies applied in the field of logistics, while the percentage that do not is smaller.

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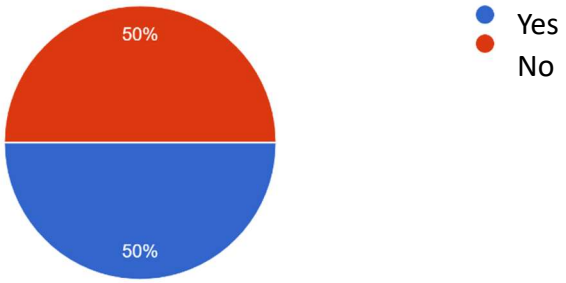
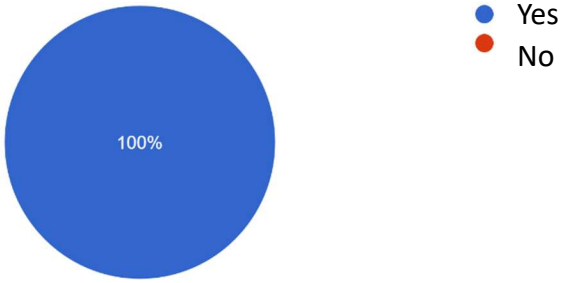
- **Have you attended specific training on recent developments in the logistics sector? - 10 replies**



The 50% of respondents have attended specific training on recent developments in the logistics sector, while the rest 50% have not attended.

- **Do you adapt your teaching method according to the needs of logistics learners? - 10 replies**



All VET trainers in logistic adapt their teaching method according to the needs of the logistics learners.

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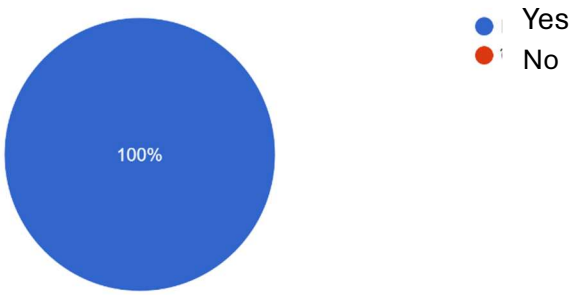
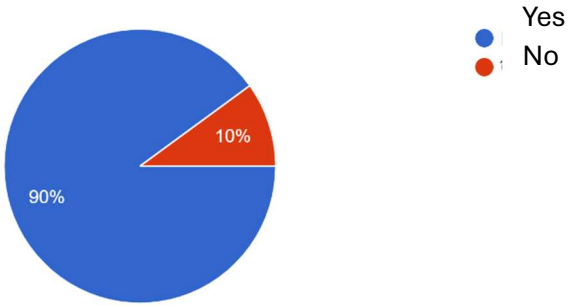
- **Do you consider continuous training as essential for the development of logistics workers? - 10 replies**



All respondents consider that continuous training is essential for the development of logistics workers.

- **Do you offer practical training or laboratory experience to trainees? - 10 replies**



The 90% of VET trainers in logistics offer practical training or laboratory experience to trainees, while only 10% do not offer.

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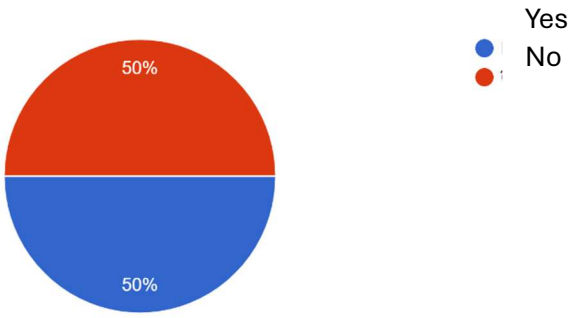
- **Do you evaluate the performance of trainees during and after the training programs? ? - 10 replies**



The 50% of respondents evaluate the performance of trainees during and after the training programs, while the rest 50% do not evaluate.

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1.3 Summary

In conclusion, there seems to be a significant agreement between the respondents from the two target groups (logistics company executive, trainer) regarding the need for digital skills in the logistics sector, in the age group over 50 years old. The recognition of this need is important as digital technology is becoming increasingly important in the logistics industry.

Furthermore, the recognition of the shortage of digital skills in this age group indicates the need for further training in technology. Learning digital skills can help to improve performance and efficiency in the sector, as well as to address the challenges resulting from the digital transition and new technologies.

Respondents seem to be aware of the seriousness of the situation and suggest supporting and investing in training and professional development programs to upgrade digital skills in the logistics sector.

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2. Desk Research

2.1 Impact of Covid in digital logistic sector transformation in Europe

In Greece, the digital upgrading of supply chains remains in short supply compared to other European countries. Only a fifth of businesses have invested in digitally upgrading their internal supply chain, despite the fact that 80% of logistics activities are carried out in-house. This is largely due to the view that the supply chain is often seen as a support process with low added value.

In trade and industry, the use of big data analytics technologies remains limited. Although one-third of businesses use specialized warehouse management (WMS) applications, 53% still rely on Excel spreadsheets to manage storage. In addition, 41% do not have a fleet management system, and only 20% have purchased specialized applications, while the rest use simple office applications.

However, supply chain operation and management (3PL and 4PL) companies are showing a greater willingness to invest in warehouse and fleet management technologies. Nevertheless, the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution remain limited in adoption in this field.

In Greece, warehouse management focuses mainly on Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), which are used by 61% of businesses. Also, the use of fleet management systems is widespread, with a percentage of 52%, while the number of RFID digital sensors for vehicle monitoring is gradually increasing and has reached 26%. In addition, 68% of businesses focus on digital procurement solutions.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the supply chain industry, with 81% of companies reporting that their supply chain operations were severely affected. 68% predict a downturn of more than 20%, with 15% predicting losses of more than 40%. In addition, 66% believe that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on overall operating costs.

The pandemic has also demonstrated the need for higher technological and digital maturity in the industry. The use of modern digital tools has emerged as key to efficient collaboration across the value chain, offering flexibility, resilience and effective risk management. In addition, the pandemic has led businesses to drastically adjust their order plan, highlighting the need to renew and improve processes.

The adaptation of commercial and industrial enterprises to exceptional production and demand conditions is closely linked to the low maturity of their supply processes. The problems highlighted during the pandemic highlight the need for digitalization of the supply chain sector, as it is necessary to improve productivity, reduce operating costs and respond to the high time demands of delivered products.

Previously, the logistics sector in Greece had a more traditional approach. Processes were often manual and companies relied on traditional systems and methods to

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manage their supply chains. However, the advent of Covid-19 interrogated this approach.

The above concerns have led many businesses to adopt digital solutions and technologies. The automation of processes and the use of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and sensors became more widespread, enhancing the digital maturity of the sector.

The digitalisation of the supply chain is central to successfully adapting to these new conditions. Although there were already some digitalisation efforts before the pandemic, the need for such solutions became even more urgent during the crisis.

Digitalisation is necessary to manage the volatile environment and the problems arising from the pandemic, such as unforeseen changes in demand and restrictions on movement and production.

Each player has an important role in this transformation process. Let's see how each actor contributes to this transformation:

Researchers and analysts:

- They provide a deeper understanding of market trends and needs, as well as the supply chain impacts of COVID-19.
- They provide analyses and recommendations on technological innovations that can be applied to improve the supply chain.
- They help develop strategies to effectively use technology and data to improve supply chain management.

Technology executives:

- They implement technology solutions that help improve the supply chain, such as inventory management systems, data tracking and recording platforms, and predictive analytics tools.
- They help integrate technologies such as automated processes, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics into the supply chain.

Government officials:

- They create policies and regulations that promote the digital transformation of the supply chain, encouraging the adoption of innovative technologies and data security.
- They provide financial support and incentives for businesses investing in digital solutions to improve the supply chain.
- They promote the creation of education and vocational training programs to increase the skills needed for the digital transformation of the supply chain.

Statistical reports and surveys showing the transformation of the digital logistics sector in Greece after Covid-19 are limited, but observation of practical changes in businesses and reports from the main players demonstrate the trend towards digital transformation to address the new challenges brought about by the pandemic.

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2.2 Opinions and problems this change occurred in logistics workers over 50 years old in Europe

The logistics industry in Greece has been subject to transformative changes in recent years, catalyzed by digitalization and further accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Assessment of Changes due to COVID-19 Pandemic - How employees over 50 in the digital logistic sector assess the changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic?

The perspectives of logistics workers over 50 in Greece regarding the alterations precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic exhibit a spectrum of reactions. While some workers commend the heightened safety measures and the newfound flexibility of remote work options, others express apprehensions regarding job security, escalated workloads, and disruptions in supply chains. These apprehensions are particularly pronounced given the economic turbulence experienced by Greece, adding layers of complexity to the concerns of older workers within the logistics domain (Eurofound, 2020).

Employees over 50 in the digital logistics sector in Greece have undergone significant shifts in their working environment and perceptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their assessment of these changes is multifaceted, influenced by various factors such as job role, technological proficiency, and personal circumstances.

Many employees over 50 in the digital logistics sector appreciate the implementation of remote work options and enhanced safety measures in response to the pandemic (Kyriakopoulos, G. L., Moysiadis, T., & Papakitsos, E. C., 2021). Remote work provides them with the flexibility to maintain productivity while minimizing the risk of exposure to the virus. Moreover, safety protocols such as social distancing and sanitization procedures are generally well-received as they contribute to a safer working environment.

Despite the benefits of remote work, older employees may face challenges in adapting to digital collaboration tools and virtual communication platforms. The sudden transition to remote work may exacerbate feelings of isolation and disconnect, particularly for those who are less familiar with technology. (Kyriakopoulos, G. L., Moysiadis, T., & Papakitsos, E. C., 2021) Collaborative tasks that were previously conducted in person may now require additional effort to coordinate effectively, leading to potential frustrations and inefficiencies.

Main Problems Regarding Digital Transformation - What are the main problems faced by employees over 50 years old regarding the digital transformation process?

Navigating the digital transformation process poses significant challenges for older logistics workers in Greece. Foremost among these challenges is the technological

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literacy gap, wherein older workers may grapple with the adoption of novel digital tools and systems. (Kyriakopoulos, G. L., Moysiadis, T., & Papakitsos, E. C., 2021) Concurrently, resistance to change emerges as a substantial barrier, as older workers may exhibit reticence towards embracing new technologies, fearing potential job displacement or becoming overwhelmed by the rapid pace of transformation. Furthermore, the restricted access to age-appropriate training programs and support mechanisms exacerbates these challenges, impeding the acquisition of requisite digital skills among older workers (European Commission, 2019; Eurostat, 2021).

As explained, one of the main problems is the technological literacy gap, where older workers may struggle to adapt to new digital tools and systems (Eurostat, 2021). This gap can hinder their ability to perform tasks efficiently and may lead to feelings of frustration and inadequacy (Eurofound, 2018).

Resistance to change is another significant barrier faced by older employees in Greece. Research by the European Commission highlights that older workers may find it challenging to embrace new technologies and workflows, fearing job displacement or becoming overwhelmed by the rapid pace of transformation (European Commission, 2019).

Moreover, limited access to age-appropriate training programs and support mechanisms exacerbates these challenges, impeding the acquisition of requisite digital skills among older workers (European Parliament, 2019). This lack of access to training opportunities can further widen the technological literacy gap and hinder the professional development of older employees.

Age discrimination and stereotypes also contribute to the challenges faced by older workers in Greece during the digital transformation process. Eurofound's study reveals that older workers may encounter biases in hiring and training opportunities, as well as assumptions about their ability to adapt to technological changes (Eurofound, 2020).
Impact on Training and Skills Development - How has their training and skills development been affected by the pandemic and digital changes, in Greece?

The COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed profound disruptions in the realm of training and skills development for logistics workers over 50 in Greece. With the imposition of restrictions on in-person activities and concomitant disruptions in workplaces, traditional training modalities have become less accessible. Although remote work arrangements offer avenues for virtual training, they may fail to adequately cater to the specific needs of older workers. Consequently, older logistics workers in Greece confront hurdles in keeping abreast of digital advancements, thereby exacerbating concerns regarding their long-term employability and career trajectories (European Commission, 2020; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2020).

The training and skills development of employees over 50 in Greece have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the concurrent digital changes.

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The pandemic-induced disruptions have necessitated adaptations in traditional training methods, leading to both challenges and opportunities for skill development.

The restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus have limited in-person training opportunities, forcing organizations to shift towards virtual training modalities (Katsikas, D., & Kokkinos, A., 2020) While remote training offers flexibility and accessibility, it may not adequately cater to the specific needs of older workers. Research by the European Commission indicates that older employees may face difficulties in adapting to digital training platforms and may require additional support to navigate virtual learning environments (European Commission, 2020).

Furthermore, the rapid digitalization of workplaces, spurred by the pandemic, has necessitated the acquisition of new digital skills. Employees over 50 in Greece may find themselves in need of upskilling or reskilling to keep pace with evolving job requirements. However, limited access to age-appropriate training programs and support mechanisms may hinder their ability to acquire these skills effectively (Eurostat, 2021).

Despite these challenges, the pandemic has also presented opportunities for skills development among older workers. Remote work arrangements have provided employees with more time and flexibility to engage in self-directed learning and skill-building activities. Additionally, organizations and educational institutions have increasingly offered online training courses and webinars tailored to the needs of older workers, facilitating their professional development (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2020).

The pandemic has underscored the importance of digital skills in navigating the changing landscape of work, making it imperative for employees over 50 in Greece to adapt and acquire new competencies. Employers, policymakers, and training providers must collaborate to ensure that older workers have access to relevant training opportunities and support mechanisms to enhance their skills and remain competitive in the digital era.

Needs Created and Skills Acquired by Workers Over 50 Locally - What needs were created and what skills were acquired by workers over 50, in Greece?

The evolving landscape of work in Greece, influenced by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformation, has created new needs and opportunities for workers over 50. These changes have necessitated the acquisition of new skills and the adaptation of existing ones to remain competitive in the workforce.

One of the primary needs created for workers over 50 in Greece is the acquisition of digital skills. The rapid digitalization of workplaces, accelerated by the pandemic, has highlighted the importance of proficiency in digital tools and technologies (Tzannatos, Z., & Monastiriotis, V.,2021). Employees over 50 may need to acquire skills such as digital literacy, proficiency in using communication and collaboration platforms, and data analysis capabilities to effectively navigate the digital landscape (Eurostat, 2021).

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Additionally, the shift towards remote work has emphasized the importance of adaptability and resilience. Workers over 50 in Greece may need to develop skills in remote collaboration, time management, and self-motivation to thrive in a virtual work environment (European Commission, 2020).

Furthermore, the pandemic has underscored the significance of health and safety skills. Employees over 50 may need to acquire knowledge and competencies in areas such as hygiene practices, workplace safety protocols, and mental health awareness to ensure their well-being in the workplace (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2020).

In response to these emerging needs, workers over 50 in Greece have acquired a range of skills to adapt to the changing demands of the workforce. Many have embraced digital learning opportunities to enhance their digital literacy and acquire new technical skills (ILO,2020). Research by Eurofound suggests that older workers have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in upskilling and retraining efforts, leveraging their experience and expertise to navigate through the challenges posed by the pandemic and digital transformation (Eurofound, 2020).

Moreover, older workers in Greece have developed skills in remote collaboration, problem-solving, and resilience as they navigate the complexities engendered by the pandemic and digital transformation (European Commission, 2021). These skills not only enable them to thrive in the current work environment but also position them to contribute positively to organizational resilience and innovation.

2.3 Summary and Intermediate Conclusions

Conclusion

In conclusion, logistics workers over 50 in Greece encounter multifaceted challenges in acclimatizing to digital transformation and maneuvering through the vicissitudes instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By addressing the technological literacy gap, furnishing tailored training and support, and leveraging indigenous initiatives, Greece can empower its mature workforce to flourish within the evolving terrain of digital logistics. Ultimately, nurturing the skills development and resilience of older workers remains paramount for ensuring their sustained relevance and contributions to the logistics ecosystem in Greece.

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3. Focus group

Please describe your focus group, for example, job title, number of participants, when it happened, how it happened, feedback.

STHEV in cooperation with RMR IKE organized a focus group on 16 April, 16:30 to 17:30 local time, on the topic: Transport and logistics - The challenges of the sector in the digital future. It was conducted through the Zoom online platform, and the total number of participants was 10 people from logistics companies.

During the focus group, the DiRECT project and its activities were briefly presented, as well as the results of the research conducted. This helped to provide new ideas and knowledge to all participants, encouraging them to explore the new trends and challenges the industry is facing in the digital world.

At the end of the focus group, an interesting discussion was held with the participants, during which the different aspects of the topic were further explored, thus enhancing the understanding and exchange of views on the challenges of the digital future in the transport and logistics sector.

The general feedback was that there is a very important digital skills shortage in the logistic sector especially among employees over 50 and the participants felt that in the future this shortage will be bigger, for this reason they are very interested in training employees in digital skills in order to reduce the shortage and increase efficiency.

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