

ALL DIGITAL Response to the Adoption of the Council's Digital Education Package

On 23 November, the Council of the European Union adopted two Recommendations on digital education, completing Actions 1 (Council Recommendation on key enabling factors for successful digital education) and 10 (Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training) of the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) (DEAP). ALL DIGITAL, as the European network of digital education stakeholders representing over 100 members in 29 countries, welcomes the advancement on this significant initiative towards equipping Europeans with the digital skills and competences they need for a successful digital transition.

We urge Member States to follow through on the commitment undertaken with the adoption of these recommendations by their swift implementation.

Corresponding to the two key priorities of the DEAP, the two documents cover both, equally important, aspects of digital competence development, namely making our education and training systems fit to make the most of the opportunities offered by digital technologies and leveraging these education and training systems to enhance everyone's digital competences.

Overall, the adopted texts improve on the original proposals by the European Commission in several key points, many of which ALL DIGITAL had called for in our assessment of the proposals (you can find the statements [on key enabling factors here](#), and [on the provision of digital skills here](#)) However, regrettably, they also weaken the potential impact and ambition of these instruments of indirect action in other aspects. As these recommendations are not legally binding for Member States, it is disappointing that the adopted texts refer to Member States' participation in the initiatives as voluntary, potentially signalling an unwillingness by Member States to fully implement their own recommendations on much needed steps towards a successful and just digital transformation.

ALL DIGITAL warmly welcomes the texts explicitly widening their scope to include competences, which additionally mention knowledge and attitudes, beyond the focus on skills alone throughout. Likewise, we appreciate the inclusion of frequent references to the concept of computational thinking as a key element of education and training processes.

ALL DIGITAL is particularly supporting the strengthening of the considerations on wellbeing, and the focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups as key beneficiaries of initiatives, underlined by moving this element from a sub-point in the proposal text to a full recommendation in the adopted Recommendations on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training.

The adopted versions, furthermore, underline the important role of non-formal and informal education and training to a much greater extent than the proposals, which is an encouraging and positive development. The recognition of civil society actors as essential stakeholders to be involved is an additional improvement on the proposals, as is the explicit reference to STEAM education and training.

We also welcome the recognition of regional strategies as important instruments within Member States towards shaping their digital education landscape, and we support the recommendation towards open source, open content, and open data solutions, which increase transparency, accessibility and inclusion, as well as encouraging further development of common standards. The explicit references to artificial intelligence as an emerging technology is a further positive addition.

While we regret the Council's decision to remove the continuation of the high-level group of national coordinators to the structural dialogue on digital education and skills, we express the hope that this is due to the support for the proposed High-Level Group on Education and Training. Elevating this high-level group from a Commission initiative the Member States welcome to a full recommendation for the Member States themselves is an extremely encouraging sign, and we also support the call for updates of the DigCompEdu and SELFIEforTEACHERS frameworks added to the adopted texts.

Finally, we positively note the inclusion of references to the provision of necessary resources and facilities to the providers of teacher and trainer education programmes in both Recommendations, whereas previously this was only mentioned in the proposal for recommendations on key enabling factors. We also welcome the recognition of the need to include regular servicing and maintenance for digital devices to be provided for teachers and trainers, as well as learners.

However, ALL DIGITAL regrets the omission of references to several key initiatives, such as the Skills Agenda, the European Child Guarantee, the Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success, and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 from the context of the Recommendations on improving the provision of digital skills, which are however still mentioned in the Recommendations on key enabling factors.

We renew our call to Member States to implement both Recommendations to their full scope, fulfilling on the promise of these two landmark important texts towards the enhancement of digital competences, in line with the principles of the [ALL DIGITAL Manifesto](#). We stand ready to support the EU institutions, Member States, and stakeholder organisations to take action and find new ways to co-operate at EU, national, regional and local level to deliver on the urgent need for enhanced digital competence development across Europe.

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



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