Basic information

2020/2135(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Shaping digital education policy **Subject** 3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	NEGRESCU Victor (S&D)	30/04/2020
	Shadow rapporteur BOCSKOR Andrea (EPP) FARRENG Laurence (Renew) KOLAJA Marcel (Greens/EFA) MELBĀRDE Dace (ECR) MICHELS Martina (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs (Associated committee)	ZALEWSKA Anna (ECR)	25/06/2020
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	WIŚNIEWSKA Jadwiga (ECR)	15/05/2020

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
17/09/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/09/2020	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
24/02/2021	Vote in committee		
15/03/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0042/2021	Summary

24/03/2021	Debate in Parliament		
25/03/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0095/2021	Summary
25/03/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/03/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2020/2135(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 57_o Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/9/03627

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE658.874	07/10/2020	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE657.431	11/11/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE660.395	19/11/2020	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE657.258	04/12/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0042/2021	15/03/2021	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0095/2021	25/03/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)345	03/08/2021	

Shaping digital education policy

2020/2135(INI) - 15/03/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own-initiative report by Victor NEGRESCU (S&D, RO) on shaping digital education policy.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the need to deliver full-scale quality education for all in order to prepare for potential future crises, enhance longer-term resilience in education systems and lay the foundations for a successful digital transition.

The sudden shift to online and distance learning also revealed a lack of readiness within education systems in most parts of Europe and gaps in the digital skills of teachers, educators, parents and learners and in their ability to use digital technologies effectively and safely.

The revised digital education action plan

Members highlighted that a rights-based approach to digital education, in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights, must be guiding principle in digital education policy to ensure that the right to inclusive and quality education for all becomes a reality. They welcomed, in this regard, the updated digital education action plan and its extended scope and ambition, with specific targets addressing notably persistent gaps in digital skills, the promotion of quality computer and IT education, or better connectivity in schools, as a further step towards a more comprehensive digital skills and education strategy.

The resolution commended the decision to align the plan with the seven-year multi-annual financial framework (MFF) since this enables a longer-term perspective and ties it in with the relevant funding instruments.

European digital hub

Members welcomed the Commission's commitment to establish a European digital education hub as a first step towards a co-creation process and ongoing monitoring system that links national and regional digital education strategies and involves key stakeholders and experts, including civil society organisations, representing different approaches from inside and outside mainstream education. Parliament should be fully involved in increasing European and national hubs and advisory services and in nominating relevant stakeholders.

Fostering a high-performing digital education ecosystem

Members stressed that fast and reliable internet and quality digital equipment in educational establishments, non-formal settings and the home are prerequisites for effective digital education. Broadband should be considered a public good and its infrastructure adequately funded to ensure that it is universally accessible and affordable as a critical step in closing the digital divide.

The resolution stressed the importance of the EU taking the lead in digital education by facilitating access to innovations and technologies for teachers, learners and parents. The Commission and the Member States are encouraged to provide schools (teachers and students) not only with technical support and Internet connection, but also a necessary support on safe and reliable software and to promote flexible models of education and support for distance learners using such means as e-resources, e-materials, videos, e-mentorship and free online training.

Enhancing digital skills

The committee considered that embracing and maximising the potential of digital technologies should go hand-in-hand with modernising existing curricula and learning and teaching methods. In this regard, Members stressed the importance of providing financial support for training courses designed for teachers.

Members also underlined the challenge of harmful and illegal content and activities in the digital environment, including in terms of mental health and well-being, such as online harassment including cyberthreats and cyberbullying, child pornography and grooming, data and privacy breaches, dangerous online games, disinformation.

Lastly, Members underscored the need for gender mainstreaming across education, skills and digitalisation policies and specifically within the action plan. They emphasised the need to focus on better inclusion of girls in digital education from a very young age. A positive and inclusive environment that promotes female role models to motivate girls to choose STEM, STEAM and ICT subjects should be created.

Shaping digital education policy

2020/2135(INI) - 25/03/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 639 votes 24, with 25 abstentions, a resolution on shaping digital education policy.

Members pointed out that 42% of Europeans still lack basic digital skills and that there are wide disparities between and within Member States, depending on socio-economic status, age, gender, income, education and employment. The need for digital skills (coding, logistics and robotics) will increase in the future. The Commission estimates that in a number of job categories, up to 90% of jobs are likely to require digital skills.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the need to deliver full-scale quality education for all in order to prepare for potential future crises, enhance longer-term resilience in education systems and lay the foundations for a successful digital transition.

The sudden shift to online and distance learning also revealed a lack of readiness within education systems in most parts of Europe and gaps in the digital skills of teachers, educators, parents and learners and in their ability to use digital technologies effectively and safely.

The revised digital education action plan

The resolution highlighted that a rights-based approach to digital education, in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights, must be guiding principle in digital education policy to ensure that the right to inclusive and quality education for all becomes a reality. It welcomed, in this regard, the updated digital education action plan and its extended scope and ambition, with specific targets addressing notably persistent gaps in digital skills, the promotion of quality computer and IT education, or better connectivity in schools, as a further step towards a more comprehensive digital skills and education strategy.

Parliament commended the decision to align the plan with the seven-year multi-annual financial framework (MFF) since this enables a longer-term perspective and ties it in with the relevant funding instruments.

Members drew attention to the contribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds, the Connecting Europe Facility, Horizon Europe, the European Solidarity Fund, the Creative Europe programme and Erasmus + to the financing of various aspects of the plan. They encouraged Member States to devote at least 10% of the Recovery and Resilience Facility funding to education. They welcomed the Commission's commitment to set up a European Digital Education Hub, which will enable Member States to promote cooperation between education and training institutions to improve digital education provision.

The Commission is invited to increase the role and visibility of education, including digital education, in the European Semester.

Fostering an effective digital education ecosystem

Parliament stressed that fast and reliable internet and quality digital equipment in educational institutions, non-formal settings and at home are prerequisites for effective digital education.

Broadband should be seen as a public good and its infrastructure should be financed to ensure that it is accessible and affordable for all, which is crucial for bridging the digital divide. Members called for specific measures and funding programmes to improve connectivity for all schools, especially those in remote, rural and mountainous areas.

The resolution stressed the importance of the EU taking the lead in digital education by facilitating access to innovations and technologies for teachers, learners and parents.

The Commission and Member States are encouraged to provide schools (teachers and pupils) not only with technical assistance and Internet connection, but also with the necessary support for secure and reliable software, and to promote flexible models of distance education and learner support using means such as online resources, electronic material, videos, online tutoring and free e-learning.

Enhancing digital skills

Parliament considered that embracing and maximising the potential of digital technologies should go hand-in-hand with modernising existing curricula and learning and teaching methods. In this regard, Members stressed the importance of providing financial support for training courses designed for teachers and the need to support parents and families in using digital tools.

The resolution also underlined the importance of developing digital literacy to address the challenge of harmful and illegal content in the digital environment, including in terms of mental health and well-being, such as online harassment, including cyber threats and cyber bullying, child pornography, data and privacy breaches, dangerous online games, disinformation.

The Commission is invited to work with national, regional and local authorities to put in place further measures to encourage digital literacy for adults and older people.

Lastly, Members stressed the need to focus on better integrating girls into digital education from an early age, highlighting the need for a joint effort to motivate more girls to study science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM).