[Education and training initiatives](#)

1. Draft Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

What is the main aim of this Recommendation?

The objective of the proposed Recommendation is to improve the development of key competences (e.g. literacy, languages, or civic and digital skills) in education systems, for people of all ages throughout their lives and to provide guidance to Member States on how to achieve this objective. This is important to better prepare people for changing labour markets and active citizenship in more diverse, mobile, digital and global societies. To this end, the Recommendation puts a specific emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation-oriented mindsets.

The proposal is also part of the answer to improve educational systems across Europe to better manage various challenges highlighted by the latest [PISA survey](#), which pointed to the poor EU average performance in basic skills.

How will the Recommendation support Member States in implementing competence-oriented education, training and learning?

The new Recommendation responds to the main challenges encountered so far in introducing competence-oriented education, training and learning: insufficient support of educational staff, limited development of methods and tools to assess and validate competences, and the need to introduce new ways of learning to enhance competence development.

The annex to the Recommendationoutlines good practices which can promote competence-oriented approaches in education and training and non-formal learning. They address the challenges mentioned above and indicate possible ways of overcoming them.

How will the European Commission support the implementation of the Recommendation?

The European Commission will support the implementation of the Recommendation and the use of the annexed European Reference Framework of Key Competences by helping Member States learn from each other. It will also develop reference materials and tools in cooperation with Members States, such as massive open on-line courses (MOOCs), assessment tools, networks including [eTwinning](#), the world's biggest teachers' network, and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe ([EPALE](#)). Finally, it will also monitor the acquisition of competences in the Member States.

What are the changes in relation to the previous 2006 framework of key competences?

Updates of the eight key competences include:

- A stronger focus on basic skills (literacy, languages and basic digital

skills) as well as on horizontal competences such as creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and communication. These competenceshelp people be resilient, adapt to more volatile labour markets and to fast changing societies.

- A specific focus on promoting entrepreneurial education and experiences at all levels of education. The Commission recommends to Member States to provide at least one entrepreneurial experience during compulsory education. It also encourages platforms bringing together schools and businesses, appropriate training to teachers and principals, and the creation of mini companies in schools.
- Focusing on improving the acquisition of science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) competence and making careers in these areas more attractive.
- An updated definition of digital skills that includes coding, cybersecurity and digital citizenship aspects.
- Strengthening citizenship, democratic values and human rights in the civic competence and highlighting intercultural skills in the cultural awareness and expression competence.

2. Digital Education Action Plan

How can the EU help individuals and education institutions and systems adapt to the digital transformation?

The Digital Education Action Plan sets out a series of initiatives to support people and organisations in dealing with rapid digital change. The Action Plan focuses on the development of digital skills (skills, knowledge and attitudes) for work and participation in society more widely, the effective use of technology in education and the use of data and foresight to improve education systems. Measures will include supporting schools with high-speed broadband connections, scaling up SELFIE, a new self-assessment tool developed by the Commission to help schools better use technology for teaching and learning and a public awareness campaign on online safety, cyber hygiene and media literacy.

How will the European Commission support the implementation of the Plan?

The Action Plan outlines a series of initiatives that the Commission, in partnership with Member States and stakeholders, will implement by the end of 2020. The Plan will be implemented in the context of the [Education and Training 2020](#) (ET2020) process, the EU's framework for Member State cooperation on education and training. The Commission will work closely with stakeholders including the ET 2020 Working Group on Digital Skills and Competences.

What are the main priorities of the Plan?

The Action Plan has three key objectives:

- making better use of digital technologies for teaching and learning;
- developing the digital skills needed for living and working in an age of rapid digital change;

- improving education through better data analysis and foresight.

What can be done to attract girls to Information and communications technology (ICT) and STEM subjects?

Studies show that interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) studies and careers by female students often wanes by the age of 15. Girls would like to see more female role models in STEM and have more practical hands-on experience in STEM subjects. In the Action Plan, the Commission commits to working with industry, NGOs and education systems to ensure that female students have the digital skills and the positive role models and mentors they need to help ensure equal participation in STEM studies and careers.

The Commission will encourage more coding classes for girls to take place in the context of the [EU Code Week](#) initiative. It will also work with the [Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition](#) and other organisations across Europe to promote activities to encourage girls and women to develop digital skills. The Commission will work with companies and civil society to break down stereotypes and makes sure that girls are better informed about job opportunities in the ICT sector. The Commission will also build on successful initiatives promoted by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), for example workshops targeting secondary school students.

How will the European Commission support the update of high-speed broadband in schools?

There is a clear digital divide between EU countries: some countries have already connected schools to high-speed broadband, whereas others are lagging behind. One reason for the lack of connectivity is that a number of schools and local authorities are not aware of the available options of broadband services as well as of the possible sources of support and financing. The European Commission will work to change this, for example through the recently created [EU network of Broadband Competence Offices](#).

In addition, the Commission will look into supporting high-speed connectivity in schools i.e. notably through a voucher scheme focusing on disadvantaged areas.

Why is the Commission proposing a framework for digitally certified qualifications?

Digital technologies offer new ways of boosting the trustworthiness and transparency of qualifications and protecting against document forgery. Digital qualifications are more portable than 'paper-based' certificates and can be hosted in more than one server or institution. They can include extensive metadata, be more easily displayed in CVs, social media and personal webpages and can be viewed by interested parties.

Building a European Education Area means ensuring that qualifications even from small providers are recognised and can be trusted, particularly in a cross-border context. A framework for digitally-signed qualifications will

allow for more coherence and provide support for quality assurance; it will improve transferability and comparability and support mobility, cooperation and exchange.

How will the European Commission promote coding?

The Commission's goal is to involve at least half of schools in EU Code Week by 2020. EU Code Week is a dynamic grass-roots movement that aims to bring coding and digital literacy in a fun and engaging way to all Europeans by letting participants explore programming as well as hardware, 3D-printing, robots, etc.

By reaching out through schools, it can include all young people — girls and boys equally. Furthermore, allowing teachers to explore programming in different subjects together with their students strengthens their competences in using coding as a tool for teaching digital skills.

To further promote coding, the Commission will work with the EU Code Week ambassadors, Member States, the eTwinning network, the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, the Digital Champions and other interested bodies and organisations.

What are the risks students face when using technologies and what can the EU do to protect and empower them?

In an increasingly connected world, risks include vulnerability of personal data, cybersecurity threats and fraud, fake news, cyber-bullying and violent radicalisation. All aspects of online safety and cyber hygiene must be addressed, and individuals need to understand, for example, how to manage their online presence, keep their accounts, information and devices safe.

Strengthening children's and young people's critical thinking and media literacy is crucial. Digital technologies will continue to integrate further into our physical and mental lives and all generations need to become confident digital citizens, empowered by the opportunities offered by digital technology, and at the same time aware of and resilient to risks related to digitisation.

The EU will promote education and awareness-raising activities aimed at empowering all EU citizens to become active, responsible, safe and critical users of technologies. One such action will be the launch of an EU-wide campaign on cyber hygiene, media and social media literacy, and effective ways to tackle online risks such as cyberbullying, fake news, or disturbing content. The campaign will encompass all relevant stakeholders and reach children, young people, parents, and educators. Moreover, the action will support educators across Europe in understanding and teaching cyber security through the creation and delivery of online and face-to-face courses for teachers.

3. Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching

What is the aim of this Recommendation?

Today, EU Member States face serious challenges to maintaining open, fair and cohesive societies in view of rising populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism, discrimination, the spreading of fake news and misinformation, as well as the challenge of radicalisation.

All these phenomena put the foundations of our societies at risk. They undermine social cohesion, hinder the emergence of a common sense of belonging and weaken citizens' confidence in public institutions and in our democratic systems. Moreover, many people are not aware of how the European Union functions and what its objectives are. Many also know little about other Member States and their diversity.

Education has a vital role in helping to revese these trends, by promoting our shared values, fostering inclusion and enabling people to better understand the European Union and each other.

Why is the EU giving guidance on values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching?

This Recommendation seeks a stronger commitment from Member States in a field that entirely falls within their remit.

EU action is particularly relevant when it comes to funding specific projects (see below). In particular, by funding mobility among schools and virtual exchanges through e-Twinning, the EU can help schools, teachers and pupils to exchange and build friendships with peers in other countries, so that they can experience first-hand what it is to be European.

EU guidance can also help policy-makers and practitioners to identify best practices, learn from their peers in other countries and be inspired by practices elsewhere that address similar issues they face at home.

What will the European Commission put in place to support Member States in these efforts?

The Commission will be looking for adequate funding to [Erasmus+](#) in the post-2020 EU funding period, to ensure that more people — students, apprentices, trainees, but especially more teachers and school pupils — can avail of cross-border mobility through Erasmus+. Already in 2018, the Commission will dedicate up to EUR 180 million in 2018 to school exchanges.

The Commission will work to include 1 million teachers and schools in the e-Twinning network in the next 10 years to support their activities. This will allow even more pupils and teachers to communicate, collaborate and develop projects through this learning community.

The Commission will continue to frame funding instruments including Erasmus+, [Creative Europe](#) and [Europe for Citizens](#) in such a way as to prioritise projects that support the promotion of common values, inclusive education and an enhanced understanding of the EU and its Member States. [The European Structural and Investment Funds](#) also help to promote inclusive education, by supporting projects targeting education systems, teachers and schoolchildren. They finance initiatives to ensure young people complete their education and

get the skills that make them more competitive on the jobs market. Reducing school drop-out rates is a major priority, along with improving vocational and tertiary education opportunities. In the 2014-2020 period more than EUR 39 billion are allocated to achieving that objective.

For more information

[Press release "Education package"](#)