Resolution on establishing the European Education Area by 2025 – micro-credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for a sustainable environment

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on establishing the European Education Area by 2025 – micro-credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for a sustainable environment.

According to the European Pillar of Social Rights, access to quality and inclusive education and lifelong learning is a basic human right for all, and is essential for acquiring and retaining skills, playing a full and active part in society, and securing effective access to an evolving labour market. The Commission aims to establish the European Education Area by 2025. However, changes in the labour market have been making skills rapidly more obsolete and led to growing demand for flexible learning opportunities.

Parliament welcomed the Commission's proposals to develop a European approach to micro-credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for environmental sustainability as part of the European Education Area by 2025, which would help make learning paths more flexible, broaden learning opportunities, deepen mutual recognition, create ties with the digital and green transitions and strengthen the role played by both higher education and vocational education and training (VET) institutions in lifelong learning.

It is stressed that micro-credentials and individual learning accounts can be important for people who want to upskill, reskill and obtain officially recognised qualifications so as to keep pace with the rapid changes in society and an increasingly digitalised labour market, as well as switch paths for personal development or upward social mobility.

The resolution called on the Council to adopt a **common definition** for the European Education Area of micro-credentials and common standards, which would form the basis for quality assurance, recognition, transparency and portability.

For its part, the Commission is called on to:

- deliver a robust instrument that motivates the Member States to implement micro-credentials, which should remain **voluntary**;

- assess and report on the use of micro-credentials in the recognition of skills and competences acquired through European learning mobility and civic engagement under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes;

- propose a common approach to **psychosocial and soft skills** in line with the definitions adopted by the World Health Organization and UNESCO.

Members underlined that automatic mutual recognition of micro-credentials within the European Education Area could be a step towards facilitating the automatic recognition of qualifications more generally. They considered that establishing a coherent European micro-credentials system that involves relevant stakeholders would be a step forward in reinforcing Europe's educational power and global

competitiveness. They insisted on the importance of providing user-friendly and regularly **updated national registers**, which should be visible and easily accessible through an EU portal, with a view to guaranteeing the quality of micro-credentials and making micro-credentials available in a digital format to support upskilling, reskilling and the acquisition of new competences, increase transparency and improve cross-border and international mobility, exchanges and cooperation.

Tertiary education institutions should develop micro-credentials to offer learners socially-engaged, high-quality and inclusive experiences, including volunteering, mentoring and youth work during their studies.

Parliament insisted that the choices available through individual learning accounts should not be too narrowly limited to the needs of the labour market but should serve to empower citizens by allowing them to make individual choices and opening up opportunities for **self-employment and entrepreneurship**. Member States should prioritise training entitlements in individual learning accounts for lower-skilled adults, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged learners, persons from vulnerable or marginalised groups, refugees and those living in remote or rural areas, and to establish clear criteria for their allocation.

Learning for **environmental sustainability** should be mainstreamed across educational curricula throughout the EU with a lifelong learning perspective, including through European and global citizenship education, in order to empower learners to enable them to become active proponents of more inclusive and sustainable societies.

Lastly, Members insisted that these initiatives be given excellent visibility at national, regional and local levels, including their European dimension and added value, so that Europeans can clearly identify the possible benefits and become aware of the merits of a European Education Area.