European Commission

CALL FOR EVIDENCE
FOR AN INITIATIVE (without an impact assessment)

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	**Digital education – enabling factors for success**
LEAD **DG** – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	EAC – C4
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Proposal for a Council Recommendation
INDICATIVE TIMING	Q1-2023
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital

A. Political context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

Political context

The COVID-19 pandemic has put in focus the importance of developing and implementing an ecosystem that delivers accessible, high-quality and inclusive digital education and training. This is the focus of the first strategic priority of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, which was endorsed in the Conclusions on digital education in Europe's knowledge societies, where Member States invited the Commission to launch a strategic reflection process on the enabling factors of successful digital education. President von der Leyen announced in her 2021 State of the Union address that digital education and skills "need leaders' attention" and launched a Structured Dialogue with Member States on digital education and skills.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

While national education and training systems in the EU are diverse, some key common challenges can be identified in relation to the provision of digital education.

School connectivity remains uneven between and within EU countries, and high-speed internet connections in schools are still rare[1]. Shortage or inadequacy of digital equipment for teaching is perceived among school principals as an increasing hindrance to school capacity[2]. While higher education institutions tend to be better connected and equipped, there are additional problems with interoperability across platforms and services and access to high-quality digital education content.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged learners have less access to computers at home and generally start using digital devices later in life, deepening existing socioeconomic inequalities. At the same time, insufficient attention to accessible and assistive digital

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[1] European Commission (2019). 2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education. Objective 1: Benchmark progress in ICT in schools. Luxembourg: EU Publications Office

[2] OECD (2019), TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners, TALIS. Paris: OECD Publishing

technologies presents another barrier in the access to education of persons with disabilities.

For many education and training institutions, developing a digital education strategy is a challenge. And prior to the COVID-19 crisis, only 39% of teachers in the EU felt well or very well prepared to use digital technologies for teaching[3].

Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)

Legal basis

The initiative is proposed under Articles 165 and 166 of the TFEU, contributing to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems.

Practical need for EU action

The initiative responds to the Council's invitation to the Commission to ensure a coordinated approach on digital education and training. In addition, it will provide support to Member States in the implementation of their Recovery and Resilience Plans, where digital education has been identified as a top priority.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how

This initiative aims to support Member States in the digital transformation of their education and training systems by outlining the key enabling factors for an effective and inclusive digital education ecosystem, and providing expertise on how best to deliver on each of the key enablers, with the aim of making progress towards to goal of ensuring universal access to high-quality digital education and training. The initiative covers all levels of education and training.

This will include recommending targeted measures on:

- promoting an integrated and coherent whole-government approach to the digital transformation of education and training,
- provision of high-speed connectivity, digital technology solutions and digital content tailored to learning needs,
- development, monitoring and evaluation of institutional digitalisation strategies, with respect to equity and inclusion,
- professional development and support for teachers and educators, institutional leaders and support staff, including developing guidelines for digital pedagogy,
- fostering closer dialogue between education and training institutions and stakeholders,
- supporting the use of digital technologies through accompanying measures such as rules and regulations on use,
- supporting capacity-building of Member States, including by using benchmarking, exchange of best practices, twinning, peer review etc.
- ensuring the effective use of EU funds and synergies with other sources of funding.

The initiative will include a proposal for an easy-to-use scoreboard reflecting the key enabling factors.

Likely impacts

The initiative will contribute to the modernisation of education and training systems and

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[3] OECD (2019), TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners, TALIS. Paris: OECD Publishing

enhance territorial cohesion, social inclusion and equity, while contributing to driving economic growth, job creation and competitiveness. At the same time, it will contribute to increasing the resilience of the EU and its preparedness for future shocks and crises.

Future monitoring

The Commission intends to report on the use of the Recommendation in the context of the implementation of Digital Education Action Plan and the European Education Area, including the Education and Training Monitor.

C. Better regulation

Impact assessment

The initiative reflects the supporting role of the EU and the voluntary nature of European cooperation in education and training. It does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States. It sets out a general policy approach and recommended actions that are not legally binding. No impact assessment is needed.

Consultation strategy

The initiative will draw on the findings of the extensive public consultation on the Digital Education Action Plan conducted in 2020.

In addition, targeted stakeholder consultations are envisaged:
- panel discussions at the European Education Summit and the Digital Education Stakeholder Forum,
- meetings of the High-Level Group of national coordinators for the Structured Dialogue on digital education and skills and bilateral meetings of the Structured Dialogue with relevant ministries and stakeholders in all 27 Member States,
- dedicated sessions with the Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment,
- virtual workshops with key stakeholders.

Why we are consulting?

The aim of the targeted consultations will be to gather input and verify whether the key enabling factors and the methods for achieving them address stakeholders' needs.

Target audience

The main stakeholders are policy-makers in Member States (including ministries responsible for education and training, employment, industry and digital transformation policies), local and regional authorities, digital technology providers and educational technology representatives, public employment services, employers and trade unions, teachers, school leaders and learners.