



The Green Infrastructure Paradox: Europe Has Technology, But Not the Talent

Europe has become a global leader in sustainable building technologies¹, developing pioneering buildings that usually merge design innovation, renewable energy systems and advanced materials. From a vertical forest in Italy, to innovative eco districts in France², the region has already proven its capacity to lead the global transition towards low emissions constructions.

However, while the technology exists, the workforce trained to implement, maintain, and replicate it at scale does not. This mismatch limits the ability to expand green infrastructures across the continent.

It is important to clarify that when we talk about green infrastructures, we refer to technologies, materials, systems, and design strategies that reduce environmental impact, increase energy efficiency, and support climate adaptation.

The France Government has implemented ambitious environmental policies such as Le Grenelle de l'Environnement, which accelerated investment in clean energy, highefficiency building standards, and environmental certifications. These frameworks have enabled the emergence of Écoquartiers, districts that are ecological, sustainable, and innovative, across the country and have strengthened France's commitment to environmentally responsible construction.



Furthermore, Milan's Bosco Verticale offers one of Europe's more emblematic sustainable architecture projects, a pair of residential towers that integrate more than 20,000 trees and plants. Creating a vertical microforest designed to reduce air pollution, mitigate the urban heatisland effect, and support biodiversity. Recognized internationally as one of the world's most innovative green building projects.

Despite Europe's architectural leadership, the expansion of sustainable buildings continues to be constrained by a shortage of specific skills within the construction workforce. This skills gap has been widely documented in labour market analyses. LinkedIn's Global Green Skills Report (2024)³ determines: "Globally, 1 in 5 construction job postings (20.6%) require green skills and 26% of workers have green skills" reinforce this trend by showing that the availability of green talent is growing far more slowly than the demand for it, particularly in hands on professions requiring technical expertise.





Moreover, CEDEFOP⁴ and the European Skills Agenda⁵ also identify the mismatch between training systems and real labour demand as one of the most urgent barriers to the green transition, highlighting that training provision often fails to keep pace with rapid technological innovation in the construction sector.

Many VET curricula still prioritize traditional construction techniques while treating sustainability as an optional module rather than a core competence. As a result, new graduates enter the labour market without the practical knowledge needed to work on next-generation sustainable buildings, while companies consistently report difficulties hiring workers capable of performing these tasks, especially in technical roles related to energy-efficient renovation and the installation of modern systems.

The paradox is therefore unavoidable: Europe has the technology and the innovation capacity, but not yet the workforce to transform these strengths into widespread sustainable infrastructure.



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