Better services for skills and qualifications (Europass)

2016/0304(COD) - 04/10/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to modernise EU tools and services in the area of skills and qualifications (Europass).

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with Council.

BACKGROUND: the single European framework for the transparency of skills and qualifications (Europass) was established by Decision No. 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Europass consisted of a set of documents comprising a **Europass portfolio:**

- **the Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV)** template allows individuals to complete their CV in a standardised format. Over ten years there have been more than 60 million Europass CVs created online;
- **two qualification supplement templates, namely (i) the Europass Diploma Supplement and (ii) the Europass Certificate Supplement**, offer information on the content and learning outcomes associated with a qualification and on the education system of the country issuing the qualification;
- **the Europass Language Passport** is used to describe language skills;
- **the Europass Mobility** describes the skills acquired abroad on mobility experiences for learning or work.

The evaluation of the Europass framework (in 2008 and in 2013) confirmed that Europass documents have the potential to facilitate mobility and that they are useful tools for individuals who are interested in working or studying abroad.

Europass has also played an important role in mobility within the same country (40% of surveyed users were domestically mobile) and indeed the documents have become widely used within some countries such as Italy and Spain.

However, the way EU tools and services have evolved over time **has not necessarily followed the changes** in the way people learn, work or communicate today and they are **not responding to current or future demands and emerging technologies**. Digitalisation and enhanced online presence are the minimum expected of tools for skills and qualifications today and even more so in the future.

Accordingly, the Commission considers it necessary to establish **a new framework**, which encompasses more responsive tools and information, both for learning and employment purposes, including skills intelligence, and which ensures **better synergies** with other relevant services such as the EURES (European Employment Services) network.

The proposed decision is one of the initiatives of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

CONTENT: the proposal to revise Decision 2241/2004/EC aims to **update and enhance the Europass framework** to bring it more in line with today's need for more comprehensive, updated, easy-to-use and interoperable information and allow it to accommodate future developments and needs.

Improved service offered by the new Europass framework: Europass will be comprised of the following web tools:

- **the CV tool would allow for presentation of different kinds of personal data and information on skills and qualifications in a variety of fields and formats**: the CV will become more adaptable to different needs and situations that arise for learners and jobseekers in different stages of their professional and personal lives. It can be edited and printed easily, but users will also be able to present their skills and qualifications in other less traditional formats, including visuals. They will also be able to make better use of the advantages of social media, mobile applications and job matching tools;
- **tools to (self-)assess individual skills**, such as digits skills, through questionnaires, or by reference to established descriptions of skills or through the integration of data from other existing EU self-assessment tools such as the Youthpass.

Along with tools for documentation and (self-) assessment, the proposed framework will also **provide relevant information on** (i) qualifications, (ii) learning opportunities, (iii) career guidance facilities, (iv) qualifications recognition practices and skills intelligence, (v) analysis of **trends in skills supply and demand** and other types of skills intelligence including at geographical and sectoral level, using technological means such as big data analysis and web crawling. Users will access this information in a simple and seamless way.

The revised Europass framework will offer the possibility to develop and use open standards for better exchange and sharing of electronic data on skills and qualifications and allow **interoperability** of services.

Main principles inspiring the new framework: the proposal aims to ensure transparency of learning and skills acquired in different settings (formal, non-formal and informal). The revised Europass framework will take into account the levels of qualifications as set out in the European Qualifications Framework. Europass will be offered in all EU official languages.

Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO): the proposal establishes this as a **common reference language** to support exchange of information and documents on occupations, skills and qualifications and search electronic documents. Using a common terminology will make search operations easier and support better exploitation of current technology such as web crawling.

Roles of Member States: the proposal sets out the main roles of Member States, in particular in relation to the designation and management of the National Skills Coordination Point responsible for co-ordination of activities associated with implementing the Europass Decision and linked tasks related to the EQF, validation, skills intelligence and guidance. The mandate and tasks of the National Skills Coordination Points are set out. Relevant data and evidence available at national level are provided to feed into and update Europass tools.

Measures provided for in the decision shall be carried out in accordance with EU law on **protection of personal data.**

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: most of the tools covered by the proposed decision **already exist and are financed by the Union.** The financial implications of the initiative are mainly linked to IT development, hosting and maintenance costs of web-based services at EU level.

Developing a more comprehensive online service will be financed by the Union. Some initial investment will be needed in the short-term for new IT development of the new European-wide web-based platform, but there should be no unexpected costs at EU level.

The Erasmus+ Work programme for 2016 includes activities to develop web services for skills and qualifications for an estimated amount of **EUR 2 500 000** to cover this investment. There will be no financial implications for Member States, or participating countries, from this development work. This activity will be supported by Union budget, as is currently the case.