REWIRE - Cybersecurity Skills Alliance
A New Vision for Europe

R7.6
REWIRE
Final Conference

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1. INTRODUCTION

The REWIRE Final Conference, part of LLLWeek 2024, showcased the project's outcomes and provided a platform for discussing ongoing challenges in cybersecurity skills. Stakeholders, including key European policymakers (the Commissioners, DG EMPL, DG CONNECT and ENISA), industry associations, educational providers, and non-profits, had the opportunities to explore these challenges, identify opportunities and propose solutions for cybersecurity education and workforce development. The conference also aimed to raise awareness, facilitate dialogue, and foster collaboration among stakeholders to advance cybersecurity workforce development and enhance societal resilience against emerging threats.

Its title, "Bridging the Cybersecurity Skills gap: the REWIRE Project's Legacy and Future Pathways", wanted to emphasize the urgency of the project and its results. The increasing frequency and sophistication of cybersecurity threats across Europe, coupled with a shortage of skilled professionals, has made closing the cybersecurity skills gap an urgent priority. In response to this challenge, the project has developed key tools and initiatives, including the CyberAbility platform, Virtual Learning Environment, and REWIRE training courses, to equip the workforce with the skills necessary to address today's complex cyber threats: the Conference offered a unique opportunity for dissemination. More than 120 people attended (hybrid) the REWIRE Conference. The conference was also enriched with a European competition, organized by MU and URL, for cybersecurity trainees, namely young people, in order to raise awareness.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Conference organization was organised by EfVET, with the collaboration of EVTA. As part of the WP7 tasks, its organization was mainly discussed and supported during the WP7 monthly meetings. An ad-hoc Task Force was also set up for the organization of the Conference who met on specific demands and then regularly since October 2024 until November 2024, involving the WP leaders and specific partners strongly involved in the Conference organization, namely EVTA.

The conference was also enriched with a European competition, organized by MU and URL, for cybersecurity trainees, namely young people, in order to raise awareness. REWIRE got 63 participants: the winner, from Czech Republic, was announced and awarded during the conference.

3. THE CONCEPT NOTE

The Concept Note consisted of a document which was drafted and shared among partners to build the program and, afterwards, to accompany the program and registration. The text is the following:

The increasing frequency and sophistication of cybersecurity threats across Europe, coupled with a shortage of skilled professionals, has made closing the cybersecurity skills gap an urgent priority. The shift to remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated this landscape, underscoring the critical need for effective solutions. In response to this challenge, the [Cybersecurity Skills Alliance – New Vision for Europe-REWIRE](#) *project was launched to bridge the gap between the rapidly evolving needs of the cybersecurity industry and the training provided by educational institutions. Over the past four years, the project has developed key tools and initiatives, including the CyberAbility platform, Virtual Learning Environment, and REWIRE training courses, to equip the workforce with the skills necessary to address today's complex cyber threats.*

The REWIRE Final Conference, part of LLLWeek 2024, will showcase the project's outcomes and provide a platform for discussing ongoing challenges in cybersecurity skills. Stakeholders, including European policymakers, industry associations, educational providers, and non-profits, will come together to explore these challenges, identify opportunities and propose solutions for cybersecurity education and workforce development. The conference also aims to raise awareness, facilitate dialogue, and foster collaboration among stakeholders to advance cybersecurity workforce development and enhance societal resilience against emerging threats.

4. THE PROGRAMME

EVENT AGENDA

13:30 –14:00	**Registration** i: To enter, please ensure you have your ID ready and allow time to pass through a security check. Arriving promptly will help the process go smoothly.
14:00 –14:10	**Welcome and Institutional remarks** • Andrius Bambalas, REWIRE Project Coordinator (MRU) • Spokesperson Lithuanian RDI Liaison Office in Brussels (LINO) • Paolo Nardi, Executive Director (EfVET)
14.10 - 14.15	**VideoMessage by the designated European Commissioner Mr. Andrius Kubilius – Defence and Space (invited)**
14:15 –14:45	**Introductory panel: Bridging the Gap: Addressing Cybersecurity Skills Challenges Through Policy and Action** Moderator: Joana Xhemali (EVTA) • REWIRE in Focus: Achievements and Future Directions - Andrius Bambalas, Project Manager, MRU • EU Policy Solutions for Digital Skills Gaps -Michael Horgan, Policy Officer Team Leader, DG EMPL, EC • Unveiling the ECSF: Roadmap Ahead - Fabio Di Franco, Cybersecurity Officer, Capacity Building Unit, ENISA
14:45 –15:15	**Discovering REWIRE's Training Courses and the Virtual Learning Environment** Alan Briones Delgado (Ramon Llull University) & Kostas Kazantzidis (ReadLab)
15:15 –15:30	**Exploring CyberAbility: A Digital Platform for Cybersecurity Skills and Market Insights**

	Sara Ricci (Technology University of Brno)
15:30 –15:45	**Coffee break**
15:45 –16:00	**REWIRE Cybersecurity Competition Award** Jakub Čegan (CyberSecurityHubCZ)
16:00 –17:30	**Shaping the Future: Leveraging the REWIRE Legacy for a Resilient Cybersecurity Workforce** Moderator: Herve Debar (Télécom SudParis) • Policy recommendations from REWIRE, Manos Athanatos (TUC) • Certification Scheme for Long- Term Impact , Argyro Chatzopoulou (Apiroplus Solutions) • The experience of the Pact for Skills and the Digital Large-Scale Partnership: Building a Collaborative Framework, Justina Bieliauskaite (European Digital SME Alliance) • Upcoming Initiatives Building on REWIRE Contributions, Ioannis Panolias (National Cybersecurity Authority of Greece) • Promoting Diversity and Inclusion: Addressing Gender Disparities in Cybersecurity, Saskia Brugman (Women4Cyber) • CyberHubs Results and Alliance Expansion, Valeria Muggianu (DIGITALEUROPE)
17:30 –17:45	**Concluding Remarks** Andrius Bambalas (MRU)
	Facilitator: *Pinelopi Kyranoudi (TUC)*

5. DETAILED REPORT OF THE DEBATE

Cyber threats are increasing, while there's still a great lack of digital skills across the EU. Within this frame, the REWIRE project initiative – part of the Cybersecurity Skills Alliance – has developed essential tools to empower the current available workforce. From the CyberAbility platform, to monitor job gaps and offers, to 4 tailored training courses with recognized certification, REWIRE is laying a solid foundation for cybersecurity in the EU. Cybersecurity is an area of great importance to the contemporary world, related to the security of the growing number of online users (to the extent of millions) and the new skills required to be competitive in the future labor market (especially GenZs).
Several big questions remain unanswered:

- How can **cybersecurity skills be introduced in schools** to raise awareness of what is happening on the internet?

- To what extent did GDPR regulations put into practice already **secure our data**?

- How to prevent growing attacks towards institutional systems? In terms of **defense and security** of our communities?

- What **skills** and knowledge are fundamental for the new generations?

At a glance. The future Cybersecurity sector needs to:

- Train more professionals while bringing **inclusivity, diversity and gender equality**, going beyond some stereotypes (e.g. *"the hacker in the basement with a hoodie"*).

- Promote inclusivity and widely offer a flexible certification system for **cybersecurity training** in schools, online, in the VET system.

- Move from the technical to the governmental level, influencing **policy makers**.

- Give a clear framework to citizens to help them protect their online identity as artificial intelligence is more and more facilitating **cyber fraud**.

- Upgrading nearly half of the **adult population** without basic digital skills.

During the final considerations and Q&A round, different opinions emerged:
- **Targeting parents rather than children** is the most effective solution to reduce the skills gap.

- Thus, the **skills gap crosses generations**; it will take a generation or perhaps more to close the existing lack of competences.

- At the national level, we need to work with the authorities to bring the **education system** up to date and close the skills gap.

- Basic digital skills are on the rise among younger students, but not in the professional sector. **The surge in the use of AI** is particularly interesting, but still mainly related to the gaming industry.

- European **GDPR regulations** have created greater awareness of data security. For example, many students do not want to share their information and photos without knowing where they will be used.

- A great amount of money has been placed in the industry to develop the certification system in the EU. But has anything really changed in recent years? Will the future trend be successful? Many people still do not know about this **certification system**, and still many things are not communicated enough.

- Apparently, there are more and more **cyber-attacks**, with an increasing number dropped at stations, city halls, hospitals, institutions. *"Things in IT are very fragile"*, they say: has there really been no improvement in this sector over the past 35 years? **Measuring the impact** of these policies remains very difficult, but much still needs to be achieved.

- Assign an event coordinator for each event regardless of which WP is involved.

- Finalise the event management blueprint (including a clear allocation of roles and steps)

- Increase outreach by allocating enough time for dissemination

- Coordinate also the content aspect much earlier – who moderates/presents

6. LINK TO OTHER RELEVANT MATERIALS

- *Link to folder with Conference Materials*

- *Pictures of the event*