



Commission calls for massive boost in enabling digital education and providing digital skills

Strasbourg, 18 April 2023

Today, the Commission adopted two proposals for a Council Recommendation in the context of the [European Year of Skills](#), with the aim to support Member States and the education and training sector in providing high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education and training to develop the digital skills of European citizens.

The proposals address the two main common challenges jointly identified by the Commission and EU Member States: 1) the lack of a whole-of-government approach to digital education and training, and 2) difficulties in equipping people with the necessary digital skills.

Strengthening key enabling factors

Despite progress and some excellent examples of innovation, combined efforts have so far not resulted in systemic digital transformation in education and training. Member States still struggle to attain sufficient levels of investment in digital education and training infrastructure, equipment and digital education content, digital training (up-skilling) of teachers and staff, and monitoring and evaluation of digital education and training policies.

The proposal for a "[Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training](#)" calls on all Member States to ensure universal access to inclusive and high-quality digital education and training, to address the digital divide, which has become even more apparent in the light of the COVID-19 crisis. This could be achieved by creating a coherent framework of investment, governance and teacher training for effective and inclusive digital education. It proposes guidance and action that Member States can pursue to implement a whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach as well as a culture of bottom-up innovation and digitalisation led by education and training staff.

Improving digital skills teaching

The second common challenge identified relates to the varying levels of digital skills within different segments of the population, and the ability of national education and training systems to address these differences. The proposal for a "[Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training](#)" tackles each level of education and training. It calls on Member States to start early by providing digital skills in a coherent way through all levels of education and training. This can be ensured by establishing incremental objectives and setting up targeted interventions for specific 'priority or hard-to-reach groups'. The proposal calls on Member States to support high quality informatics in schools, to mainstream the development of digital skills for adults, and to address shortages in information technology professions by adopting inclusive strategies.

The Commission stands ready to support the implementation of both proposals by facilitating mutual learning and exchanges among Member States and all relevant stakeholders through EU instruments, such as the [Technical Support Instrument](#). The Commission also promotes digital education and skills through cooperation within the [European Digital Education Hub](#) and through EU funding, such as [Erasmus+](#) and the [Digital Europe Programme](#), the [Just Transition Fund](#), the [European Regional Development Fund](#), the [European Social Fund Plus](#) and the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), [Horizon Europe](#), and [NDICI-Global Europe](#).

Pilot for a European Digital Skills Certificate

A key action by the Commission will be facilitating the recognition of certification of digital skills. To this end, the Commission will run a pilot project of the [European Digital Skills Certificate](#) together with several Member States. The certificate aims to enhance the trust in and acceptance of digital skills certification across the EU. This will help people have their digital skills recognised widely, quickly and easily by employers, training providers and more. The results of the pilot will be

presented as part of a feasibility study on the [European Digital Skills Certificate](#) towards year-end. The final European Digital Skills Certificate will be rolled out in 2024 based on the pilot's outcomes and the study's findings.

Next Steps

The Commission calls on Member States to swiftly adopt today's proposals for two Council Recommendations.

Building on the successful Structured Dialogue and the group of national coordinators, the Commission will set up a High-Level Group on Digital Education and Skills to support the implementation of the two Recommendations.

Background

The two proposals presented today draw on the conclusions of the [Structured Dialogue on digital education and skills](#), during which the Commission engaged with EU Member States throughout 2022. Through the Digital Decade the EU aims to ensure that 80% of adults have at least basic digital skills and that 20 million ICT specialists are in employment in the EU by 2030. The objective of the dialogue was to increase the commitment on digital education and skills and help accelerate efforts at EU level, so Europe can deliver on its 2030 targets in this area. The proposals are furthermore in line with the solidarity and inclusion key pillar of the [European digital rights and principles](#) stating that everyone should have access to the internet and to digital skills, with no one left behind.

The proposals deliver on the two strategic priorities of the [Digital Education Action Plan](#): fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem and enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation. The Action Plan calls for greater cooperation at European level on digital education to address the challenges and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to present opportunities for the education and training community (teachers and students), policy makers, academia and researchers on national, EU and international level. It is a key enabler to realising the vision of achieving a [European Education Area](#) by 2025, and contributes to achieving the goals of the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [European Social Pillar Action Plan](#) and the [2030 Digital Compass](#). By promoting and improving digital skills of Europeans, today's package is also a key deliverable of the [European Year of Skills](#).

The proposal builds on the analysis conducted by the Commission's Joint Research Centre identifying the main lessons and trends that have emerged through the Structured Dialogue, the Call for Evidence and the Resilience and Recovery Plans by EU Member States.

For More Information

[The European School Education Platform](#)

[Factsheet on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training](#)

[Factsheet on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training](#)

[Factsheet on the Pilot for a European Skills Certificate](#)

[The European Digital Skills Certificate \(EDSC\)](#)

[Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#)

[European Year of Skills](#)

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Quotes:

These proposals underline the need for everyone everywhere in Europe to have access to digital education. We need to do much better on digital skills and treat them with the same importance as reading and writing. The aim is to reach a target of at least 80% of all adults as a minimum with basic digital skills, and 20 million employed ICT specialists including a lot more women, by 2030.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age - 18/04/2023

A Europe fit for the digital age needs to lead not only in technology but also in education. Our education and training systems must embrace the opportunities offered by the digital age and empower learners with the competences and skills needed to set them up for success in their present and future. We must respond more effectively to the increased needs for digital skills for learning, for life and for the labour market.

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life - 18/04/2023

Our work with EU Member States through the Digital Education Action Plan has proved useful in pointing to our weaknesses and identifying solutions. The digital divide remains in our territories and societies. Today's proposals are exposing our vision for an inclusive and high-quality digital education. I am confident that Member States, schools and training institutes, teachers, parents and learners will join forces and transform our vision into reality.

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth - 18/04/2023

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