



A Union of Skills to equip people for a competitive Europe

Brussels, 5 March 2025

The Union of Skills will support the development of our Union's human capital to strengthen EU competitiveness. A key initiative of the first 100 days of this Commission, the Union of Skills will:

- **Deliver higher levels of basic skills**, for example through the Basic Skills Support Scheme pilot;
- **Provide lifelong opportunities for adults to regularly upskill and reskill**, for example through a Skills Guarantee pilot;
- **Facilitate recruitment by businesses across the EU**, for example through a Skills Portability Initiative;
- **Attract and retain the skills and talents** needed in the European economy, for example through the 'Choose Europe' action to attract top talent globally;
- **Have a strong governance foundation**, building on the new European Skills High-Level Board that will be informed by a European Skills Intelligence Observatory.

From children at school to those reaching retirement, this initiative will **empower people across Europe** with the skills they need to thrive. It will also encourage the **portability of skills** across the continent through the free movement of knowledge and innovation.

The Union of Skills Communication is accompanied by an **Action Plan on Basic Skills** and a **STEM Education Strategic Plan** to improve skills in science, technology, engineering, and maths, promote STEM careers, attract more girls and women, and boost preparedness in the face of digital and clean-tech transitions.

New targets for 2030

The Commission proposes a number of new targets by 2030:

- The share of underachievement in literacy, mathematics, science and digital skills should be less than 15%, whereas the share of top performance in literacy, mathematics and science should be at least 15%;
- The share of students enrolled in STEM fields in initial medium-level VET should be at least 45%, with at least 1 out of every 4 students female;
- The share of students enrolled in STEM fields in third-level education be at least 32%, with at least 2 out of 5 students female;
- The share of students enrolled in ICT PhD programmes should be at least 5%, with at least 1 out of every 3 students female.

Building a solid foundation through education and training

Education and training play an essential role in creating quality jobs and lives, for example we will support literacy, maths, science, digital and citizenship skills through the **Basic Skills Support Scheme pilot**. Together with Member States, the Commission will develop and financially support a framework of effective intervention measures (such as early warning, monitoring, personalised support, networks). This scheme for children and young people that struggle to acquire basic skills will improve their achievement levels.

Regular upskilling and reskilling as the new norm

Developing new skills should be a recurring and essential part of peoples' professional lives in our

evolving economies.

The Commission will develop a **Skills Guarantee** pilot. This scheme will offer workers involved in restructuring processes, or at risk of unemployment, the opportunity to develop further their careers in another company or another sector.

The EU will streamline and reinforce the EU Skills Academies that deliver the skills needed by businesses for the green transition and the Clean Industrial Deal.

Helping the free movement of skilled people

The Single Market's full potential will be unlocked by circulating skills. To open up more opportunities for workers and businesses, a **Skills Portability Initiative** will make it easier to recognise and accept skills and qualifications across the EU, independently of where they were acquired. The initiative will promote the use of digital credentials.

Making the EU a magnet for talent

The Union of Skills will bolster the EU's ability to attract, develop and retain key talents, from inside the EU and around the world.

For example, the Commission will launch a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions pilot call 'Choose Europe' with a budget of €22.5 million to attract top talent globally, by offering excellent scientific working and employment conditions and careers prospects.

Furthermore, once adopted by the Parliament and Council, the Commission will set up an **EU Talent Pool** for recruitment from outside the EU at all skills levels, especially in occupations facing severe shortages. A **Visa Strategy** will be presented this year to further support the arrival of top students, trained workers, and researchers.

Strong new governance

Delivering on the Union of Skills will require a collective responsibility and increased ambition, investment, and effective reform implementation. For this, the Union of Skills will rest on a strong governance, informed by a **European Skills Intelligence Observatory**. The observatory will provide data and foresight regarding skills and allow for early warning alerts regarding skills shortages in critical or strategic sectors.

A new **European Skills High-Level Board**, will bring together education and training providers, business leaders and social partners to provide comprehensive insights on skills to the EU policy makers. Building on the Observatory the Board will ensure a coordinated vision and the identification of the bold action necessary to strengthen our human capital.

Because human capital, education and skills are a core matter for ensuring European competitiveness, the Commission intends to introduce **a new EU-27 Recommendation on education and skills** in the European Semester cycle, to guide the Member States and relevant actors.

For More Information

[A Union of Skills \(Communication\)](#)

[Union of Skills website](#)

[Questions & Answers](#)

[Union of Skills factsheet](#)

[Skills development, labour and skills shortages – factsheets for all 27 Member States](#) (Cedefop)

[Action Plan on Basic Skills](#)

[STEM Education Strategic Plan](#)

[Action Plan on Basic Skills factsheet](#)

[STEM Education Strategic Plan factsheet](#)

Quote(s):

"The Union of Skills is our strategy to help people stay ahead in a rapidly changing world and keep Europe competitive and fair. We, in Europe, put people first because the success of every person in learning, at work and in life is essential for competitiveness and for a stable and resilient Union."

Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness - 05/03/2025

Press contacts:

[Eva HRNCIROVA](#) (+32 2 29 88433)

[Anna GRAY](#) (+32 2 29 80873)

[Quentin CORTES](#) (+32 2 29 13283)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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