

DAISSy-HOU joined the Kick-off Meeting of the SMARCO project

On 19th and 20th February 2025, the consortium of the **“SMARCO - SMART Communities Skills Development in Europe”** European project met at the launching Transnational Partners’ Meeting (TPM), in Brussels and kicked-off its implementation. The scheme includes twenty-one (21) organisations from all over Europe and the [DAISSy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University \(HOU\)](#), is the Greek partner.

More precisely, SMARCO focuses on supporting the skills development for resilient smart communities, directly supports the EU Skills Agenda, and aligns with the Digital Ecosystem Large Scale Partnership’s mission about contributing to the targets of the Digital Decade. The involvement of external stakeholders, through the External Advisory Board and the Large-Scale Partnership for the Digital Ecosystem, are crucial for the project's success.

Furthermore, SMARCO strives to become a unique one-stop-shop for smart community skills focusing on three main objectives:

- Addressing the skills gaps of smart city engineers and public procurers through the development of modern upskilling courses and training programmes.
- Granting flexible learning, trans-national dimension and learning mobility, as well as a wide recognition of trainings through the development of micro-credentials, training certificates and wider certification scheme.
- Creating a sustainable community of stakeholders related to the skills of smart communities via participating in the Pact for Skills.

Understanding the concept of smart communities governs horizontally the whole project implementation, and is linked to increasing economic competitiveness, social well-being, resilience and sustainability, meanwhile ensuring a human-centered approach.

In particular, during the two-day kick-off meeting of SMARCO, the various phases of the project implementation were analyzed and the targeted results were agreed upon. At the initial phase, partners will conduct a needs assessment, so as to identify, both the demand for smart communities’ skills and the already existing educational resources, projects, initiatives and best practices. Furthermore, a modern short-term upskilling training will be piloted with learners in twelve (12) European countries, and additionally, train-the-trainer materials will be created and promoted towards European Digital Innovation Hubs.

Throughout its evolvement, SMARCO will provide smart communities’ engineers and public administrations’ staff with Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education Training (VET) programmes which offer the most comprehensive and effective results.

At least four-hundred (400) learners will be engaged in the testing and evaluation phase, aiming at measuring the success of the training program and collecting feedback, in order to improve the learning outcomes. Finally, emphasis will be put to creating a certification framework, so as to leverage micro-credentials and to acknowledge the specific acquired skills.

Additionally, by the end of the SMARCO Project, it is expected that more than two-hundred (200) decision-makers will be included in roundtable workshops, ten (10) VET courses will be developed, and a minimum of a hundred (100) learning resources will be collected and developed for HE curricula.

The final conference will mark the completion of the project's implementation, where over a hundred (100) participants will join in and the consortium will present both a retrospective of the successfully achieved project's results and its impact on the smart communities' experts, with regard to the digital, green, resilience and sustainability skills.

☞ SMARCO is a four-year project, funded by the ERASMUS+ program of the European Union. It is implemented by a consortium of twenty-one (21) partners from twelve (12) European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Spain), with the DAISSy-HOU, as the Greek partner. The Research Group is involved in all SMARCO deliverables, having the responsibility for the instructional design and development of the educational content of the Higher Education curricula, as well as for the development of the SMARCO e-learning platforms.

For more information on the **SMARCO** project, and other activities of DAISSy-HOU:

- Website: <http://daissy.eap.gr/en>
- Facebook: @DAISSyResearchGroup,
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/daissyresearchgroup/>
- X (Twitter): @daissy_research
- Instagram: @daissy_researchgroup
- Email: info@daissy.eap.gr



The SMARCO project is co-funded by the “Erasmus+” programme of the European Commission
Agreement number: 101186291

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