

## ALL DIGITAL call on Council to adopt the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training

On 18 April the College of Commissioners adopted the proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training. The proposal constitutes Action 10 of the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) (DEAP). ALL DIGITAL approves of the proposal and urges the Spanish Council Presidency, which has taken office 1 July, to further its swift adoption. The proposal relates closely to and complements the proposal for a Council Recommendation on key enabling factors for successful digital education and training under Action 1 of the DEAP (Find ALL DIGITAL's position on this proposal [here](#)). The proposal on improving the provision of digital skills addresses the development of digital competences within education and training settings, which complements the other proposal's topic of using digital methodologies, tools and content in education and training.

It is welcome that the Commission has opted to delay the publication of the proposal from its original date in Q3 2022 to allow for a thorough and structured consultation process, which ALL DIGITAL sees reflected in the final proposal text. We particularly welcome the consideration of all levels of education and training, from primary education to adult learning, and also including informal and non-formal education and training. Deficits in digital skills both on an advanced and basic level among Europe's population, including its labour force, must be addressed with a life-long learning approach in mind. Accessible, inclusive, and high-quality digital competence development for all is a necessity for a successful digital transformation. Therefore, the recognition is a welcome and highly appreciated inclusion in the proposal text.

As a consequence, the goals of the recommendations reflect the whole breadth of the education and training landscape and are supported by ALL DIGITAL. In particular, we want to stress the aim for a consistent approach towards inclusivity, including the need to involve all parts of society, the facilitation of digital skills certification and mutual recognition, and improving access to digital competence development in adult learning and vocational education and training (VET). We particularly value the repeated references the text makes to hard-to-reach groups as a key area for needed improvements.

We commend the recommendations containing specific points targeted at each level of education and training, specifically on primary, secondary and higher education, on VET, adult learning and on ICT professionals. Additionally, there are cross-cutting and general recommendations not linked or limited to specific levels of education and training.

ALL DIGITAL seconds the recommendation of setting national objectives by Member States aligned with the EU level targets, paired with their consistent and continuous evaluation and monitoring. These efforts aid the targeted and effective application of measures ensuring that

no one is left behind. Furthermore, we welcome that both the need for increased cross-curricular approaches and need of specialised teachers and trainers are equally emphasised and recognised as complementary elements required to cover the whole spectrum of digital competences and proficiency levels.

In addition, it is a positive decision to not link the recommendation on certification to any education and training level, nor to just the labour market. Certification of digital skills, and the recognition of these certifications, can have positive effects for every citizen, regardless of their age, state of employment, whether they may have disabilities or not, nor their gender, sexuality, or ethnic and socio-economic background. We are delighted that the recommendations urge Member States to support and leverage the European Digital Skills Certificate, which ALL DIGITAL facilitates by hosting the Digital Competence Certification Community of [Practice](#), and include references to micro-credentials and individual learning accounts.

As a last universal recommendation applying to all levels of education and training, the call to provide adequate funding for digital skills development is of particular significance, and we consider its inclusion as vital. Adequate funding forms the backbone of the successful implementation effort of any policy initiative or framework. We appreciate that the European Commission is stressing the range of EU-level funding programmes and support facilities available to Member States for support in providing the required funding. It is especially positive that these recommendations on funding should adopt a life-long learning perspective. ALL DIGITAL supports most of the recommendations targeted at specific sectors of education and training. They generally support measures appropriate for the respective sector and provide a complete, yet succinct guide for Member States to implement. However, we are dismayed at the limitations in the recommendations dedicated to the VET sector. The role of VET providers should be considered much broader than only advanced and specialist digital skills, which, while arguably of importance, are in focus of the recommendations to the disadvantage of equally important aspects. Given the current situation of skills deficits also on a basic level among Europe's citizens and labour force, VET providers are a crucial actor in developing these skills for adult learners. It is a missed opportunity that the recommendations do not put credit to this wider role of VET providers.

The recommendations on adult learning in particular are to be considered as very positive, with the caveat of a focus on working age adults. However, they are not exclusively limited to this perspective either, and their scope includes adults outside the labour market, albeit a more explicit mention would have strengthened this point. Noteworthy are recommendations on ensuring specific support for adults most in need, and the call to include all types of actors in collaborative approaches. We welcome the references to the Council Recommendation on Individual Learning Accounts and the recommendation calling for the creation of further local and regional Digital Skills and Jobs Coalitions.

ALL DIGITAL approves of the proposed Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training and urges Member States to reach a swift agreement on their adoption, as well as a strong commitment towards their subsequent implementation.

We stand ready to continue to support the European Commission and Member States in their initiatives towards the inclusive and accessible development of digital skills for all.

*ALL DIGITAL is a leading pan-European association based in Brussels, representing member organisations across Europe that work with 20,000 digital competence centres.*

*We focus to support Europeans that have an insufficient level of digital skills. That means that they're having less chances to find work, to use online services, to have a better quality of life, to be included in today's society.*

*We believe that every European should be able to exploit the benefits and opportunities created by digital transformation.*

For further questions, please get in touch with Norman Röhner, ALL DIGITAL Policy Officer, at [norman.rohner@all-digital.org](mailto:norman.rohner@all-digital.org)

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