Digital Education

Action Plan 2021-2027

Improving the provision of digital skills in education and training

18 April 2023
#EuropeanYearofSkills

The ongoing digital transformation requires education and training systems to support people in developing their digital skills.

The Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training. The aim of the Recommendation is to support Member States in taking measures to promote digital skills development in a coherent way through all levels of education and training.

The **_Declaration on European digital rights and principles_** states that: "Everyone has the right to education, training and lifelong learning and should be able to acquire all basic and advanced digital skills".

54%

Only 54% of people (aged 16-74) have at least basic digital skills

1/3

More than a third of the EU's labour force lacks the digital skills required in most jobs

Education and Training

Why is there a need to improve the provision of digital skills?

Digital skills are essential for life, work and active citizenship in a digitalised world. Demand for digital skills is growing, triggered by the digital transformation of society and the economy.

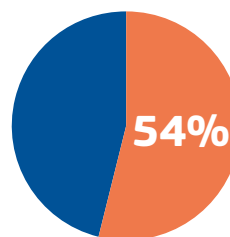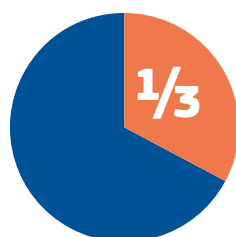Digital skills are also a key priority of the *European Year of Skills* and the *Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027*.
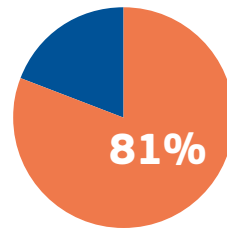
The *European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan* and the *Digital Decade* set out ambitious targets on digital skills by 2030:

- at least **80% of people** with basic digital skills as a precondition for inclusion and participation in the labour market and society.
- **20 million** ICT specialists working in the EU, with women representing a significant proportion.
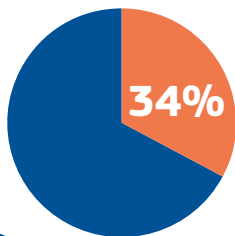
These goals are complemented by a target set in the *European Education Area*:

- **less than 15%** low-achieving eighth-graders in computer and information literacy.

There is moreover a growing demand in the labour market for people with advanced digital skills across a variety of different occupations (beyond ICT professions).

81%

There is a high gender imbalance in ICT professions: **81% of employed ICT specialists are male**

34%

34% of students were rated as underachieving in digital skills (against a target of 15%)

20 million

The number of employed ICT specialists (9 million in 2021) is not enough to meet the needs of the labour market or the **goal of 20 million by 2030**

This Recommendation aims to:

- Support Member States in promoting a quality, inclusive and consistent approach to the development of digital skills at all levels of education and training.
- Enable cooperation, support specialized teachers and improve education and training institutions' capacity to cover the demand of digital skills.
- Protect people's digital rights, including the right to acquire basic and advanced digital skills as needed.
- Contribute to reach the targets on digital skills of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, of the Digital Decade, and of the European Education Area.

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How will we achieve this?

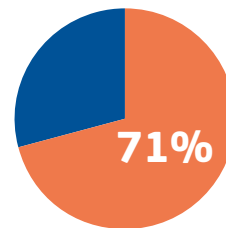## This proposal for a Council Recommendation invites Member States to:

- Agree on a national strategy for digital education and skills and monitor its effectiveness and impact.

- Start early to guide learners in the digital world and offer equal opportunities to develop digital skills.

- Reinforce cooperation among Member States to promote and provide quality education in informatics at school.

- Support higher education to develop digital skills across disciplines, and address the need for advanced digital skills.

- Support the recruitment, training and retention of specialised teachers and trainers.

- Support the provision of digital skills in Vocational Education and Training and for adults, and improve its accessibility.

- Foster actions related to digital skills certification.

The Commission intends to:

- Support Member States' efforts for strengthening digital skills development and high-quality informatics.
- Set up a High-Level Group on Digital Education and Skills.
- Use EU instruments, such as the Technical Support Instrument, and EU funding, such as Erasmus+, European Social Fund Plus, Just Transition Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe, and NDICI-Global Europe.
- Promote excellence in advanced and specialist digital skills courses in higher education and Vocational Education and Training.
- Facilitate the recognition of digital skills certificates and qualifications.
- Support efforts to increase the number and diversity of ICT specialists.

€11 billion

Under Cohesion Policy 2021–2027, **more than €11 billion** will be dedicated to support digital skills

71%

71% of young people aged 16-24 have at least basic digital skills

Timeline

October 2021 – December 2022
Targeted stakeholder consultations

April 2023
Commission adoption of the proposal for Council Recommendation

March 2022– November 2022
Structured dialogue with Member States on digital education and skills

August – September 2022
Call for Evidence on the initiative

by end of 2023
Council adoption of the Council Recommendation

Publications Office of the European Union