## Basic information

| | |
|---|---|
| **2017/2002(INI)**<br>INI - Own-initiative procedure | Procedure completed |
| New skills agenda for Europe<br>**Subject**<br>4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning<br>4.40.15 Vocational education and training | |

## Key players

European Parliament

| Joint committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| EMPL Employment and Social Affairs | DLABAJOVÁ Martina (ALDE) | 25/01/2017 |
| CULT Culture and Education | NEKOV Momchil (S&D) | 25/01/2017 |
| | Shadow rapporteur<br>ŠOJDROVÁ Michaela (PPE)<br>PAVEL Emilian (S&D)<br>DZHAMBAZKI Angel (ECR)<br>ŽITŇANSKÁ Jana (ECR)<br>KYUCHYUK Ilhan (ALDE)<br>CHOUNTIS Nikolaos (GUE/NGL)<br>BOYLAN Lynn (GUE/NGL)<br>EVANS Jill (Verts/ALE)<br>LAMBERT Jean (Verts/ALE)<br>D'AMATO Rosa (EFDD)<br>BIZZOTTO Mara (ENF)<br>BILDE Dominique (ENF) | |

| Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection | GRAPINI Maria (S&D) | 13/07/2016 |

| Council configuration | Meetings | Date |
|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Council of the European Union | | | |
| | Education, Youth, Culture and Sport | 3541 | 2017-05-23 |
| European Commission | | | |
| | **Commission DG** | **Commissioner** | |
| | Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion | THYSSEN Marianne | |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10/06/2016 | Non-legislative basic document published | COM(2016)0381 | Summary |
| 19/01/2017 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 19/01/2017 | Referral to joint committee announced in Parliament | | |
| 23/05/2017 | Debate in Council | | |
| 21/06/2017 | Vote in committee | | |
| 23/08/2017 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A8-0276/2017 | Summary |
| 14/09/2017 | Decision by Parliament | T8-0360/2017 | Summary |
| 14/09/2017 | Results of vote in Parliament | | |
| 14/09/2017 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 14/09/2017 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

## Technical information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Procedure reference** | 2017/2002(INI) |
| **Procedure type** | INI - Own-initiative procedure |
| **Procedure subtype** | Initiative |
| **Legal basis** | Rules of Procedure EP 55<br>Rules of Procedure EP 59 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |
| **Committee dossier** | CJ28/8/08960 |

## Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee draft report | | PE600.967 | 06/03/2017 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE602.922 | 12/04/2017 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE602.979 | 12/04/2017 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee opinion | IMCO | PE599.673 | 12/05/2017 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A8-0276/2017 | 23/08/2017 | Summary |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T8-0360/2017 | 14/09/2017 | Summary |

**European Commission**

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commission document (COM) | COM(2016)0381 | 10/06/2016 | Summary |
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2017)780 | 21/02/2018 | |

**National parliaments**

| Document type | Parliament /Chamber | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contribution | DE_BUNDESRAT | COM(2016)0381 | 03/10/2016 | |
| Contribution | RO_CHAMBER | COM(2016)0381 | 05/10/2016 | |
| Contribution | CZ_SENATE | COM(2016)0381 | 19/12/2016 | |

**Additional information**

| Source | Document | Date |
|---|---|---|
| European Parliament | Briefing | |
| European Parliament | Briefing | |

# New skills agenda for Europe

2017/2002(INI) - 23/08/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, in conjunction with the Committee on Culture and Education, adopted an own-initiative report drawn up by Martina DLABAJOVÁ (ALDE, CZ) and Momchil NEKOV (S&D, BG) on a new skills agenda for Europe.

Members welcomed the Commission communication and acknowledged that the EU needs a paradigm shift in the goals and functioning of the education sector in line with the fast changing economic, technological and societal environment.

**Developing skills for life and skills for employment**: although the main focus of the skills package is the immediate needs of the labour market, Members recommended working in close collaboration with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) in order to anticipate skills needs and to develop a pan European skills needs forecasting tool and lifelong learning.

In order to achieve the objectives of the strategy, the report advocated a **holistic approach to education and skills development** that provides citizens with all the essential skills for lifelong learning, defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship and employment.

Member States are invited to:

- **not only focus on employability skills**, but also skills that are useful to society (managerial skills, social and intercultural skills, management, volunteering, foreign language proficiency and negotiation) in their education and training programmes, while promoting European craftsmanship;

- **go beyond promoting the 'right occupational skills'** and to also focus on those aspects of education that are more work-based and more practical, and that foster an entrepreneurial mind-set, innovativeness and creativity, support people to think critically, understand the concept of sustainability, while respecting fundamental rights and values and participate in the democratic process and social life.

**Role of education in the fight against unemployment, social exclusion and poverty**: Members are concerned that between 2010 and 2014 investment in education and training fell by 2.5 % across the Union. **Public education systems should be adequately resourced** so that education can fulfil its role in the fight against unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Access to learning and training opportunities should be a universal right at every stage of life.

Members also considered that the prospect of the new skills strategy in relation to the early stages of education is not sufficiently forward-looking. They therefore called on Member States to **invest in early childhood education and care** (ECEC) in order to increase quality and adopt measures to reduce early school leaving.

**Boosting lifelong learning opportunities**: concerned about the situation of 70 million Europeans lacking basic skills, Members welcomed the introduction of the initiative 'Upskilling Pathways' which should involve the individualised assessment of learning needs, a quality learning offer and systematic validation of the skills and competences acquired, enabling their easy recognition on the labour market.

**The key role of non-formal and informal learning**: the report stressed the importance of validating non-formal and informal learning, particularly in the case of vulnerable or disadvantaged people such as refugees or low-skilled workers who need priority access to validation agreements.

Significant progress has been made in recent years in the framework of the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018. However, further efforts are needed in establishing **relevant legal frameworks** and creating comprehensive validation strategies in order to enable validation

**Fostering digital, science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) and entrepreneurial skills**: the report welcomed the Commission's proposal to urge Member States to draw up comprehensive **national strategies for digital skills** with special attention being paid to closing the digital divide, in particular for older persons; points out however that in order for these strategies to be effective, there is a need to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for educational staff.

Members considered that greater importance should be given to STEM education to improve digital learning and teaching. They also highlight the need to include elements of **entrepreneurial learning**, including social entrepreneurship, at all levels of education.

**Modernising education and vocational training (VET) and enhancing work-based training**: the report called on the Commission and Member States to change the image of VET, with adequate investment, to guarantee that it is more relevant to employers and the labour market and to consider VET as a valid educational and vocational pathway. It also stressed the need to strengthen vocational and career guidance practices in both the education system and adult education.

With a view to reducing the number of people dropping out of school and the number of people who are not working or studying or training (NEETs), Members recommended that there should be a cooperation between secondary schools and businesses.

**Teachers and trainers**: the report highlighted the need to invest and support the initial and continuing professional development of teachers in all sectors of education. They stressed that strengthening the status and professional development of all teachers and trainers would be a prerequisites for the launch of the new skills agenda.

**Funding**: the report regretted the lack of funding for the implementation of the proposals. It recommended encouraging Member States to take advantage of the existing funding sources to support the implementation of the strategy, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF).

With regard to implementation, the report stressed the need for the New Skills Agenda to be further elaborated, implemented and monitored **in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders**, including social partners, civil society organisations and non-formal education providers, employment services and local authorities. It called on the Commission to encourage the promotion of greater partnerships with stakeholders.

Lastly, Members announced a **European Year of Adult Learning**, which will help to raise awareness of the value of adult education and 'active ageing' across Europe.

# New skills agenda for Europe

2017/2002(INI) - 14/09/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 391 votes to 80 with 31 abstentions, a resolution on new skills agenda for Europe.

Members welcomed the Commission communication and acknowledged that the EU needs a paradigm shift in the goals and functioning of the education sector in line with the fast changing economic, technological and societal environment.

**Developing skills for life and skills for employment**: although the main focus of the skills package is the immediate needs of the labour market, Members recommended working in close collaboration with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) in order to anticipate skills needs and to develop **a pan European skills needs** forecasting tool and lifelong learning.

Parliament advocated a **holistic approach to education and skills development**, inviting Member States to:

- **not only focus on employability skills**, but also skills that are useful to society (managerial skills, social and intercultural skills, management, volunteering, foreign language proficiency and negotiation) in their education and training programmes, while promoting European craftsmanship;
- **go beyond promoting the 'right occupational skills'** and to also focus on those aspects of education that are more practical, and that foster an entrepreneurial mind-set, innovativeness and creativity, support people to think critically, understand the concept of sustainability, while respecting fundamental rights and values and participate in the democratic process and social life.

Members wanted to see a **more comprehensive approach to the up-skilling of migrants**, including through social entrepreneurship, civic education and informal learning.

**Role of education in the fight against unemployment, social exclusion and poverty**: Members are concerned that between 2010 and 2014 investment in education and training fell by 2.5 % across the Union. **Public education systems should be adequately resourced** so that education can fulfil its role in the fight against unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Access to learning and training opportunities should be a universal right at every stage of life.

Furthermore, the prospect of the new skills strategy in relation to the early stages of education is not sufficiently forward-looking. Parliament therefore called on Member States to **invest in early childhood education and care** (ECEC) in order to increase quality and adopt measures to reduce early school leaving. It insisted that relevant programmes must be available to give all young people who have dropped out of primary or secondary school a second chance. People with **disabilities** also have special requirements, and thus need appropriate support in order to acquire skills.

**Boosting lifelong learning opportunities**: concerned about the situation of 70 million Europeans lacking basic skills, Members welcomed the introduction of the initiative ‘Upskilling Pathways’ which should involve the individualised assessment of learning needs, a quality learning offer and systematic validation of the skills and competences acquired, enabling their easy recognition on the labour market.

**Strengthen the link between education and employment:** Members encouraged Member States to promote professional learning in accordance with economic demands, and together with the social partners to develop and put in place policies that provide for educational and training leave, as well as in-work training. They stressed the huge innovation and employment potential of renewable energy sources and the search for greater resource and energy efficiency.

**The key role of non-formal and informal learning**: Parliament stressed the importance of validating non-formal and informal learning, particularly in the case of vulnerable or disadvantaged people such as refugees or low-skilled workers who need priority access to validation agreements.

Parliament underlined the need to work on overcoming the lack of awareness on validation among all relevant stakeholders and make further efforts in establishing relevant legal frameworks in order to enable validation.

**Fostering digital, science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) and entrepreneurial skills**: Parliament welcomed the Commission’s proposal to urge Member States to draw up comprehensive **national strategies for digital skills** with special attention being paid to closing the digital divide, in particular for older persons; points out however that in order for these strategies to be effective, there is a need to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for educational staff.

Members considered that greater importance should be given to STEM education to improve digital learning and teaching. They also highlight the need to include elements of **entrepreneurial learning**, including social entrepreneurship, at all levels of education.

**Modernising education and vocational training (VET) and enhancing work-based training**: the report called on the Commission and Member States to change the image of VET, with adequate investment, to guarantee that it is more relevant to employers and the labour market and to consider VET as a valid educational and vocational pathway.

Members recommended encouraging cooperation between secondary schools and businesses, especially through internships. They also highlighted the need to invest and support the initial and continuing professional development of teachers in all sectors of education.

**Funding:** Parliament regretted the lack of dedicated funding for the implementation of the proposals. Member States should be encouraged to take full advantage of the existing sources of funding that are available to support the implementation of the Agenda, especially the European Social Fund.

Lastly, Parliament called for the announcement of a **European Year of Adult Learning**, which will help to raise awareness of the value of adult education and ‘active ageing’ across Europe.

# New skills agenda for Europe

2017/2002(INI) - 10/06/2016 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present a new skills agenda for Europe to strengthen employability and competitiveness.

BACKGROUND: in a fast-changing global economy, skills will to a great extent determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive innovation.

Yet the situation in Europe calls for action in this area:

- **70 million Europeans** lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion;
- **more than half of the 12 million long-term unemployed** are considered as low-skilled;

- many people work in jobs that **do not match their talents**; at the same time, 40% of European employers have difficulty finding people with the skills they need to grow and innovate;
- too few people have the **entrepreneurial mind-sets** and skills needed to set up their own business.

Tackling the skills challenges will require significant policy efforts and systemic reforms in education and training. It will require smart investments in human capital from both public and private sources, in line with the Stability and Growth Pact.

While competence for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems lies with Member States, a **concerted effort at EU level** is required to achieve meaningful, sustainable results.

CONTENT: the **new skills agenda** presented by the Commission supports a shared commitment and works towards a common vision about the strategic importance of skills for sustaining jobs, growth and competitiveness. It seeks a shared commitment to reform in a number of areas where Union action brings most added value.

It is centred around three key work strands:

**1. Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation**: the Commission will:

- propose that a **Skills Guarantee** be established to provide: (i) a skills assessment, enabling low-qualified adults to identify their existing skills and their upskilling needs; (ii) a learning offer, responding to the specific needs of individuals and of local labour markets; (iii) opportunities to have their skills validated and recognised;
- launch a revision of the **Key Competences Framework** in 2017 in order to develop a shared understanding of key competences: the aim is to promote entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets, including by encouraging practical entrepreneurial experiences;
- showcase vocational studies as a first class option by supporting opportunities for learners to undertake a work-based learning experience as part of their studies;
- launch the **Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition** to develop a large digital talent pool and ensure that individuals and the labour force in Europe are equipped with adequate digital skills.

**2. Making skills and qualifications visible and comparable**: the Commission intends to:

- present a proposal for the **revision of the European Qualifications Framework** to support transparency and the comparison of qualifications and contribute to their better use in the EU labour market;
- launch a **Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals** to assist services in receiving and host countries to identify and document skills, qualifications and experience of newly-arrived third country nationals.

**3. Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices**: the Commission will:

- propose a **revision of the Europass Framework** to set up an intuitive and seamless online service platform. It will provide web-based tools for documenting and sharing information on skills and qualifications, and free self-assessment tools;
- analyse the issue of **brain drain** and promote the sharing of best practice as regards effective ways of tackling the problem;
- launch a **Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills**. It will help mobilise and coordinate key players, encourage private investment and promote more strategic use of relevant EU and national funding programmes. The Blueprint will be supported by existing EU funding and initially piloted in a demand driven process in 6 sectors, with preparatory work starting in 2016: automotive, maritime technology, space, defence, textile and tourism;
- propose as a first step in 2017 an **initiative on tertiary graduate tracking** to support Member States in improving information on how graduates progress on the labour market.

The Commission will also engage in a more in-depth dialogue with Member States on **how to best use the opportunities offered by existing funding programmes** to meet the Agenda' objectives.

The main instruments concerned are the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Horizon 2020 and Erasmus +.

The potential of the EIB and other financial organisations and products, including the European Fund for Strategic Investments, should also be used to the full to boost private-sector investment in skills development.