29-04-2025

Deliverable D3.2:
First year report on the marketing and dissemination activities

Deliverable D3.2

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Abstract

This deliverable summarizes the strategies and achievements in promoting the project's goals. Key activities include creating marketing materials, participating in industry conferences, and utilizing digital platforms for outreach. The report evaluates the effectiveness of these efforts and suggests improvements for the future, aiming to enhance SPECTRO's visibility and impact. This deliverable had an initial delivery date planned on 31-08-2024. In agreement with the Project Officer, WP3 leader took advantage of the possibility to provide an updated version of higher quality. This deliverable hence covers marketing and dissemination activities from M1 to M18 (28 Feb 2025) of the SPECTRO project.

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Versioning and contribution history

Version	Date	Authors	Notes
0.9	07/08/2024	Vera Hartmann (EITD)	First version.
1.0	30/08/2024	Andrea Biancini (EITD)	Formatted with style from template.
1.2	11/04/2025	Romane Léauté (EITD), Domitilla Mariotti (EITD)	Restructured deliverable according to PO comments during review meeting.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project summary

SPecialised Education programmes in CybersecuriTy and Robotics (SPECTRO) focuses on the design and delivery of two double-degree master's programmes (ISCED Level 7, 120 ECTS) in two key digital technology areas for the future of Europe: Cybersecurity and Robotics.

The two specialised master's programmes, which also include a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, are designed and delivered by a consortium consisting of 12 higher education institutions from 7 different countries, 2 innovative SMEs, 1 leading research centre in Information Systems and EIT Digital, a pan-European organisation with in-depth knowledge and experience in the digital skills domain.

In addition to the two master's programmes, SPECTRO partners develop and deploy a series of standalone learning modules on Cybersecurity and Robotics. These modules lead to four different certifications, awarded by participating higher education institutions and EIT Digital. The SPECTRO project aims to expand specialised education in Europe and address the current shortage of digital specialists by training over 1,000 European citizens in Cybersecurity and Robotics.

Marketing and dissemination employed by SPECTRO focuses on enhancing the overall understanding of the advanced fields of Cybersecurity and Robotics, fostering a constructive dialogue among higher education institutions, the workforce, and the public. The activities in WP3 are designed to effectively communicate essential details about the project, its contextual relevance, and its outcomes to both specialized stakeholders and the broader public. The overarching goal is to promote shared learning, encourage the implementation of digital advancements, and facilitate the dissemination of governance innovations.

WP3 works closely with other work packages (WP1: Curriculum Design Cybersecurity, WP2: Curriculum Design Autonomous Systems and Intelligent Robots, and WP4: Project Management) to ensure effective communication in a collaborative approach, maximizing the project's impact. By creating synergies among different components and stakeholders, WP3 contributes to a broader societal understanding and adoption of advancements in Cybersecurity and Robotics. These efforts directly influence the admissions and interests of potential and current students in the double-degree education programmes in these fields.

1.2 Deliverable overview

Deliverable D.3.2 represents SPECTRO's First-Year Report on marketing and dissemination activities. This deliverable had an initial delivery date planned on 31-08-2024. In agreement with the Project Officer, WP3 leader took advantage of the possibility to provide an updated version of higher quality. This deliverable hence covers marketing and dissemination activities from the 1st interim review period, from M1 to M18 (28 Feb 2025) of the SPECTRO project.

The project activities revolve around the development and delivery of education programmes in Cybersecurity and Robotics, namely:

- The 2 master's programmes, one in Cybersecurity and one in Robotics, each span two years and are double-degree programmes (ISCED Level 7, 120 ECTS). Both programmes offer students a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) totalling 30 ECTS, including a summer course on transforming innovative digital technologies into business between the first and second years of the master's programmes.
- Standalone learning modules on topics related to Cybersecurity and Robotics, including dedicated sections on Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Ethics for Trustworthy Technology, are available for free. These modules target a much broader audience than the master's programmes and lead to certifications. Participants can follow different paths through the modules, resulting in four different certifications.

For details on the Marketing and Dissemination plan and strategy, please consult Deliverable 3.1 Report presenting the Marketing and Dissemination Plan for SPECTRO project. The communication and dissemination efforts for the SPECTRO project utilize a range of marketing strategies and channels to increase awareness about the project and the educational offerings developed under the SPECTRO framework. These efforts aim to engage relevant stakeholders for promotional purposes and enhance the long-term sustainability of the deliverables. Various communication channels, including online platforms, social media, newsletters, articles, and targeted outreach to industry networks and associations, are employed to reach the target audience. Dedicated marketing campaigns are launched to recruit students into the education programmes while promoting diversity by encouraging the participation of women and individuals from RIS countries.

The communication and dissemination strategy are translated into a set of dissemination actions and promotional campaigns, implemented via the project's communication channels and those of its partners to maximize impact. These efforts follow the objectives outlined below:

- **DO1. Raise awareness**. Ensure that the key results are disseminated (spread and understood) among the target audiences of the project.
- **DO2. Engage key stakeholders**. Maintain the engagement of the involved stakeholders across related projects and further engage other actors vital to or benefiting the outreach.
- **DO3. Enhance sustainability long-term**. Maintain effective collaboration of key stakeholders during and after the project's lifetime.

For the first 18 months of the project, most of the communication and dissemination activities have been focused at DO2. stakeholders engagement, specifically attracting students and learners to enroll to the SPECTRO study programmes. Early results from the SPECTRO project as per DO1 are already disseminated to relevant target audiences, this effort will intensify as the project moved forward and delivers results. As per DO3. Enhance sustainability, the focus in the first months was mainly on fostering and sustain a close collaboration between

project partners. Project partners have also expanded and opened partnerships with industry. This Objective should expand in the second half of the project lifetime.

The document delivers an overview of the activities undertaken, channels employed, and results achieved up to this point. Conclusively, it analyses marketing and dissemination activities to draw insights into optimal approaches moving forward and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, it serves as an evaluation of the progress in implementing the Marketing and Dissemination Plan (i.e. D.3.1). The initial goal of the plan was to maximize the project's impact, enhance its visibility, and ensure the broad dissemination of project outputs. Building upon the groundwork laid out in D.3.1, the document summarises the achievements in executing the marketing and dissemination activities. It highlights the advancements made to further contribute to the project's overarching objectives and enhance its reach and impact. The management and overall implementation of marketing and dissemination activities are led by EIT Digital. All SPECTRO consortium partners have supported marketing and dissemination activities by providing content, participating in events, and promoting the project along the standalone modules.

2 SPECTRO Marketing and promotion Activities

2.1 Introduction

The Gantt Chart presented below in Figure 1, presents the projected timeline and plan for effectively communicating and disseminating information related to the SPECTRO project. It includes anticipated actions and milestones in promoting and raising awareness, engaging with the audience, collecting, and sharing key updates and outcomes. The activities carried out in the first 18 months followed this timeline.

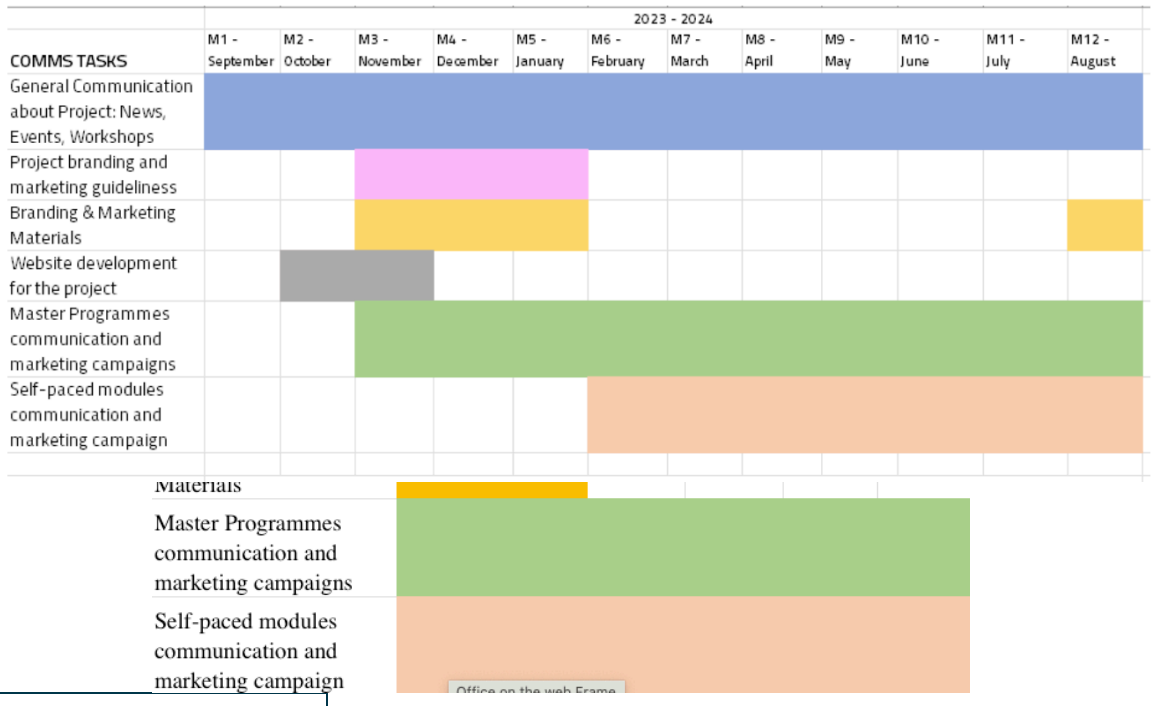


Figure 1: SPECTRO WP3 actions timeline

Looking ahead, the Gantt Chart will continue to guide the communication efforts with greater granularity, ensuring all actions are well-coordinated and effective. As the project moves into the second year, this chart will become even more crucial in helping us navigate and plan project's communication with precision.

2.2 Brand building

2.2.1 Brand strategy

A comprehensive branding strategy was formulated to establish a unified identity. This involved creating a visual identity, defining a colour scheme, identifying relevant hashtags, and designing a dedicated webpage. These branding elements were applied across all visual communications, campaigns, and documentation for a consistent visual experience. The cohesive branding approach was also implemented in social media communications and webpage landing pages. It was embedded in other communication channels, such as email marketing campaigns. This comprehensive application enhanced recognition and established a professional image, ensuring consistency throughout diverse platforms and contributing to a unified brand presence. Furthermore, partners integrated the project's visual identity with their existing visuals, leveraging their established reputation in local networks. Examples of visuals and campaigns will be presented in this Deliverable.

As part of the branding process, the project's visual identity was introduced and shared in various formats, including banners, templates for project presentations, and other deliverables as planned in D3.1 Marketing and Dissemination Activities Plan, section 4.1.

2.2.2 Graphism

To support the marketing and dissemination activities of the SPECTRO project, visuals and graphism were developed. This included creating PowerPoint presentations and custom graphics designed to effectively convey the project's goals, progress, and outcomes (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4). These materials are tailored to engage various stakeholders, ensuring clarity and consistency in the messaging. By leveraging these tools, the activities aim to enhance awareness, facilitate understanding, and drive engagement with the SPECTRO project across all relevant platforms and audiences.

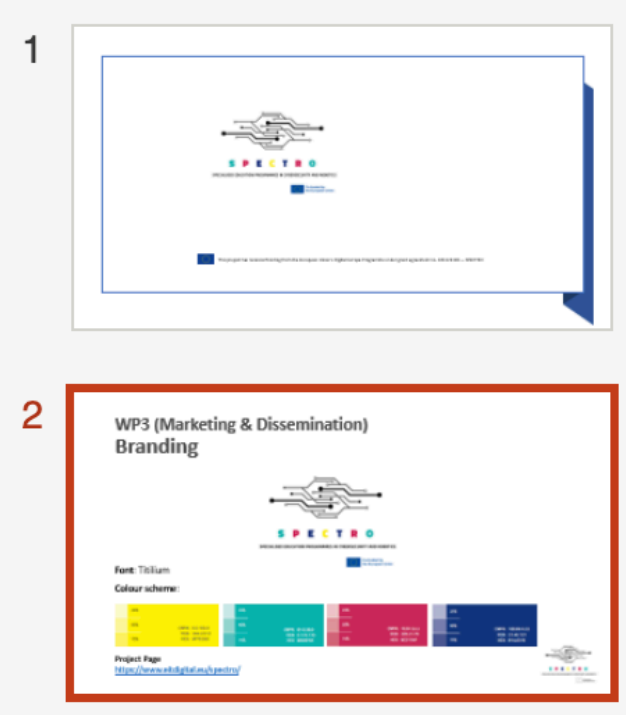
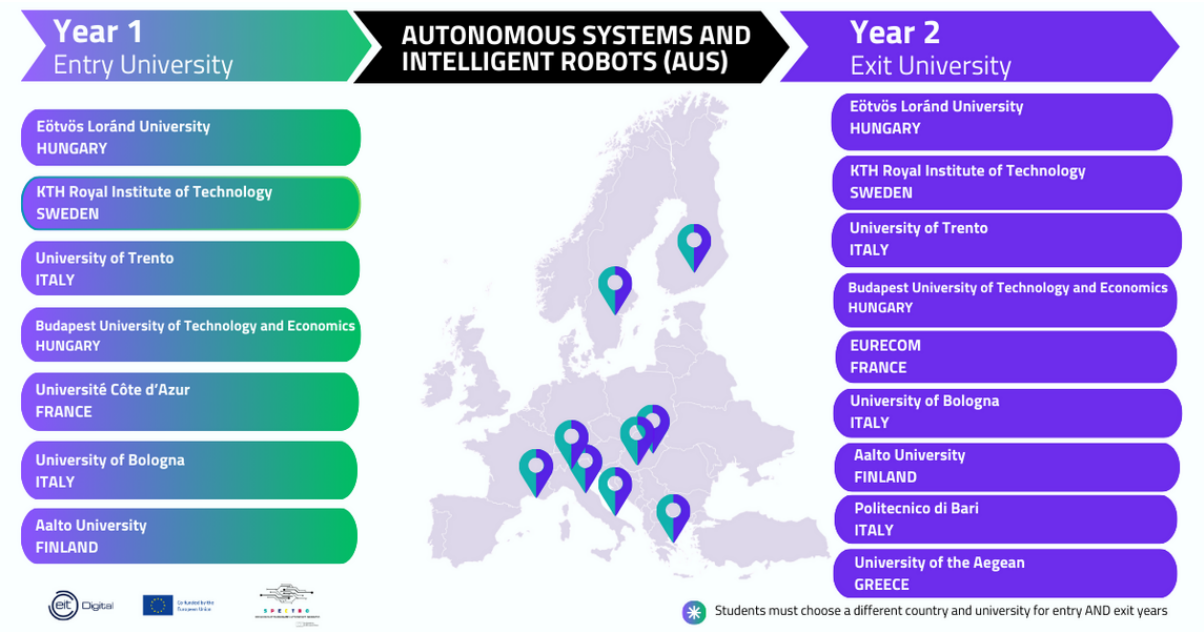


Figure 2: Extract from SPECTRO branding template guidelines



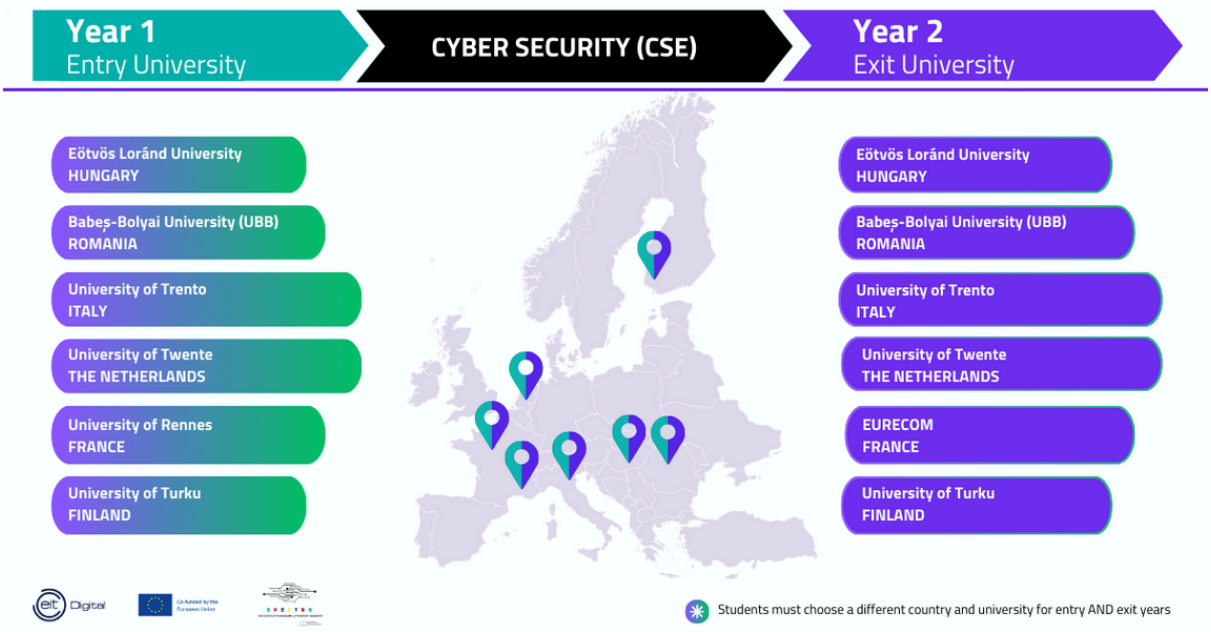


Figure 3: SPECTRO Masters' Entry and Exit universities locations

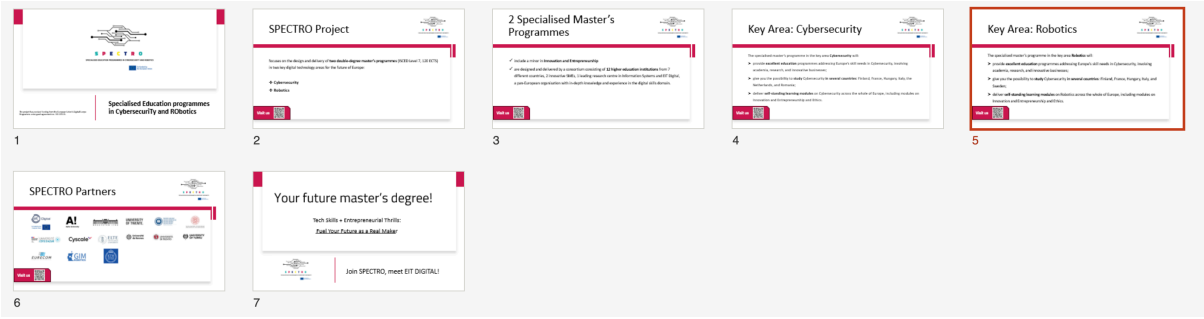


Figure 4: SPECTRO project presentation .ppt

2.3 SPECTRO webpage

As part of establishing a recognizable project identity a webpage [link] dedicated to the project was created under the EIT Digital domain. The webpage (Figure 5) is the primary resource for project-related information. It hosts details about the project and its short-term courses, the consortium, public deliverables, reports, news, and events in their respective sections.

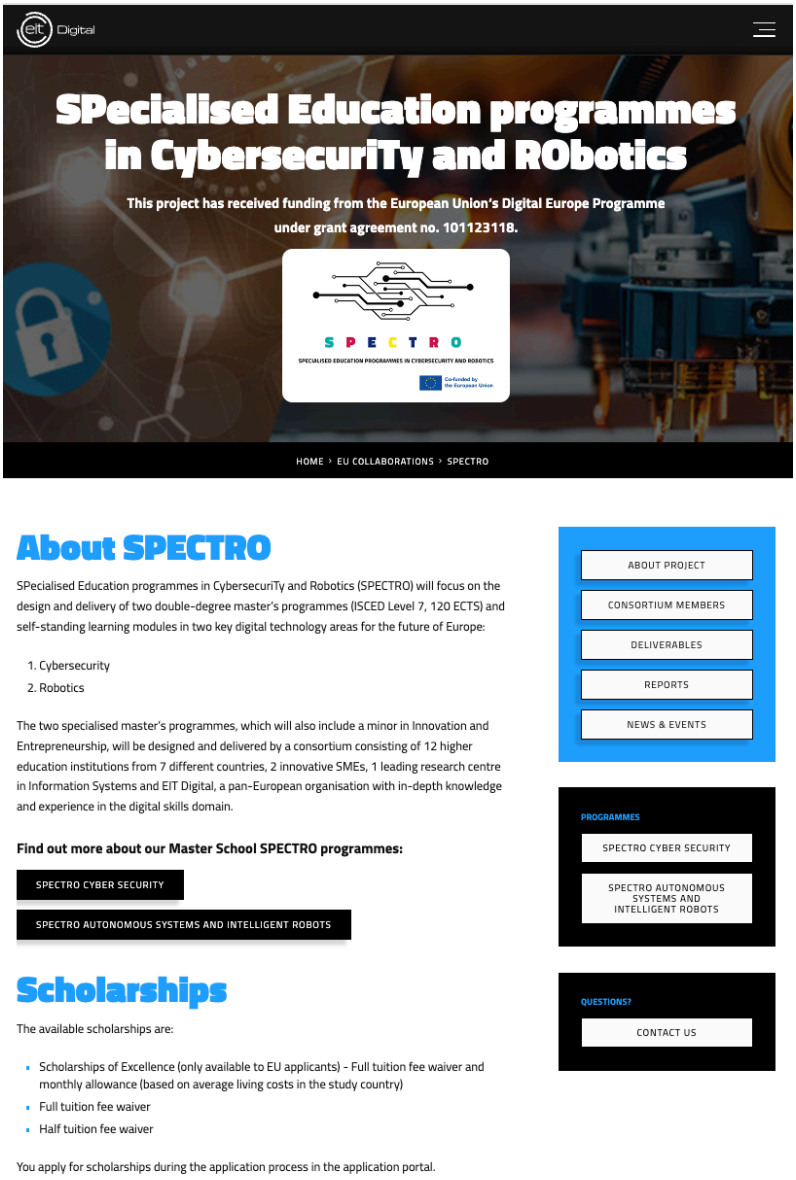
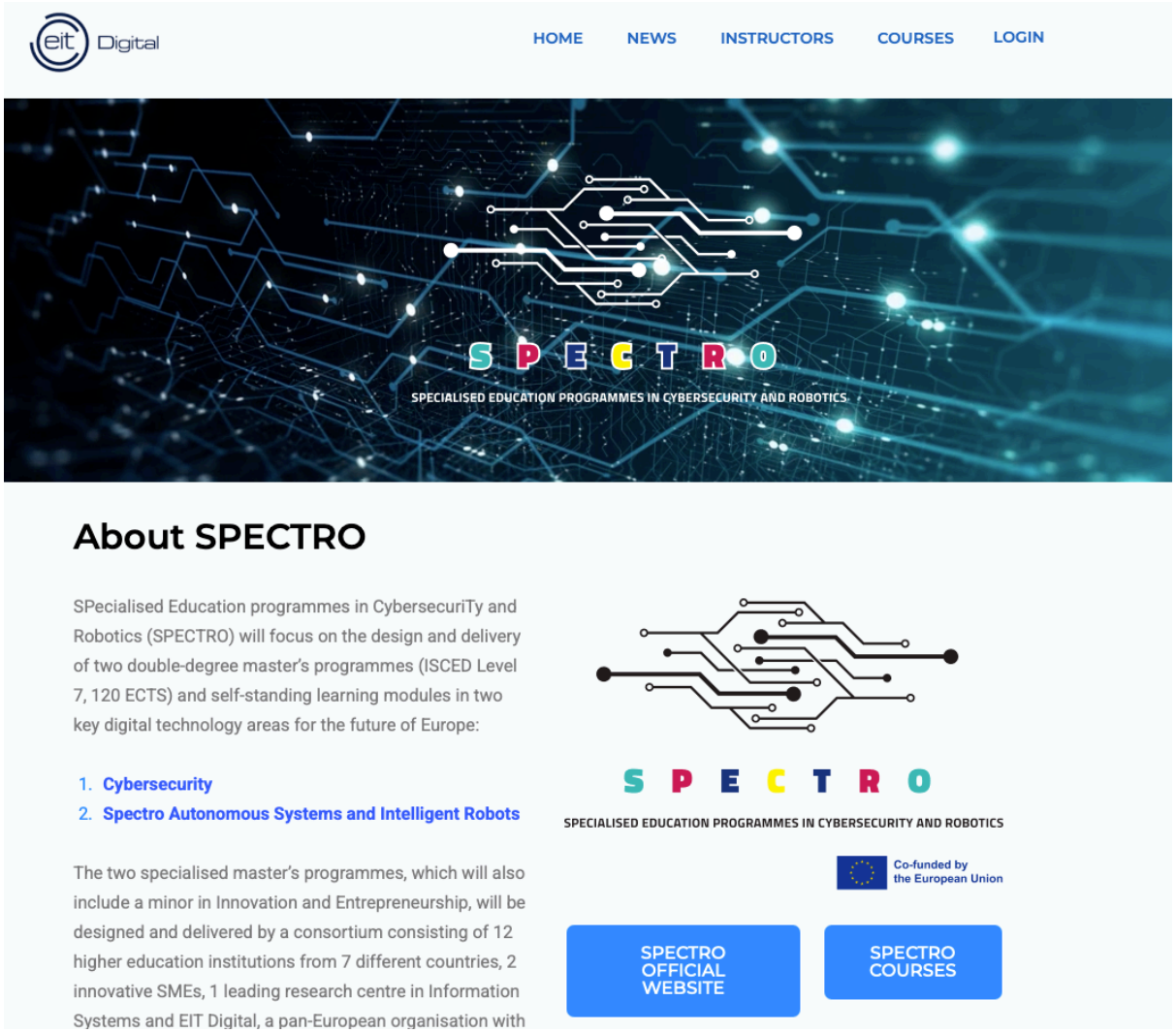


Figure 5: SPECTRO official webpage

2.4 SPECTRO platform for Robotics and Cybersecurity self-standing modules

SPECTRO WP3 leader, in collaboration with the project partner Evolutionary Archetypes (EA), have designed and created a dedicated platform to host SPECTRO's self-standing modules on Cybersecurity and Robotics. The platform following the SPECTRO visual identity and is user-friendly to those learners that will be registering to

self-paced modules. Instructors have a dedicated space on the platform to upload their content and create their course evaluations.



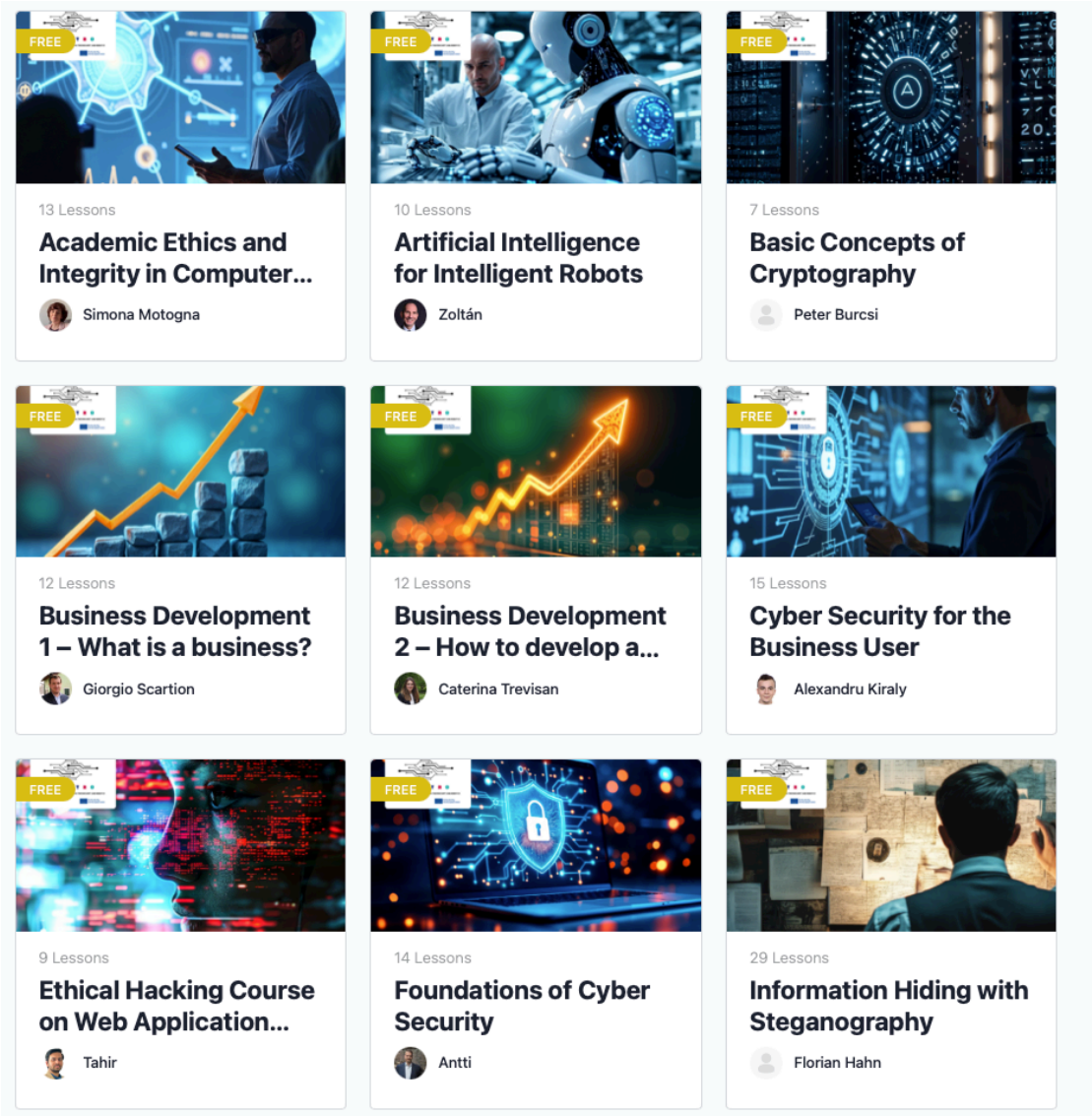
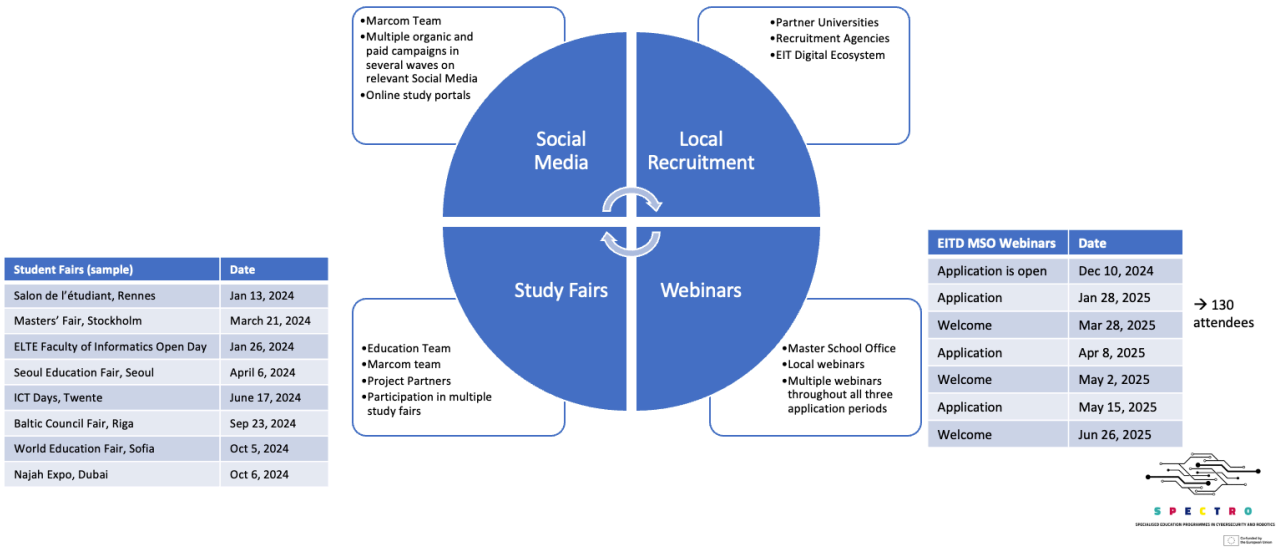


Figure 6: SPECTRO self-standing module platform (screenshots)

2.5 Organisation of dissemination and outreach

The figure below illustrates how the promotional activities for the recruitment of students is organised, among different teams (cross-collaboration with support teams, ie. Master School office, Marketing and Communication team), and among project partners.



Student Fairs (sample)	Date
Salon de l'étudiant, Rennes	Jan 13, 2024
Masters' Fair, Stockholm	March 21, 2024
ELTE Faculty of Informatics Open Day	Jan 26, 2024
Seoul Education Fair, Seoul	April 6, 2024
ICT Days, Twente	June 17, 2024
Baltic Council Fair, Riga	Sep 23, 2024
World Education Fair, Sofia	Oct 5, 2024
Najah Expo, Dubai	Oct 6, 2024

EITD MSO Webinars	Date
Application is open	Dec 10, 2024
Application	Jan 28, 2025
Welcome	Mar 28, 2025
Application	Apr 8, 2025
Welcome	May 2, 2025
Application	May 15, 2025
Welcome	Jun 26, 2025

Figure 7: Organisation of dissemination and outreach

The graph illustrates the recruitment and outreach strategies for the EIT Digital Master School program, categorized into four main areas: Social Media, Local Recruitment, Study Fairs, and Webinars. These strategies collectively aim to attract prospective students through diverse channels.

Social media campaigns, managed by the Marcom Team, include both organic and paid initiatives across various platforms to enhance visibility and engagement. Local recruitment focuses on partnerships with universities, recruitment agencies, and the broader EIT Digital Ecosystem to reach specific regions effectively. Study fairs provide opportunities for direct interaction between the Education Team and prospective students at events held globally. Webinars, organized throughout the application period, serve as virtual sessions to inform and guide applicants, attracting approximately 130 attendees per session. This multi-channel approach ensures broad accessibility and engagement, leveraging in-person events, digital platforms, and collaborative networks to maximize outreach for the program.

2.6 Dissemination channels strategy

As described in D3.1, there is no dedicated website or social media for the SPECTRO project because the consortium agreed it would be more effective to focus the communication strategy on leveraging the existing social media accounts and websites of the project's beneficiaries. The full list of SPECTRO partners' social media channels is available in D3.1 **Error! Reference source not found.**. Many of the partners already have well-established, high-traffic digital platforms with strong followings, offering valuable and visible channels to

promote SPECTRO's activities, brand, and results. This approach ensures wider and more targeted dissemination by reaching audiences already engaged with the partners' networks. Additionally, since the admission and application processes for the involved master programmes are centrally managed by EIT Digital, it was a natural and practical decision to host the official SPECTRO webpage under the EIT Digital domain. This creates a clear, centralized access point for students, stakeholders, and external audiences.

Eighteen months after the implementation of the Dissemination and Marketing Plan, the SPECTRO webpage hosted under the EIT Digital domain continues to perform well, generating steady traffic and maintaining good visibility and positioning. It still makes sense to keep the page within the EIT Digital ecosystem, ensuring coherence with the admission processes and wider promotional activities. The consortium remains aligned in their view that creating dedicated SPECTRO social media accounts is unnecessary, as it could dilute engagement and fragment the audience. However, the decentralized approach has introduced challenges in reporting, particularly with the inconsistent use of agreed hashtags and difficulties in tracking shared content and engagement metrics. While partners remain collaborative and actively promote the project, reporting often gets overlooked. If these coordination and reporting challenges persist, partners have agreed to reassess the need and relevance of establishing dedicated social media channels to streamline communication, improve visibility, and facilitate easier, more accurate tracking of online activities.

3 Project promotional activities

During the project's initial phase, the primary focus was to generate general awareness about the SPECTRO project and disseminate information to target audience. This involved addressing both Dissemination Objective 1: Raise awareness and Dissemination, and Objective 2: Engage key stakeholders. Communication actions during this initial phase revolved around:

- Promote the project
- Recruit students and learners for the two educational programmes (2 Masters + self-standing modules)
- Highlighting the cooperation between project partners

This subsection will present activities that were put in place to reach these objectives, also raising issues and challenges faced. As per project Grant Agreement, the following activities were foreseen:

- Organic social media promotion within the SPECTRO consortium
- Disseminating information about courses through events, both face-to-face and digital, on the EU level

- Publication of press releases, articles, and documents
- Exploration of communication-related synergies within similar initiatives and projects
- Creation of dissemination materials
- e-Newsletter of the project in English in collaboration with all the project partners

This subsection will provide evidence and examples for each of them.

3.1 Organic social media promotion activities

Throughout the initial phase of the project, various organic marketing channels, including social media, email campaigns, and representations at events, were strategically employed to attract attention, enhance visibility, and foster engagement.

In the context of organic outreach, with a specific focus on raising awareness for SPECTRO, social media channels play a key role in the project's communication and dissemination activities. These channels had the potential to significantly enhance post visibility and topic exposure through impressions, creating opportunities for increased reach and content visibility.

To support social media dissemination efforts, specific hashtags were identified for promoting the project and its courses: **#SPECTRO, #euprojects, #cybersecurity, #studyineurope, #robotics, #training.** The hashtags **#DigitalEurope or #DigitalEU and #HaDEA** are compulsory in every post.The SPECTRO visual identity, including the European Union emblem, and the mention of the co-funding, are compulsory in all dissemination and communication activities of the beneficiaries (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.). During the first 18 months of the project, these hashtags and funding visual were not consistently employed whenever a new social media post about the project was shared across all partner channels. The tagging of HaDEA was not properly implemented either. For this reason, all project partners have been reminded of the European Commission rules for funded projects. They received a dedicated training and close follow up from the coordinator to follow communication and dissemination rules. The branding guidelines were updated with further information about tagging HaDEA using the appropriate account tags and hashtags to generate further promotion on HaDEA's webpage and social media.

3.1.1 Social media organic promotion

Consortium partners leveraged their social media channels and their internal contact databases to disseminate project information. The full list of SPECTRO partners' social media channels is available in D3.1 **Error! Reference source not found.**. The following section (Figure 8) provides illustrative examples of the activities undertaken as part of these initiatives. The impressions of the posts have been ranging between 1400 and 6000 whilst receiving 53 clicks on average per post.

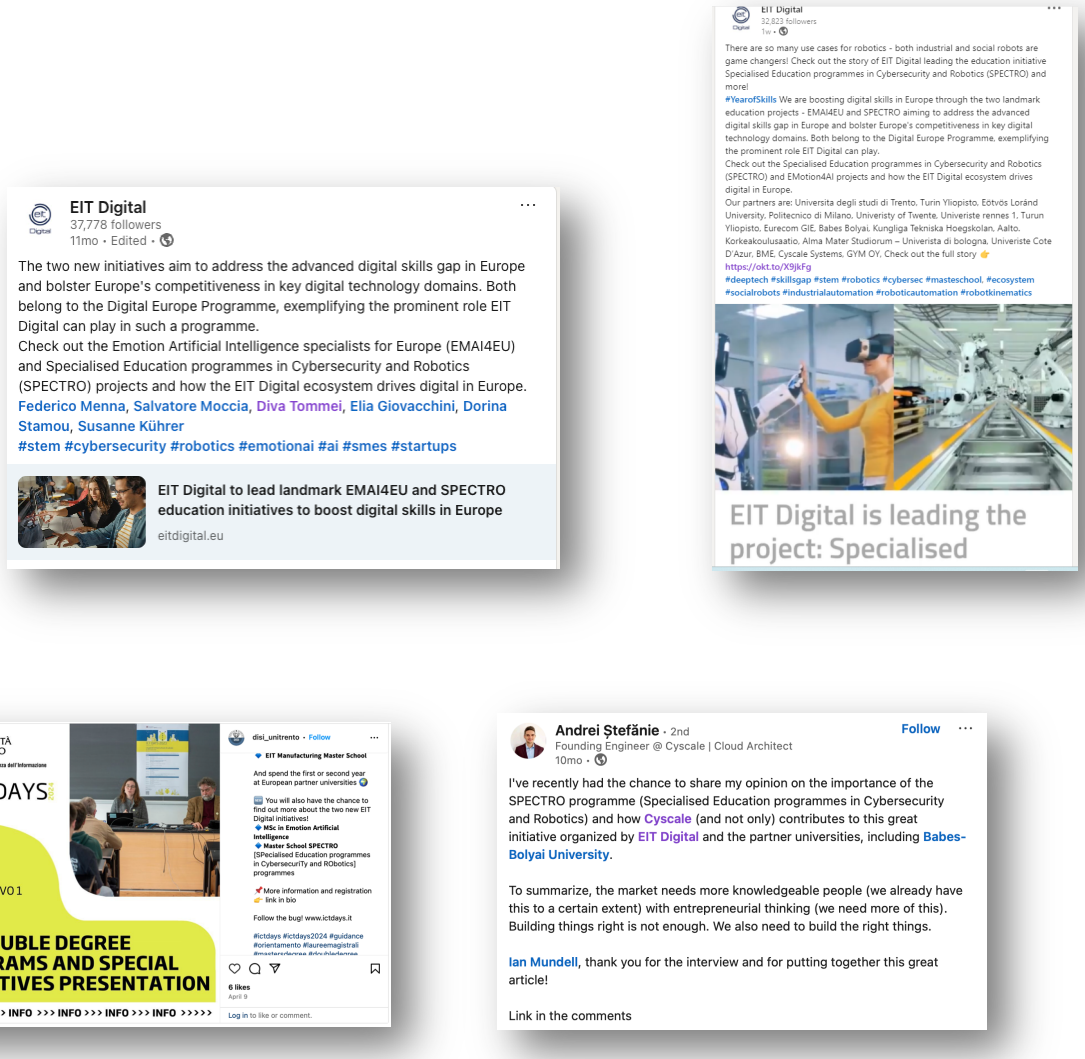


Figure 8: Social media post examples

SPECTRO project's partners have been actively promoting the initiative across their social media channels to reach a broader audience. By leveraging platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram, they are spreading awareness about the SPECTRO project and the diverse master's programs it offers. Through regular posts, engaging content, and targeted campaigns, the partners aim to connect with potential students, industry professionals, and academic communities, highlighting the unique opportunities available within the project. These efforts are part of a coordinated strategy to increase visibility and attract talented individuals to the SPECTRO programs.

3.2 Social media Paid campaigns

For social media paid campaigns, channels such as META, Linkedin and REDDIT were used to promote the recruitment period and the scholarships available to EU students. In 2024, META was heavily used to promote the scholarships during the recruitment period Phase 1. With three different targets in place (regionally and generally), the campaigns reached 1.195.632 impressions and 380.659 clicks.

Regarding paid advertisement, the original marketing plan had focused on using Facebook and Instagram to promote the SPECTRO programmes. However, starting in 2025, the EIT Digital WP3 team expanded the strategy by exploring Reddit as an additional channel. Reddit stands out for its strong user base within the 18 to 29-year-old demographic, making it an ideal platform to reach and engage prospective Master School students. With its wide range of niche communities and interest-based forums, Reddit offers valuable opportunities to connect with audiences specifically interested in topics like cybersecurity, autonomous systems, and digital innovation. This new channel complements the existing strategy by diversifying outreach efforts and increasing visibility among highly relevant, digitally engaged student groups.

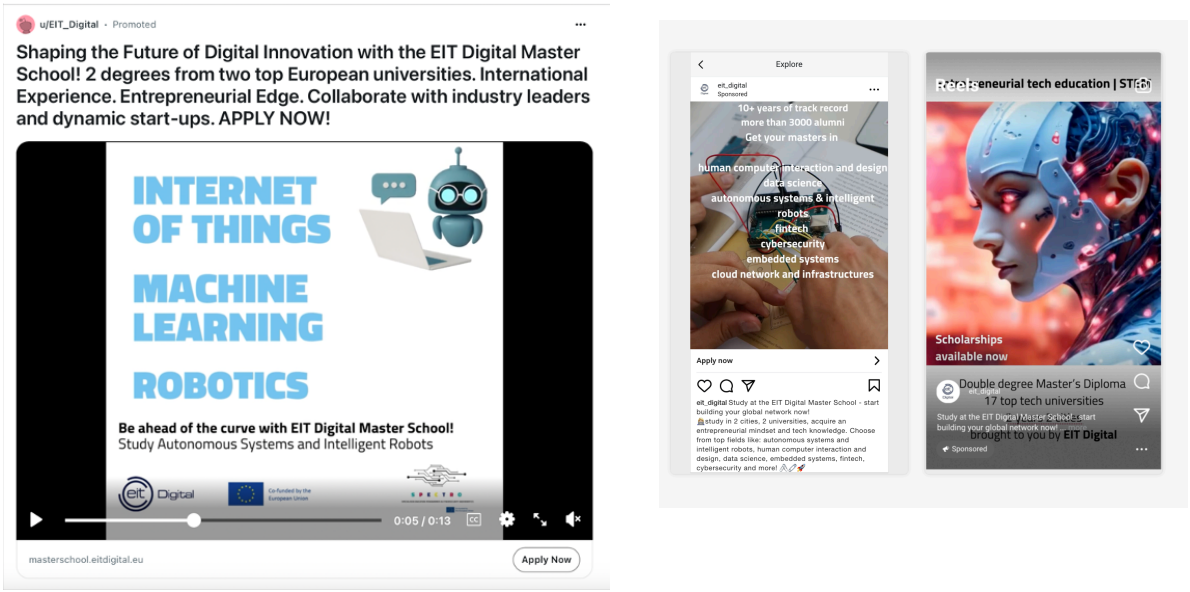


Figure 9: Paid social media, examples

3.2.1 Social media sponsored campaigns: Facebook Paid Ads

During the autumn of 2023, EIT Digital carried out targeted promotional campaigns through paid advertisements on Facebook Ads and Google Ads as those were identified as the primary source of the targeted audience. These campaigns were designed to drive engagement and direct potential leads to the dedicated landing pages for the Master School programmes:

- Autonomous Systems and Intelligent Robots (AUS)
- Cybersecurity

The visuals below (figure illustrate Facebook ads (Facebook and Instagram promotion), both image and video, that ran as of November 14, 2023 – May 15, 2024, targeting the EU geographical location and November 14, 2023 – May 31, 2024, targeting international students. These ads (Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12) recorded a total of 2,200,236 impressions and 153,910 clicks, directing users to the registration pages (Figure 13).

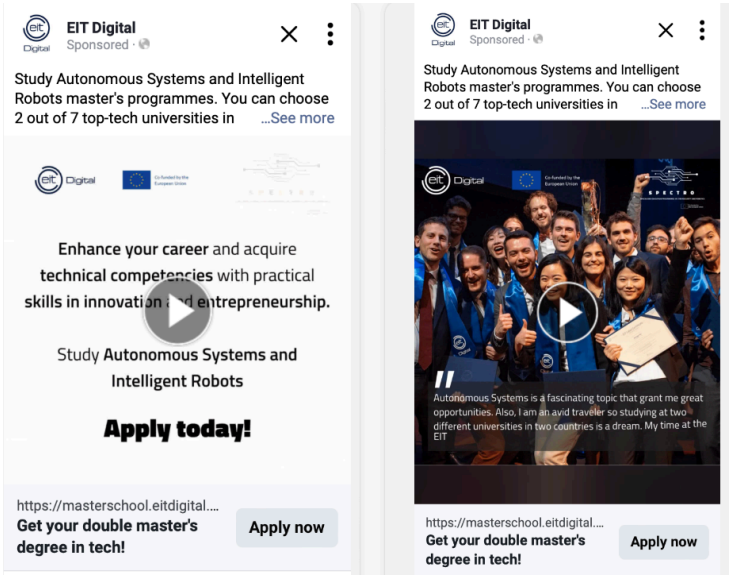


Figure 10: Facebook Ads example 1

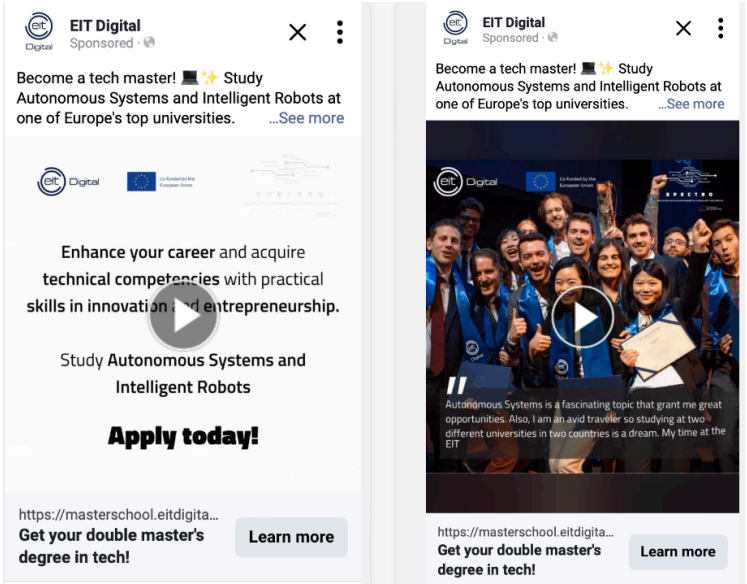


Figure 11: Facebook Ads example 2

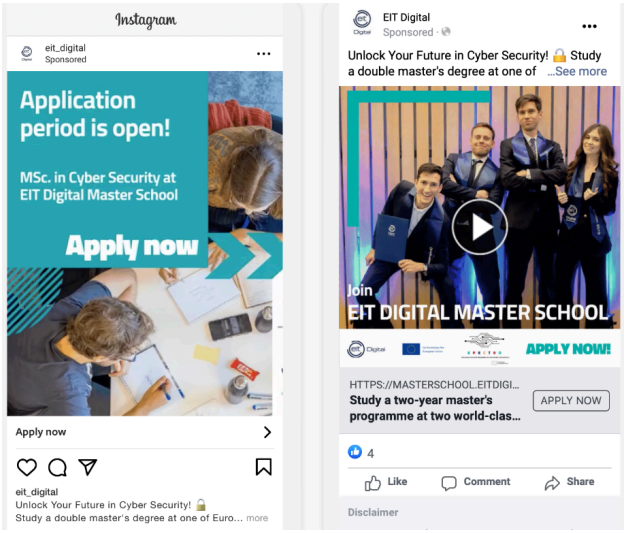


Figure 12: Facebook Ads example 3

Ad set	Results	Reach	Impressions	Cost per result	Amount spent	Ends
MSL General_Europe 24	32,217 Link clicks	198,487	604,478	€0.09 Per Link Click	€2,956.65	May 15, 2024
MSL General_NON EU 24	121,693 Link clicks	696,841	1,595,758	€0.01 Per Link Click	€1,373.58	Mar 31, 2024
Results from 2 ad sets	**153,910** Link clicks	**899,478** Accounts Center acco...	**2,200,236** Total	**€0.03** Per Link Click	**€4,330.23** Total spent	

Figure 13: Facebook Ads delivery example

The ads featured compelling headlines designed to prompt applications and capture student interest in the programme topics. The visuals highlighted images of current EIT Digital Master School students, while complying with the EC rules on Communication, Dissemination and Visibility.

3.2.2 Google Search Paid Ads

Search campaigns were run by EIT Digital throughout the enrolment period because Google Ads as a platform was evaluated to reach the target audience in the most cost-effective way. By targeting specific keywords related to the educational programmes, Google Ads ensures that the ads reach users actively searching for these topics and programmes. The pay-per-click (PPC) model makes it cost-effective whilst ensuring flexibility and control (Figure 14). Geographic targeting also ensures that ads reach the right audience in specific locations, while ad customization allows for personalized and relevant messaging to different audience segments (Figure 15). Google Ads also deliver quick results, generating immediate traffic to the programmes with immediate impact, especially for niche markets and topics. The keywords included: masters in cyber security, cyber security companies, study in Europe, best schools master, cyber security education, cyber security schools, cyber security degrees, Information technology

master, master program artificial intelligence, autonomous systems robotics, masters in robotics and autonomous systems, masters in robotics, master of computer and information technology, autonomous systems course.

Campaign	Impr.	Interactions	Interaction rate	Avg. cost	Cost	Bid strategy type	Clicks	Conv. rate	Conversions	Avg. CPC
SPECTRO_MSL_Cybersecurity	739,351	27,714 clicks	3.75%	€0.26	€7,119.19	Maximize conversions	27,714	64.04%	17,747.37	€0.26
SPECTRO_MSL_Autonomous Systems & Intelligent Robots	765,275	20,548 clicks	2.69%	€0.31	€6,460.21	Maximize conversions	20,548	94.36%	19,389.97	€0.31
Total: Filtered campai...	1,504,626	48,262 clicks	3.21%	€0.28	€13,579.40		48,262	76.95%	37,137.34	€0.28
Total: Account	13,433,757	1,709,982 clicks, engagements, views	12.73%	€0.03	€51,391.64		416,983	21.06%	360,120.59	€0.12

Figure 14: Google Ads delivery example

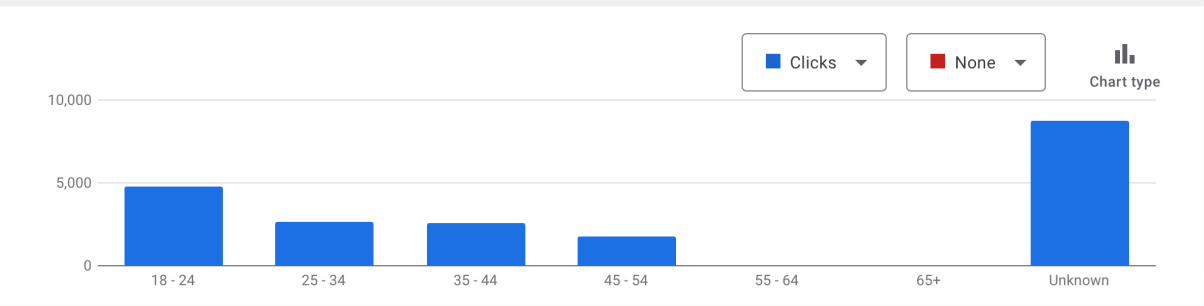


Figure 15: Google Ads geographical breakdown

Below are examples of the Google search ads deployed throughout the period between November 2023 and April 2024 (Figure 16).

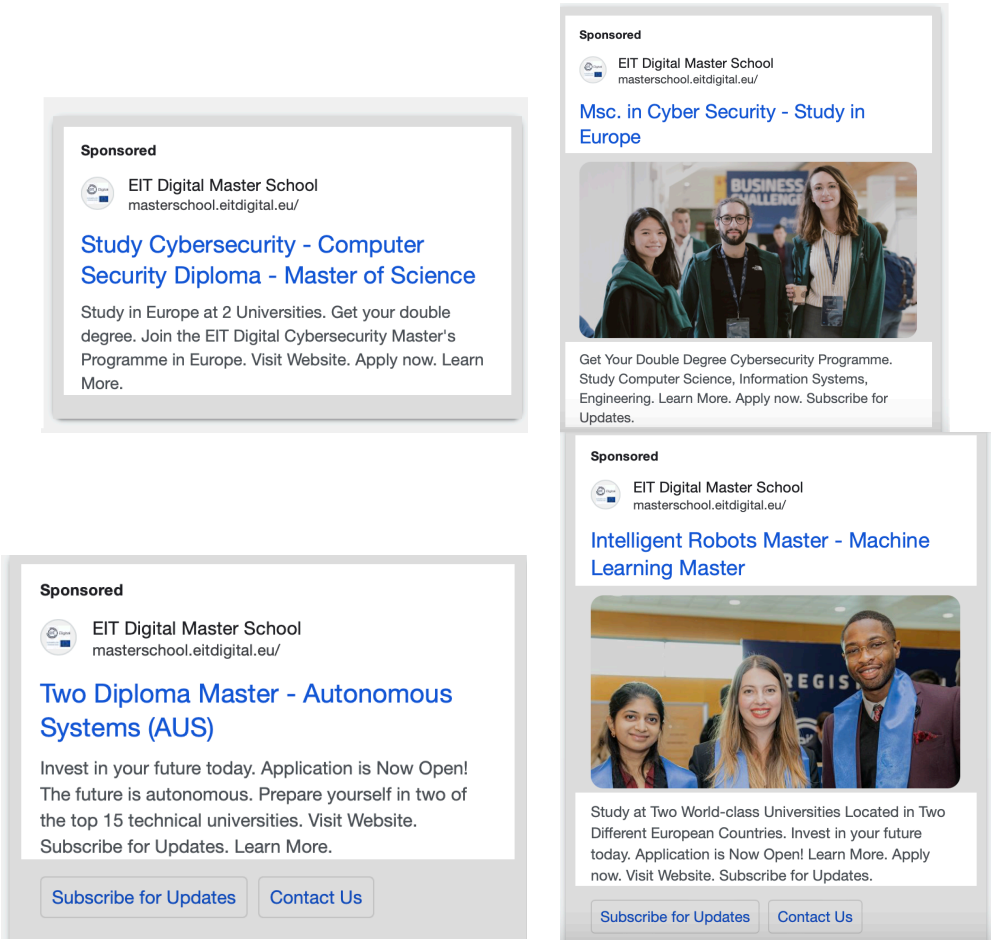


Figure 16: Google Ads examples

3.2.3 REDDIT Paid Ads

Regarding paid advertisement, the original marketing plan had focused on using Facebook and Instagram to promote the SPECTRO programmes. However, starting in 2025, the EIT Digital WP3 team expanded the strategy by exploring Reddit as an additional channel. For three weeks in January, there were 3 different campaigns running, separated by broad communities, niche communities and interests. The content was focused on the Autonomous Systems and Intelligent Robots program; therefore, the KWs were based on robotics. With the videos, the internationalization of the SPECTRO programs were also promoted. Together, the REDDIT ads reached 424.630 impressions and 5.236 clicks. The click-through-rate average was 1.2%, while it's usually 0.4% for educational programs.

	Off/On	Name	Status	Impressions	eCPM	Clicks
☐		Creative 1: Build Your Own Dance Partner ⋮	Not delivering	110,946	€0.94	1,300

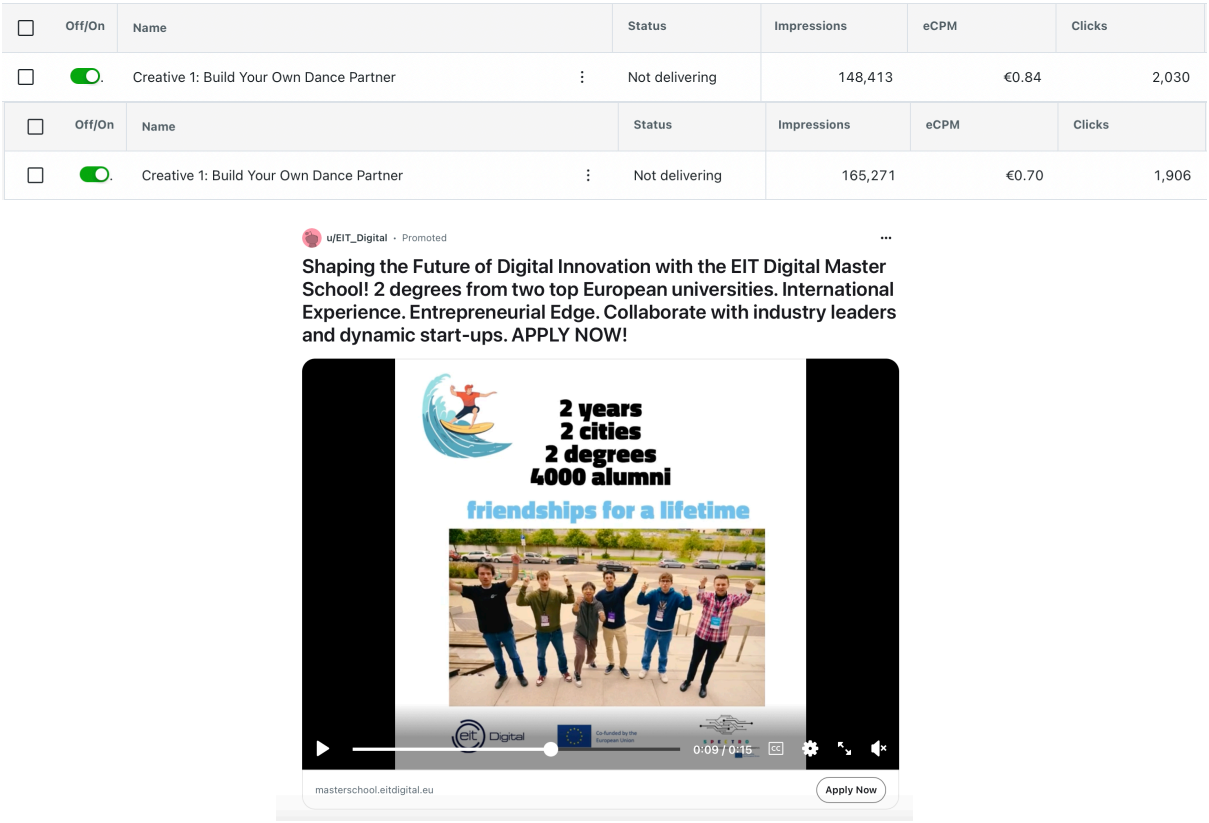


Figure 17: Reddit paid ads, example

3.3 Dissemination of information through events and conferences

In the first 18 months of the project EITD WP3 team and the project partners attended 67 events, conferences and education fairs, reaching out to over 80,000 persons in total. At most of these fairs, the SPECTRO project had a dedicated booth or space, showcasing the study offer.

3.3.1 Students' recruitment: international fairs and local recruitment

Attending education fairs is a highly effective strategy for attracting students to master's programs. These events offer several key advantages that help connect with prospective students and showcase SPECTRO's offerings.

- Education fairs provide face-to-face interaction with prospective students, which builds trust and allows students to ask specific questions about admission requirements, scholarships, and campus life. This

personal engagement is often more impactful than online outreach, as it addresses concerns in real time and helps students make informed decisions. Additionally, fairs create a centralized platform where students can access information about multiple institutions, saving time and effort compared to researching universities individually.

- Another benefit is the opportunity for career guidance and personalized counseling. Students can receive tailored advice about programs that align with their interests and career goals. This personalized approach enhances their confidence in choosing the right academic path. Education fairs also allowed to highlight SPECTRO scholarship opportunities, which are crucial for many students when selecting a program.
- Furthermore, these events foster networking opportunities, enabling students to connect with university representatives, alumni, and other attendees who share similar interests. Such interactions often lead to valuable insights about academic programs and future career prospects.

The below pictures show examples of SPECTRO booths at two education fairs:

- 28 Sept 2024, the Baltic Council Fair, Riga gathered about ~3,500 participants
- 5 Oct 2024, the World Education Fair, Sofia gathered about ~10,000 participants.

The fairs were selected to ensure a broad European coverage, and also reach out to RIS-country students directly.

Figure 18: On the right: Baltic Council Fair, Riga. On the left: World Education Fair, Sofia

Additionally to the participation to student fairs, many small-scale recruitment activities were organized locally by each partner universities to engage with local bachelor students. These initiatives include university open days, information sessions, and career days.

For example, Aalto University has launched several initiatives to promote the SPECTRO programmes. These include a one-day event on joint degrees in September 2023, an "Aalto Double Degree Day" event in November 2023 featuring a dedicated stand with a roll-up banner, a follow-up webinar on "How to Apply for Joint Programs at Aalto," student newsletters, brief information sessions led by program coordinators, "coffee corners," and more.

Another example from the University of Trento advertised the programs using different channels. The poster of the SPECTRO program was displayed throughout all the buildings of the STEM faculties before each application deadline. A session dedicated to SPECTRO was arranged at the ICT Days event on the 17th of April 2024 to explain and advertise the SPECTRO programmes to local students. The ICT Days are a local annual event involving more than 50 companies, and open to all students and prospective students. SPECTRO was also presented on the 8th Sept. 2023 in a dedicated event organized annually by the Department of Information Engineering and Computer Science to present all its MSc degrees.

A last example from University Twente, who presented SPECTRO during two different sessions at the University's Master's Open Day in 2023 and 2024, targeting students interested in pursuing master's studies.

3.3.2 Conferences and other dissemination activities

The SPECTRO project was proudly represented at 8 conferences, cybersecurity or robotics dedicated events or symposiums; throughout the first 18 months of the project. Attending these events offered numerous benefits, including excellent networking opportunities with industry professionals and potential collaborators. It significantly increased the project's visibility and brand awareness, allowing the team to highlight the programmes and early outcomes to a wide audience. It allowed a strategies positioning of SPECTRO in the field of cybersecurity and robotics. These conferences also provided the SPECTRO team with valuable insights and direct feedback from attendees on the educational offer. Additionally, these events allowed the team to stay updated on the latest industry trends and advancements, boosting the knowledge and strategic positioning in the market. Overall, the conferences were instrumental in enhancing the project's growth and success. Below are presented The Maker Faire Rome [link] stands as a prominent European edition event that facilitates and talks about technical innovation. The topics discussed cover a wide range, including robotics, 3D printing, computers, arts, and crafts, and more. It was held during 22-23 October 2023 with 500+ participants.

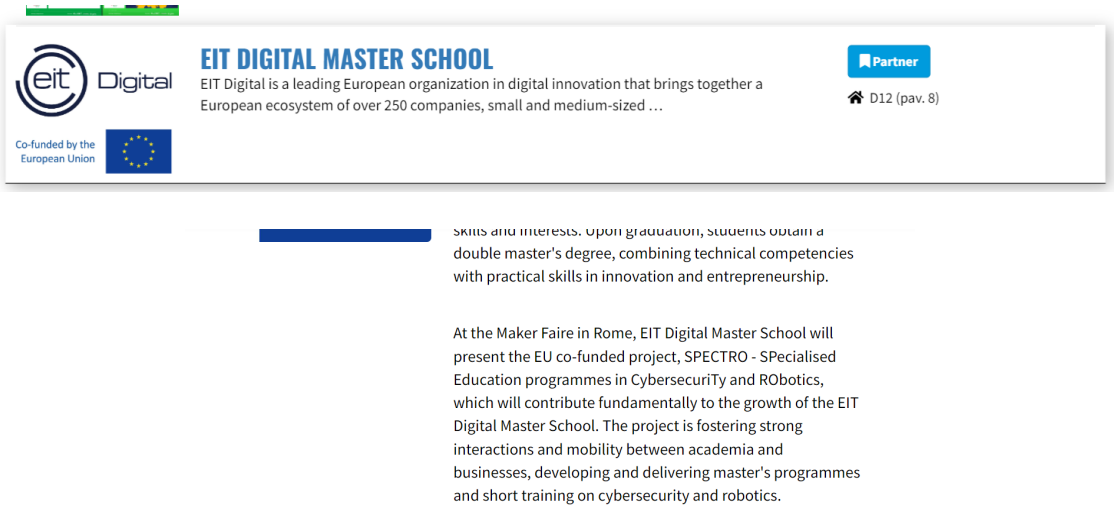


Figure 19: Maker Faire Rome presence

The EIT Summit [link] has kicked off the flagship INNOVEIT event series on 20 February 2024, hosted in the EGG Brussels. The EIT Summit brought together the entire EIT ecosystem – Europe's largest innovation network. The attendees included EIT-supported entrepreneurs and innovators for round table discussions with Members of the European Parliament, European Commissioners, leading experts and industry players. EIT Digital crowned Europe's most promising innovators during the 2024 EIT Awards. EIT Digital's booth, strategically located at the entrance, attracted significant attention. The EIT Digital showcased the SPECTRO project at their booth (Figure 20).

Figure 20: EIT Summit booth presence

SPECTRO project partners have participated to thematic robotics or cybersecurity events. For example, The University of Twente (UT) attended the National Cyber Security Event: The Future of Human Capital in Cybersecurity, held at Amare in The Hague on June 4, 2024. The event attracted over 100 attendees, where SPECTRO was showcased as an answer and good practice to remediate to the national shortage of experts in cybersecurity (Figure 21).

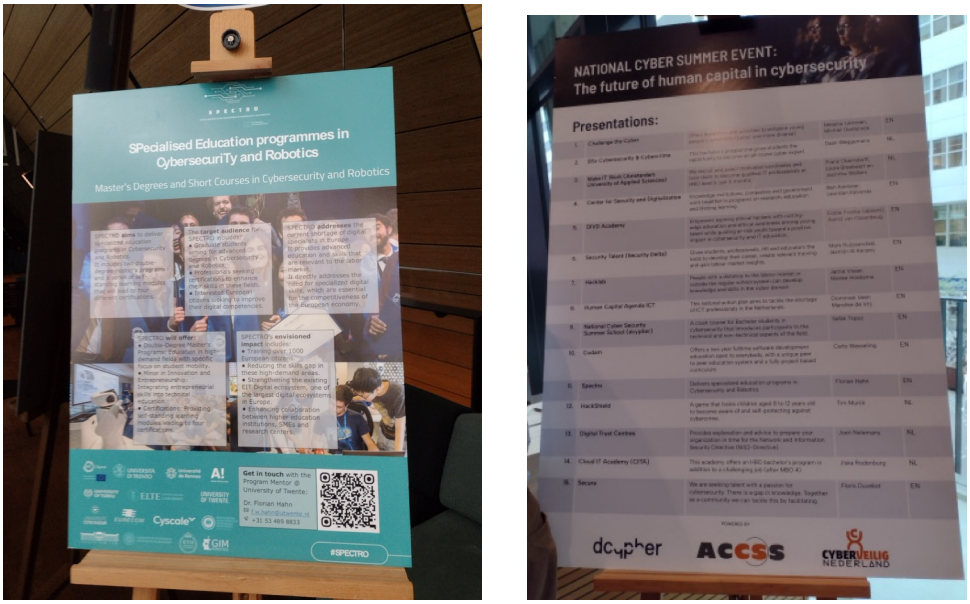


Figure 21: National Cyber Security Event, the Netherlands

3.4 Creation of dissemination materials

WP3 Communication Coordinator created many dissemination tools, and materials. Each tool and material play a role in marketing and outreach strategy by enhancing visibility, engagement, and communication with prospective students:

- Master School Recruitment Toolkit: Provides standardized resources that ensure consistency in messaging and branding across all recruitment activities, making it easier for project partners to promote the program effectively.
- Local Promotion Designs: Tailored materials for specific regions help address cultural preferences and local interests, increasing relevance and impact in targeted areas.
- Banners, Posters for Fairs: Eye-catching visuals at education fairs attract attention, create a strong first impression, and provide essential information about the program to attendees.
- Thematic Campaigns for Social Media (incl. visuals, reels): Engaging and creative content on social media platforms boosts online visibility, captures the interest of a digital-savvy audience, and drives traffic to application portal.

Figure 22: SPECTRO promotional flyers

As previously mentioned, EITD WP3 Communication coordinator also worked closely with local universities to create tailored campaigns for them, including impactful messages, or displaying the university logo. These proved useful to address local students preferences and culture, and tailor the communication activities to the right audience. Below are examples of flyers created for ELTE university, Budapest.

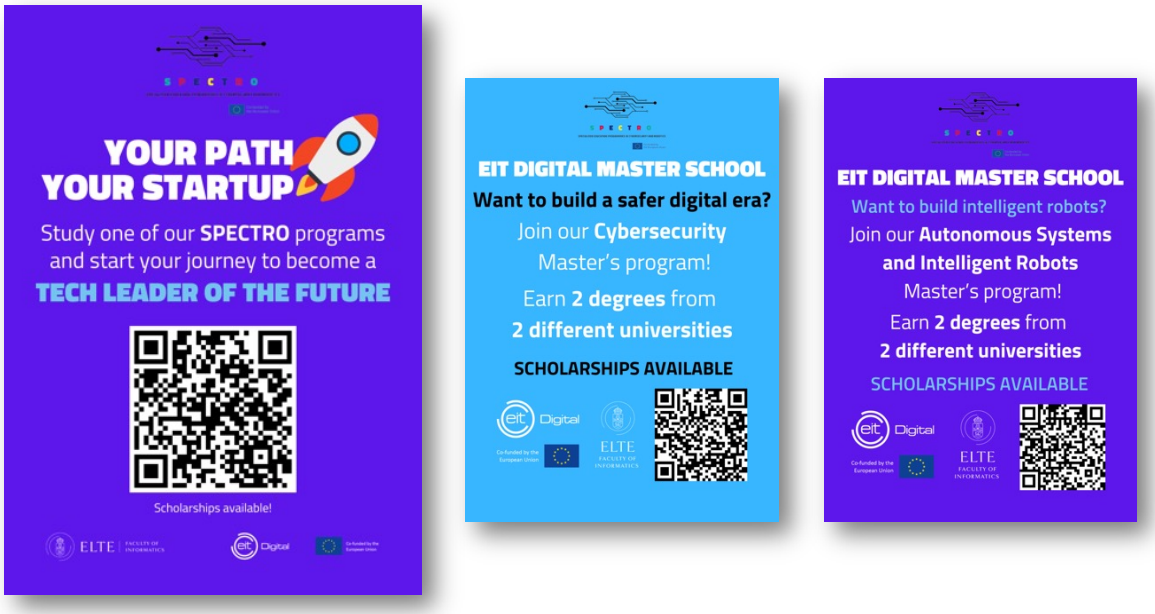


Figure 23: SPECTRO flyers for ELTE university

3.5 Exploration of communication-related synergies within similar initiatives and projects

The SPECTRO educational programmes and self-standing modules are closely connected to the master's programs and self-standing modules from the following projects: ACHIEVE, RESCHIP4EU, and EMAI4EU. Each one is designed to focus on distinct technological domains while sharing a common structure that emphasizes technical excellence, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Marketing and outreach efforts are streamlined to reduce redundancy, enhance brand recognition, and attract a broader audience of prospective students. Collaborative dissemination of best practices, success stories, and outcomes amplifies the impact of these programmes. Shared digital platforms, including a centralized admission portal and self-standing modules,

serve as repositories for educational materials and simplify access for students. Consistent branding strengthens the reputation and appeal of the programs while adhering to EU communication and dissemination guidelines. Additionally, the SPECTRO master's programs are referenced on the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP). Thematic synergies are being explored with other EU initiatives in cybersecurity and robotics to foster collaboration, still at an early stage for the moment but this aspect will be strengthened in the future.

3.6 Publication of press releases, articles and documents

SPECTRO Coordinator and project partner regularly publish articles, blog posts and media articles to promote the project activities, share recent project news, and position the project early outcomes as a reference in scientific publications and articles.

For example, an article on the SPECTRO EIT Digital webpage for the launch of the SPECTRO project (Figure 24). This article presented the project's objectives, scope, and expected impact. The full article can be found on the official EIT Digital webpage [link]. The article has received over 1200 views from over 700 users.

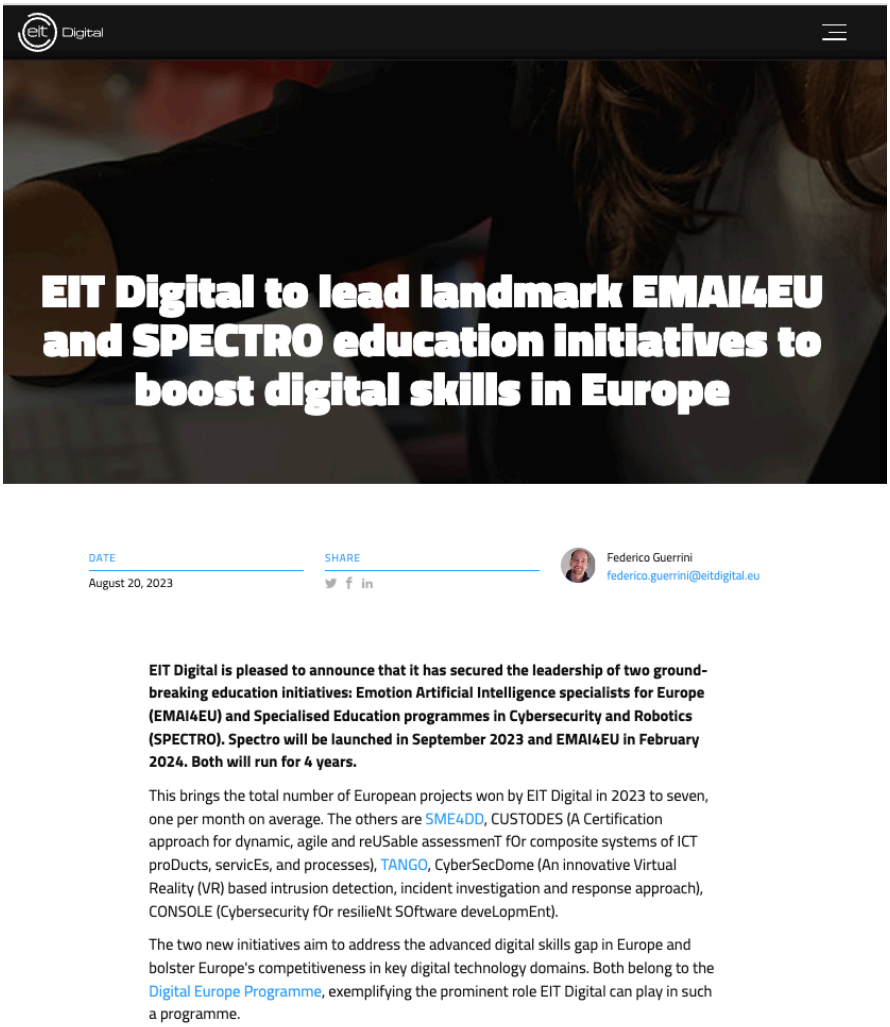
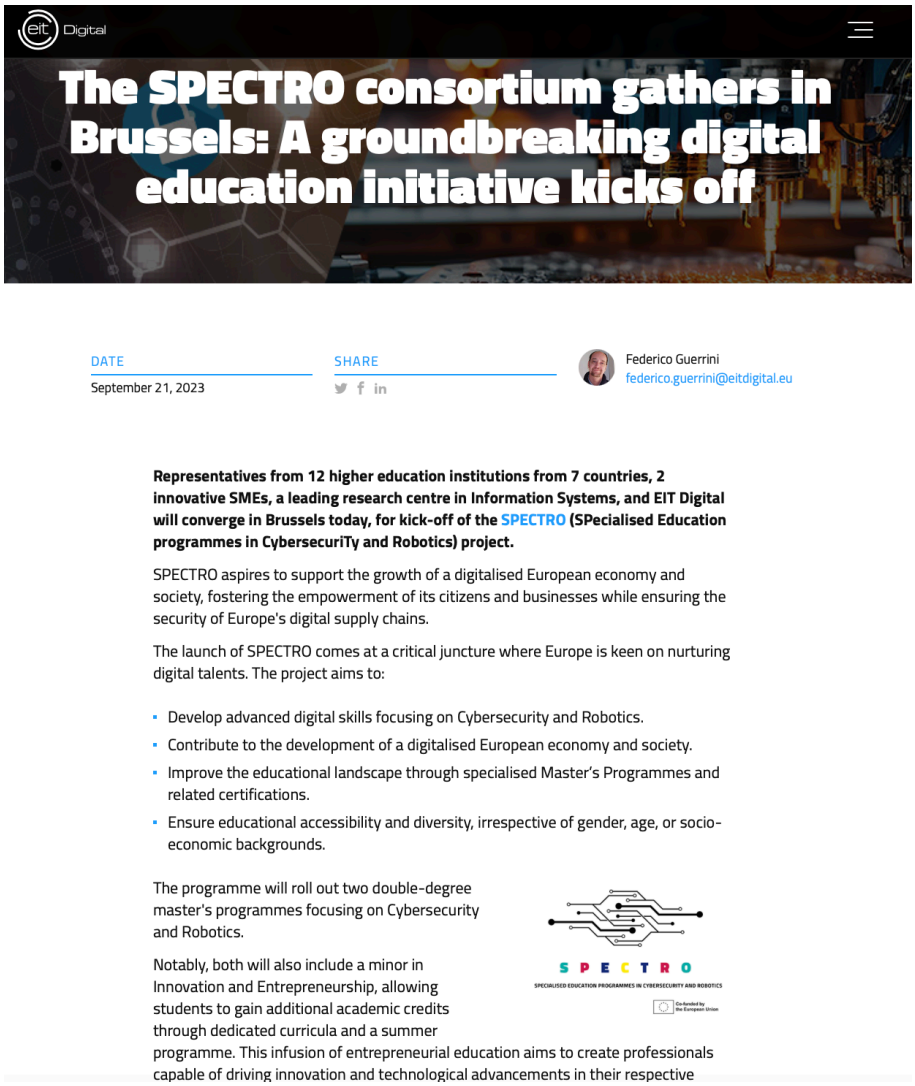


Figure 24: SPECTRO webpage article 1

The EIT Digital team also published a news article announcing SPECTRO consortium's gathering in Brussels to launch kick-off the project (Figure 25) [link].



The SPECTRO consortium gathers in Brussels: A groundbreaking digital education initiative kicks off

DATE
September 21, 2023

SHARE

Federico Guerrini
federico.guerrini@eitdigital.eu

Representatives from 12 higher education institutions from 7 countries, 2 innovative SMEs, a leading research centre in Information Systems, and EIT Digital will converge in Brussels today, for kick-off of the SPECTRO (SPecialised Education programmes in CybersecuriTy and Robotics) project.

SPECTRO aspires to support the growth of a digitalised European economy and society, fostering the empowerment of its citizens and businesses while ensuring the security of Europe's digital supply chains.

The launch of SPECTRO comes at a critical juncture where Europe is keen on nurturing digital talents. The project aims to:

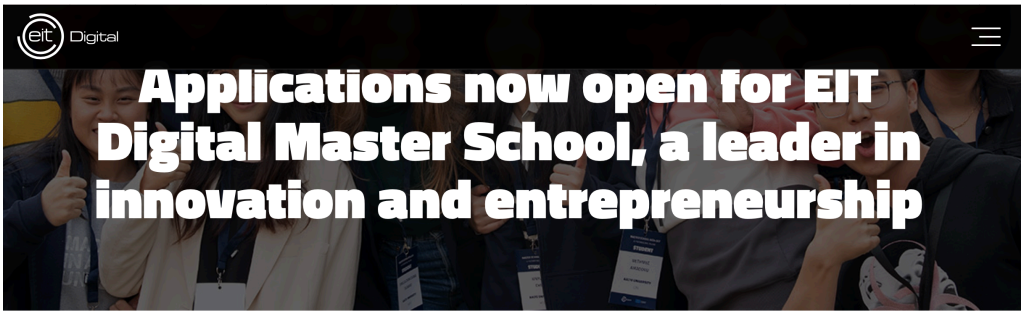
- Develop advanced digital skills focusing on Cybersecurity and Robotics.
- Contribute to the development of a digitalised European economy and society.
- Improve the educational landscape through specialised Master's Programmes and related certifications.
- Ensure educational accessibility and diversity, irrespective of gender, age, or socio-economic backgrounds.

The programme will roll out two double-degree master's programmes focusing on Cybersecurity and Robotics.

Notably, both will also include a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, allowing students to gain additional academic credits through dedicated curricula and a summer programme. This infusion of entrepreneurial education aims to create professionals capable of driving innovation and technological advancements in their respective

Figure 25: SPECTRO webpage article 2

To connect with prospective students and promote the project, a dedicated article was published on the EIT Digital webpage [link] colliding with the beginning of the Cycle 1 application period (Figure 26). The article has received close to 1600 views from 670 users.



DATE
January 8, 2024

SHARE

EIT Digital Master School
masterschool@eitdigital.eu

Applications to the EIT Digital Master School, hosting 8 exceptional European master's programmes combining top digital education with entrepreneurship training, are now open. Graduates receive two master's degrees, from two top

Digital

Eight programmes

There are eight different programmes, focused on providing cutting edge, hands-on learning in the most important digital fields today.

Two of the programmes, in cyber security and robotics, are provided as a part of **SPECTRO (SPecialised Education programmes in CybersecuriTy and Robotics)**, an EU collaboration. EIT Digital brings its expertise in developing masters' programmes to the consortium, which includes 12 higher education institutions from seven countries, two innovative SMEs and a leading research centre.

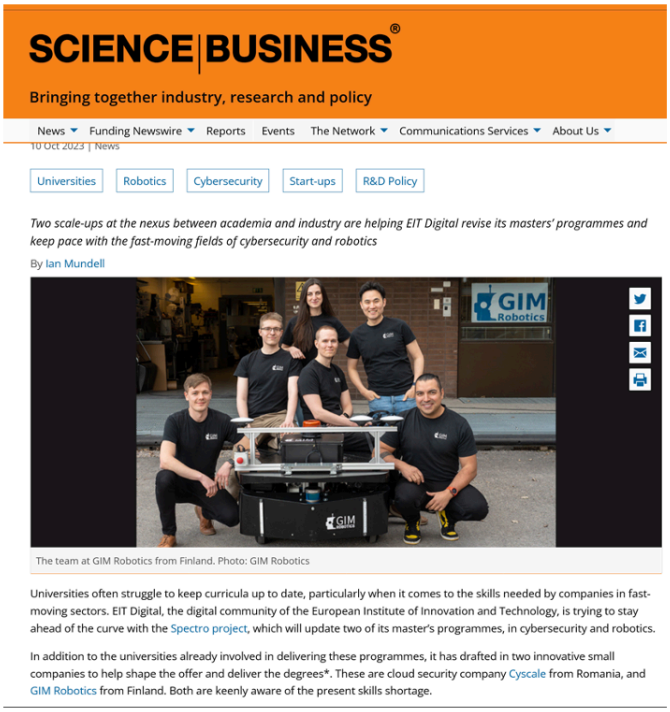
SPECTRO's goal is to help ensure a sufficient supply of digital talent in Europe while offering educational accessibility and diversity for students of every gender, age and background. You will obtain cutting-edge skills and be positioned as a future leader in the booming fields of cybersecurity and robotics.

SPECTRO
SPECIALISED EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN CYBERSECURITY AND ROBOTICS

Another new programme offered this year is FinTech for Business, which gives you the skills and technical knowledge needed to

Figure 26: SPECTRO webpage article 3

SPECTRO project partners have also updated their webpages with mentions of the programmes and published articles related to their participation in the collaboration. Some examples below from GIM Robotics and University of Turku. Figure 27: Science Business article, is an example of a mention of SPECTRO in a scientific media, here "Science Business".



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10 Oct 2023 | News

Universities | Robotics | Cybersecurity | Start-ups | R&D Policy

Two scale-ups at the nexus between academia and industry are helping EIT Digital revise its masters' programmes and keep pace with the fast-moving fields of cybersecurity and robotics

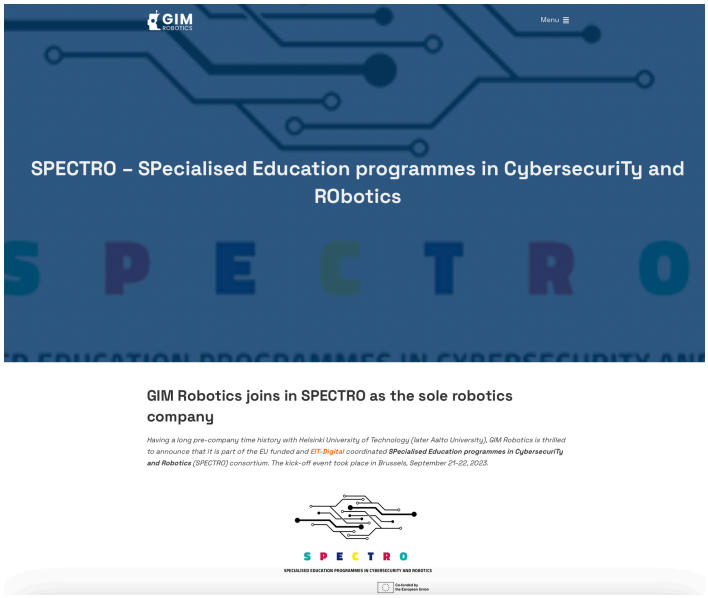
By Ian Mundell

The team at GIM Robotics from Finland. Photo: GIM Robotics

Universities often struggle to keep curricula up to date, particularly when it comes to the skills needed by companies in fast-moving sectors. EIT Digital, the digital community of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, is trying to stay ahead of the curve with the Spectro project, which will update two of its master's programmes, in cybersecurity and robotics.

In addition to the universities already involved in delivering these programmes, it has drafted in two innovative small companies to help shape the offer and deliver the degrees*. These are cloud security company Cyscale from Romania, and GIM Robotics from Finland. Both are keenly aware of the present skills shortage.

Figure 27: Science Business article



Menu

SPECTRO – SPecialised Education programmes in CybersecuriTy and RObotics

GIM Robotics joins in SPECTRO as the sole robotics company

Having a long pre-company time history with Helsinki University of Technology (later Aalto University), GIM Robotics is thrilled to announce that it is part of the EU funded and EIT-Digital coordinated ***SPecialised Education programmes in CybersecuriTy and Robotics*** *(SPECTRO) consortium. The kick-off event took place in Brussels, September 21-22, 2023.*

Figure 28: GIM Robotics article

Figure 29: University of Turku article

3.7 Email engagement and newsletters

To maximize awareness and engagement during the Master School open enrolment period, EIT Digital launched a series of targeted newsletter email. These campaigns strategically guide potential applicants through every stage of the enrolment process to apply to the open programmes, including the two programmes which are part of the SPECTRO project. The emails highlighted the unique benefits of the Master School, such as innovative curriculum, industry partnerships, and global networking opportunities. By maintaining consistent communication with prospects students, we aim to inspire and motivate prospective students to take the next step in their educational journey with confidence.

For example, an email campaign spanned from November 2023 to April 2024, targeting a diverse audience. This includes students met at fairs who subscribed to the lead collection form, individuals who signed up to EIT Digital's application portal, prospective students who attended the information webinars and agreed to share their contact details, and prospective students who filled in the "Contact me" form on the EIT Digital webpage (Figure 30, Figure 31). All contacts and personal information have been collected with respect of GDPR rules, and only with the informed consent of individuals. Please refer to Deliverable 3.1 and Deliverable 4.2 for more information.

Other partners have engaged with their audience via newsletters, see an example from the University of Trento (Figure 32).

Dear friend of EIT Digital,

We are super enthusiastic to open the application period for cohort 2024-2026!
As of today, the **1st of November**, the **EIT Digital Master School** application period starts, so we are welcoming you to create your account and gather all the documents needed. You can check what are the general required documents **here** and the programme-specific relevant bachelor's degree **here**, while the English requirements per university are **here**.

START YOUR APPLICATION

We are looking forward to receiving your application,

Master School Admissions Office

EIT Digital IVZW, Rue Guimard 7, Brussels, 1040, Belgium

Manage preferences

Figure 30: Newsletter example 1

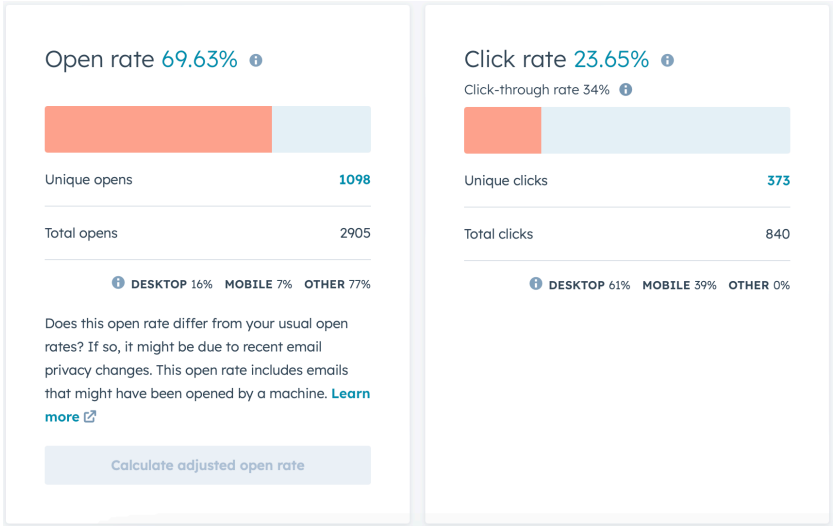
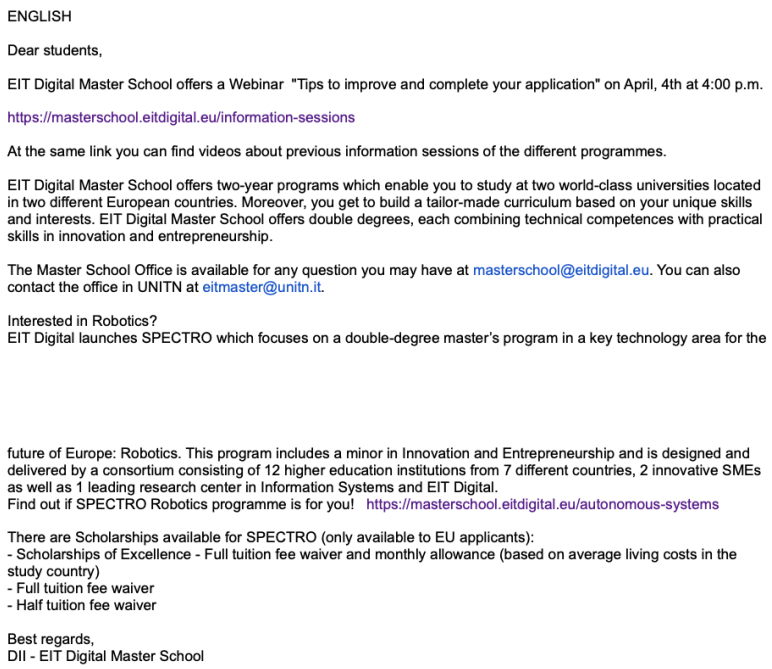


Figure 31: Newsletter delivery example 1



ENGLISH

Dear students,

EIT Digital Master School offers a Webinar "Tips to improve and complete your application" on April, 4th at 4:00 p.m.

https://masterschool.eitdigital.eu/information-sessions

At the same link you can find videos about previous information sessions of the different programmes.

EIT Digital Master School offers two-year programs which enable you to study at two world-class universities located in two different European countries. Moreover, you get to build a tailor-made curriculum based on your unique skills and interests. EIT Digital Master School offers double degrees, each combining technical competences with practical skills in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Master School Office is available for any question you may have at masterschool@eitdigital.eu. You can also contact the office in UNITN at eitmaster@unitn.it.

Interested in Robotics?
EIT Digital launches SPECTRO which focuses on a double-degree master's program in a key technology area for the future of Europe: Robotics. This program includes a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship and is designed and delivered by a consortium consisting of 12 higher education institutions from 7 different countries, 2 innovative SMEs as well as 1 leading research center in Information Systems and EIT Digital.
Find out if SPECTRO Robotics programme is for you! https://masterschool.eitdigital.eu/autonomous-systems

There are Scholarships available for SPECTRO (only available to EU applicants):
- Scholarships of Excellence - Full tuition fee waiver and monthly allowance (based on average living costs in the study country)
- Full tuition fee waiver
- Half tuition fee waiver

Best regards,
DII - EIT Digital Master School

Figure 32: Newsletter UNITN

4 Results, achievements and conclusions

4.1 KPIs and first 18-months results commented

During the 18-months of the SPECTRO project, WP3 launched a diversity of marketing and promotion activities in alignment with the Communication and Dissemination Plan (D.3.1). These efforts aimed to engage relevant stakeholders, raise awareness about the project and its outcomes, and promote the enrolment of students in the programmes. The completion of these activities is measured through a set of KPIs established for the entire project. The two tables below illustrate the results achieved during the first 18-years of the project, against the overall project benchmarks (KPIs). The expected first 18-month targets were calculated using a linear projection from the overall 48-month project KPIs.

KPI	Expected Result *Overall Project*	Expected *First 18-months*	Actual Results *First 18-months*
KPI20: Number of applications to the education programmes:	3,500	306	364

KPI	Expected Result *Overall Project*	Expected *First 18-months*	Actual Results *First 18-months*
KPI21: Number of master's programmes on Cybersecurity and Robotics listed on the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform:	2	2	2
KPI22: Number of leads interested in the education programmes:	12,000	4.500	7,186

Table 1: SPECTRO project KPIs

KPI20 Comment: The actual number of applications (364) exceeded the expected target for the first 18 months (306), indicating a positive trend in engagement. However, given that the overall project target is 3,500, a significant increase in applications will be needed in the next phases to stay on track. Moreover, the self-standing modules have only recently been published, so the number of applications is expected to grow as the project progresses and promotional efforts are fully activated.

KPI21 Comment: The project has met its expected target for this KPI, achieving the listing of two master's programmes within the expected timeframe. It will sustain the programme's visibility and engagement for continued success.

KPI22 Comment: The actual number of leads (7,186) significantly surpasses the expected first 18-month target (4,500), which is a strong indicator of interest in the programmes. The number of leads interested was calculated aggregating: number of applications started, webinar attendance, emails received to the 'contact me' form, email collected through leads generation forms, registrations to the self-standing platform.

Overall, performance in the first 18 months has been strong, particularly in generating interest and applications. However, further efforts will be required to ensure that applications continue to grow in line with the ambitious overall project target.

ACTIVITY CHANNEL	Expected Impact *Overall project*	Impact Achieved *First 18-months*
CH1. SPECTRO webpages	10,000/month visitors	16,634/month visitors (3 pages in total)

ACTIVITY CHANNEL	Expected Impact *Overall project*	Impact Achieved *First 18-months*
CH2. Social media (EITD + partners')	200,000/month impressions 50 posts/month using project-specific hashtags 10/month project mentions	33,186/month impressions 10/ posts/month using project-specific hashtags 5/month project mentions
CH3. Paid advertisement on social media (EITD)	350,000/month impressions 5,000/month number of clicks	88,531 impressions/month 11,273 clicks/month
CH4. Paid search advertising on Google (EITD)	350,000/month impressions 5,000/month number of clicks	174,169 impressions/month 11,048 clicks/month
CH5. Event, conference, meetings (EITD + partners')	4,000 persons reached through events	80,513 persons reached through events
CH6. Scouting and synergies with other initiatives	5 successful partnerships created	2 partnerships created (Poliba, Agean)
CH7. Dissemination materials	30 brochures, flyers, visuals 10 videos 1/month newsletters 20 press releases	42 brochures, flyers, visuals 16 videos 1/month newsletter (EITD + partners') 6 press releases (incl. scientific articles, media articles, blog posts)

Table 2: SPECTRO Communication Channels – Expected vs. Actual Impact and KPIs

CH1 Comment: The actual webpage traffic (16,634 visitors/month) has exceeded the expected impact of 10,000 visitors/month, even in the early stage of the project. This strong performance suggests high interest and effective outreach efforts.

CH2 Comment: Social media performance has fallen significantly short of expectations, with impressions reaching only a fraction of the target (33,186 vs. 200,000). The lower-than-expected posting frequency and

project mentions further indicate reduced engagement and visibility. This shortfall is acknowledged and is partly attributed to high turnover in the communication team, which disrupted continuity in processes and campaigns. Addressing this gap will be a strong focus in the coming months, with efforts to improve consistency, expand reach, and enhance engagement across social media platforms.

CH3 Comment: While the number of clicks has more than doubled the expected target, the impressions are considerably lower than planned. This suggests that although the reach has been limited, the engagement and conversion rates are strong. The shortfall in impressions is attributed to the same challenges faced in CH2, particularly the lack of continuity in campaign execution due to high turnover in the communication team. Addressing this gap will be a priority moving forward.

CH4 Comment: Similar to CH3, while impressions have fallen short of expectations, the number of clicks has more than doubled the target, indicating strong interest and effective targeting. However, the lower reach suggests that campaign visibility needs improvement. The underperformance is again linked to the disruptions caused by team turnover, which affected consistency in paid advertising strategies. Improving continuity and optimizing ad spend allocation will be key focus areas in the next phase.

CH5 Comment: This KPI has outperformed expectations, with the number of people reached exceeding the target by a significant margin. This success reflects the strong efforts of the coordinator and project partners in organizing events and joining education fairs, conferences and relevant dissemination and communication opportunities in-person. The excellent results demonstrate effective outreach and engagement strategies, which have significantly boosted project visibility and impact. Maintaining this momentum will be key to further strengthening the project's reach.

CH6 Comment: This KPI is on track. Two successful partnerships have been officialised with universities of Poliba and Agean joining the consortium as Associated partners to the project. More successful partnerships are expected to be creating moving forward.

CH7 Comment: Overall, dissemination efforts are on track, with strong performance in the production of printed materials and videos, largely driven by event participation and social media campaigns. The newsletter is being maintained consistently, thanks to contributions from project partners, but it will require close monitoring, especially during the recruitment phase, to ensure sustained engagement. Press releases are currently below target, but there is still time to catch up. A more structured approach to media outreach and content generation could help boost this area in the coming months.

4.2 Lessons learned

- Strong Interest in Educational Programmes

The number of applications (KPI20) and leads generated (KPI22) have exceeded initial expectations, indicating strong demand for the programmes. The recent launch of self-standing modules suggests further growth potential as promotion intensifies.

- Effective Event Engagement

The number of people reached through events (CH5) has significantly exceeded targets, demonstrating the success of in-person and virtual engagements. This highlights the effectiveness of outreach through conferences, meetings, and education fairs.

- High Web Traffic and Engagement

SPECTRO webpages (CH1) have outperformed expectations, indicating strong interest and effective SEO or referral strategies. The challenge now is maintaining this momentum and converting visitors into active participants.

- Gaps in Social Media and Paid Advertising Performance

Social media metrics (CH2) and paid advertising impressions (CH3 & CH4) have fallen short, largely due to high turnover in the communication team and a lack of continuity in campaign execution. However, engagement rates (clicks) were higher than expected, suggesting that the audience targeted was relevant but reach needs improvement.

- Mixed Performance in Dissemination Materials

While brochures, flyers, and videos (CH7) exceeded targets, press releases and media articles lag behind. Newsletters are on track but require more consistency, particularly in the recruitment phase, to maintain engagement.

- Risk due to high turnover of WP3 Communication coordinator role

During the first 18 months of the project, EITD experienced a change in the WP3 lead position, disrupting the continuity of work. The position experienced high turnover, with three individuals occupying the role in quick

succession and leaving abruptly. This caused significant disruptions and left the coordinator responsible for covering the resulting gaps in responsibilities. The consortium partners, other EITD colleagues, and the coordinators built a contingency plan to ensure that this transition did not impact the timely completion of project milestones and deliverables. The situation has now stabilized with the appointment of a new WP3 leader.

4.3 Future steps and recommendations

Moving forward, the SPECTRO project is set to diversify its local initiatives and collaborations within focus countries. The primary goal is to capitalize on the established reputation within local networks and cater to the student audience, recognizing that investing in strong connections in their immediate geographies is the most effective approach. While cross-country collaboration will be explored, it comes with inherent complexities due to the courses' stronghold in their respective geographies and languages, and, for this reason, limitations in the reach it providers.

4.3.1 Offline engagement strategies

Looking ahead, the project will continue to strengthen its offline engagement strategy to enhance visibility and attract prospective students. This approach focuses on maintaining a consistent presence at educational fairs and outreach events across Europe, serving as valuable opportunities to present the SPECTRO programmes and connect directly with potential applicants. Special attention will be given to activities in EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) countries, where there is strong potential to grow awareness and student enrolments. This offline strategy was piloted in autumn 2024, with participation in fairs such as the Baltic Council Fair, World Education Fair, Border Concepts, and Najah Expo, and proved effective in boosting brand visibility and recruitment interest. Moving forward, the project will continue this engagement, ensuring a more coordinated and strategic effort among partners. Additionally, all partners will promote the SPECTRO project through university open days, master classes, and programme-specific events, ensuring it remains visible and accessible to a wide, diverse audience.

4.3.2 Budget (paid campaigns)

All paid campaigns and their corresponding targets have been thoroughly evaluated to optimize spending for maximum value. The evaluation revealed underspending on paid campaigns, largely due to lower-than-expected costs for certain activities like media buys and content creation, which were handled in-house by the EIT Digital team. Additionally, keyword performance contributed to this underspending.

The first-year campaigns were limited to a few months, but future campaigns are planned to run for significantly longer periods, starting at least one month before the opening of new enrolment periods and continuing through the final application deadline. The initial campaigns were also smaller in scale, primarily for testing purposes, with plans to scale up based on performance, which further contributed to lower immediate spending.

EIT Digital has also identified more effective and emerging channels for reaching the target audience, prompting a strategic shift and reduced spending on traditional campaigns. These channels include LinkedIn, YouTube, Reddit, and TikTok. The budget allocated for Google Ads is planned to be reduced to free up funds for these new channels.

Although the planned delivery goals were met, the quality of leads from Google Ads was insufficient to achieve the enrolment and final student targets. Based on the evaluation of the first-year results, the new channels are expected to have a higher potential for reaching a more interested and qualified audience.

This strategy is supported by EIT Digital's expertise and successful optimization of other paid campaigns for the Master's Double Degree programs offered by the EIT Digital Master School. The project lead believes this approach will yield better results by reaching a higher number of qualified leads.

4.3.3 Enhanced engagement with RIS countries and underrepresented groups

In line with the Conclusions from D4.4 Enrolment and scholarship allocation Year 1 report, communication strategies will be increasingly tailored to specific student groups, with particular attention to addressing the gender imbalance and providing targeted information for underrepresented groups and those requiring financial support. Additionally, efforts will be made to support underperforming partner universities through customized outreach strategies and joint promotional initiatives. A key priority moving forward will be enhancing engagement with RIS countries and underrepresented groups by building strategic partnerships with local universities and organizations, participating in relevant events, and removing barriers for potential applicants. Targeted outreach campaigns in these regions, supported by translated materials, local media channels, and diverse role models, will help position SPECTRO as an inclusive, accessible, and attractive opportunity for a diverse and highly qualified student body.