

## Background Note Digital Education Action Plan COM (2018) 22

[According to the dossier](#), education and training are the best investments in Europe's future. They play a vital role in boosting growth, innovation and job creation. Europe's education and training systems need to give people the forward-looking knowledge, skills and competences they need to innovate and prosper. They also have an important role to play in creating a European identity, building on common values and cultures.

Education should help empower young people to articulate and engage, participate and shape the future of a Europe characterised by democracy, solidarity and inclusion. Digital technology enriches learning in a variety of ways and offers learning opportunities, which must be accessible to all. It opens up access to a wealth of information and resources.

In the Rome Declaration of March 2017, EU Member States stressed their commitment to providing young people with the 'best education and training'. The October 2017 European Council called for training and education systems to be 'fit for the digital age'. At the November 2017 Gothenburg Summit, the Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights, which enshrines the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning. The Communication 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture', the Commission's contribution to the EU Leader's Agenda discussion on education and culture at the Gothenburg Summit, set out a vision for a European Education Area and announced a dedicated Digital Education Action Plan.

The dossier states **that this Action Plan sets out how education and training systems can make better use of innovation and digital technology and support the development of relevant digital competences needed for life and work in an age of rapid digital change**. The Action Plan also has a specific focus on initial education and training systems and covers schools, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

The Action Plan focuses on implementation and the need to stimulate, support and scale up purposeful use of digital and innovative education practices. It will draw on a wide range of education and training stakeholders including business, research, NGOs, as well as, nonformal education where relevant. It has **three priorities**:

### **Priority 1: Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning**

1. Tackle the connectivity divide between EU Member States regarding the uptake of very high capacity broadband in all European schools by: (i) raising awareness of the benefits for schools and available funding opportunities; (ii) supporting connectivity i.e. through a voucher scheme focusing on disadvantaged areas and ensuring full implementation of the toolkit for rural areas; (iii) publishing data about progress.

2. Support the digital readiness of both general and vocational schools by strengthening their digital capacity and by making the SELFIE self-assessment tool reach one million teachers, trainers and learners by end of 2019 in all EU Member States and the Western Balkans; promote a mentoring scheme at national/regional level, supported by an EU-level awareness-raising platform.

3. Provide a framework for issuing digitally-certified qualifications and validating digitally-acquired skills that are trusted, multilingual and can be stored in professional

profiles (CVs) such as Europass. The framework will be fully aligned with the European, Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO).

## **Priority 2: Developing relevant digital skills and competences for the digital transformation**

4. Create a Europe-wide platform for digital higher education and enhanced cooperation. The new platform, supported by Erasmus+, will serve as a one-stop-shop and offer: online learning, blended mobility, virtual campuses and exchange of best practices among higher education institutions at all levels (students, researchers, educators).

5. Strengthen open science and citizen science in Europe by piloting dedicated training, including continuous professional development courses on open science in higher education institutions at all levels (students, researchers, educators).

6. Bring coding classes to all schools in Europe, including by increasing schools' participation in EU Code Week.

7. Tackle the challenges of digital transformation by launching: (i) an EU-wide awareness-raising campaign targeting educators, parents and learners to foster online safety, cyber hygiene and media literacy; and (ii) a cyber-security teaching initiative building on the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, to empower people to use technology confidently and responsibly.

8. Support measures to further decrease the gender gap in the technology and entrepreneurial sector by promoting digital and entrepreneurial competences among girls; mobilise stakeholders (companies, NGOs) to equip girls with digital skills and inspirational models, building on the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens and the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework.

## **Priority 3: Improving education systems through better data analysis and foresight**

9. Build evidence on the uptake of ICT and digital skills in schools, by publishing a reference study assessing progress in mainstreaming ICT in education. It will cover the availability and usage of ICT infrastructure and digital tools and levels of digital skills. Together with the next round of the PIAAC survey, the results may feed into an update of the Digital Competence Framework. The Commission will also work with the OECD on the development of a new module in PISA on the use of technology in education, as well as explore the relevance and feasibility of proposing new Council benchmarks for digital competences and entrepreneurship.

10. Launch artificial intelligence and learning analytics pilots in education as of 2018 to make better use of the huge amount of data now available and thus help address specific problems and improve implementation and monitoring of education policy; develop relevant toolkit and guidance for Member States.

11. Initiate strategic foresight on key trends arising from digital transformation for the future of education systems, in close cooperation with Member State experts and making use of existing and future channels of EU-wide cooperation on education and training.