



Host: Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Report on the 10th Meeting of the Irish Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Secretary: Anne Higgins

Date: 1 February 2023





QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilochta agus Cáilochtaí Éireann



Photo: Speakers, left to right: Sheena Duffy HEA; Andrina Wafer QQI; Koen Nomden EU Commission; Angela Lambkin, QQI; Órla Barry, QQI; Deidre Finlay Léargas; Roisin Doherty SOLAS

Introduction

This report is an overview of the proceedings of the tenth meeting of the Irish European Union (EU) Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) which took place in Dublin on the 1 February 2023. The meeting was hosted by Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) and was the first in-person meeting since the removal of Covid 19 restrictions. It was attended by 67 delegates from a broad range of further and higher education agencies across Ireland.

On behalf of QQI, Angela Lambkin, Head of Qualifications Information and Learning Opportunities, welcomed the participants to the meeting. Angela opened her welcome by reflecting on the initial meeting ten years ago when the remit of the meeting was viewed as *'offering the potential to share our thinking, shape our national responses together, and multiply the impact of what we do individually'*. That remit was reflected in the purpose of the tenth meeting which was to share updates on European policies and developments in the further and higher education sectors, including identifying a range of current initiatives, sharing emerging findings from new projects, and discussing potential developments affecting learner mobility. (A copy of the agenda is attached as an [annex](#)).

The meeting was divided into two sessions:

1. Session 1 covered poster updates from the agencies of the Reference Group meeting.
2. Session 2 focused on EU Skills policies developments.

Keynote speaker Koen Nomden, Team Leader, Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications, European Commission.

Session 1-Poster updates

Deirdre Finlay, Léargas



Deirdre spoke about the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027. She began with a brief outline of the role of Léargas in supporting learning mobility and cross-border cooperation projects that encourage European exchange for participants in adult education, school education and vocational education and training.

Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027¹ Submissions and Themes

- The Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 includes the fields of:
 - Education
 - Training
 - Youth
 - Sport
- The priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 are:
 - Inclusion and diversity-promotes greater participation by learners and organisations with fewer opportunities.
 - Digital transformation-promotes the enhancement of digital skills for the digital transformation.
 - Environment and fight against climate change-promotes awareness raising of the impact of actions on climate.
 - Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement promotes active citizenship.
- Funding is available for education and training organisations working in adult education, schools' education and vocational education and training.
- Key Action 1 (KA1) relates to learning mobility of individuals, and funds short-term projects. Key Action 2 (KA2) relates to cooperation among organisations and institutions, and funds long-term, small-scale partnerships and cooperation partnerships. Deirdre highlighted that additional funding is available to support inclusion.
- Priorities for Léargas include projects relating to inclusion and sustainability, growth in the participation of adult learners, apprenticeships, small scale partnerships, normalising mobility and an active youth programme for youth workers and young people.



¹ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>

Sheena outlined current national and international developments for the HEA in the context of national and European policy.

- The Higher Education Authority Act 2022² legislates for co-operation and collaboration between higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland and higher education authorities in
 - Northern Ireland through student mobility and
 - Places outside the State by providing funding for international projects.
- The five key themes of the Higher Education System Performance Framework 2023-2027³, developed by the HEA, will be used by the HEIs to identify their individual priorities and targets which will contribute to the achievement of institutional and national strategy.
- Opportunities arise from the establishment of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) which brings higher education and research together in one department. In bringing the international education strategy and the research and innovation strategy together in an aligned framework it creates the opportunity for Ireland to succeed on a world stage through the development of talent and promotion of innovation and research in a suitable, quality structure.
- The HEA is awaiting publication of the new International Education, Research and Innovation Strategy.
- As part of the European Universities Initiative, Irish HEIs have established a strong network of alliances and strategic partnerships with European universities.
- The mobility and cooperation budgets for 2023 have increased. Approximately 300 students from Ukraine have registered in HEIs. Erasmus+ funding is used to support those students.
- The budget for Key Action 171 (KA171), International Credit Mobility (ICM), supports international mobility for students and staff in HEIs to anywhere in the world. The HEA did not receive any applications for funding under KA171 for Western Balkans and only a limited number for Neighbourhood East, while all other regions were oversubscribed. The HEA wants to promote collaborations between Irish HEIs and HEIs in Western Balkans and neighbourhood regions.

² <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/act/31/enacted/en/html>

³ <https://hea.ie/2022/11/10/system-performance-framework-2023-2027-written-consultation-process-open/>

Órla Barry, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Órla delivered an update on the progress of the EQF-NCP Project 2021-2023 with particular focus on national and European updates and priorities.



National Updates and Priorities for 2023:

- Ongoing update of Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ)⁴ including a review of the current IRQ and plan for future development.
- The IRQ saw a significant increase in uploads by awarding bodies and new users in 2022, and data was transferred from the IRQ to the European Qualification Dataset Register (QDR) in January 2023.
- Scheme for Listed Awarding Bodies to include non-formal sectoral and international awards in the NFQ. (September 2023)
- Mark 20th anniversary of NFQ. The anniversary will be marked by a report celebrating the achievements of the NFQ, which will include a wide stakeholder perspective. Tenders will be sought shortly for the evaluation report. (November 2023).
- Review of Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) Practice in Ireland. The review will be a high-level report on good practice and areas for improvement in ATP practice which will feed into the NFQ report. (August 2023).

European Updates and Priorities:

- The EU Commission evaluation of the EQF, which commenced in 2022, is continuing in 2023 with Ireland included as a case study. Stakeholders can provide feedback on the EQF until 22 March 2023.
- Cedefop is updating the European Inventory of NFQs and validation.
- The EQF AG has two projects relevant to the Reference Group namely:
 - Developing guidelines for writing short learning outcomes
 - Developing a procedure for levelling international qualifications.

QQI recognises the importance of a consistent approach to writing learning outcomes and will consider how best to apply the guidelines when published.

The UK and Ireland Qualifications Frameworks Group

- The Frameworks Group consists of the regulators, QA bodies and governments of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England whose purpose is to facilitate understanding, consistency and collaboration between the five countries on their NFQs.
- The Group also produces and updates an information leaflet⁵ comparing qualifications, including apprenticeships, across jurisdictions.
- Even though the UK is no longer part of the EU, the Common Travel Agreement⁶ supports mobility between these countries.



⁴ [Irish Register of Qualification \(irq.ie\)](http://irq.ie)

⁵ [Qualifications can Cross Boundries 2019.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

⁶ <https://www.dfa.ie/brexit/brexit-and-you/common-travel-area/>

Angela Lambkin, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)  europass

Angela updated the meeting on Europass⁷ and the EQF NCP Project 2020-2023.

QQI, as part of the EQF-NCP and Europass joint NFQ / IRQ/QDR project, has engaged in a series of shared work packages to

- Promote Europass and the EQF and
- Establish synergies with EU agencies⁸ in Ireland, and public, community and voluntary bodies.

Ireland celebrated Europe Day 2022-All about YOUth⁹ in a series of hybrid activities organised by the European Parliament and European Commission representatives in Ireland, and Eurofund.

It was noted that more work needs to be done to embed Europass in Irish education and training. Examples of communication tools used to promote Europass were given, such as an interagency event, national media and QQI's e-zine. However, it was acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on mobility.

Evaluation of Europass by the European Commission is ongoing and feedback from users is welcome. A new phase, aligned with EU priorities, will commence in 2024.

Mobility supports for learners:



1. Europe is Open to You!¹⁰

The booklet is a guide for young people who want to work, study or volunteer in Europe.

2. Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is useful for Higher Education graduates who intend to engage with mobility. The successful completion of the ADDS UP project has resulted in resources¹¹ being made available to support institutions that offer their Diploma Supplements digitally.

⁷ <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

⁸ <https://www.leargas.ie/resource/europe-is-open-to-you-eurodesk-euroguidance/>

⁹ https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/events-ireland-european-commission/europe-day-2022-all-about-youth-2022-05-09_en

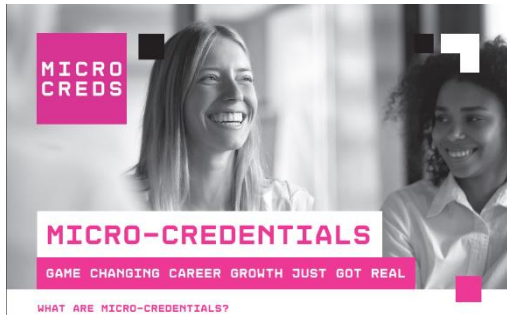
¹⁰ <https://www.leargas.ie/resource/europe-is-open-to-you-eurodesk-euroguidance/>

¹¹ <https://www.ectis.com/OurWork>

[Worldwide/Contributions/AddUp.aspx?cldee=nASed9f3MU_A48JwK_u_Kl0bsNGxF9-](https://www.ectis.com/OurWork/Worldwide/Contributions/AddUp.aspx?cldee=nASed9f3MU_A48JwK_u_Kl0bsNGxF9-)

Feedback is welcome by QQI and the National Europass Centre.

Plans for 2023



The IUA and Micro-credentials Project plans to upload the micro-credentials to the QDR.

A number of external engagements are planned such as IGC 2023 where the Institute of Guidance Counsellors will present a poster, and the Higher Education Options and Grad Ireland events.

Kinia Credentials

Reference was made to Kinia Credentials¹², which are bilingual, were explained as stackable awards achieved on the successful completion of professional development training by educators.



Kinia Educator Credentials are stackable awards achieved by educators when they engage in our professional development training and demonstrate the activation of the new skill in their learning setting.

- ✓ European Digital Credentials for Learning
- ✓ Electronic Portfolio
- ✓ Portable
- ✓ Metadata
- ✓ Bilingual



www.kinia.ie/

3tPJy_y03O5yJrh4WyFpFuqGECvOyTK&recipientid=contact-318efa88a8a9e71180cc000d3ab2f532-522171efa14744839a31001bd2bb96fc&esid=f04a018b-a156-ed11-a819-000d3ab7869e

¹² <https://kinia.ie/credentials/>

Andrina Wafer, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Andrina delivered an update on the highlights in EU Initiatives and actions in recognition nationally with reference to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the National Academic Recognition and Information Service (NARIC).

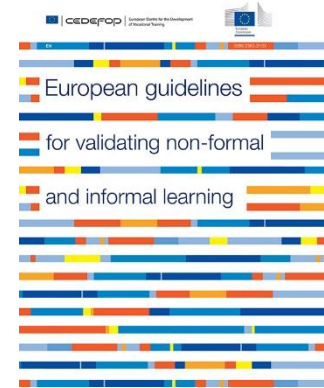
RPL

The Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹³ in 2012 is supported by Cedefop's European Guidelines¹⁴, and country and thematic inventories¹⁵, along with Peer Learning Activities.

A revised version of the European Guidelines is pending publication following extensive consultation with stakeholders.

Work has begun on the country and thematic reports which will examine progress at national level since our last inventory, taking European and national agendas, such as the Programme for Government¹⁶ and QQI's Corporate Plan¹⁷, into account. e.g., green and sustainable economies, refugees.

The RPL Practitioner Network Ireland¹⁸ facilitates the awareness raising and sharing of learning among stakeholders.



NARIC

NARIC is an online database of advisory comparability statements for qualifications from countries worldwide. Statements are advised against the level and award type on the NFQ. Recognition decisions are made by competent authorities at national or local level.

In 2022 NARIC prioritised supporting applications from refugees and asylum seekers from Syria¹⁹ and Ukraine²⁰.



Recognition of qualifications and statutory obligations

States, such as Ireland, that ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention²¹ are required to establish procedures to expeditiously assess access for 'refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation' to education programmes or employment, regardless of the availability of documentary evidence.

¹³ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012H1222(01)&from=EN)

¹⁴ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3073>

¹⁵ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e05d-programme-for-government-our-shared-future/#>

¹⁷ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-09/Corporate%20Plan%202022.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/partners/recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl-practitioner-network-ireland/>

¹⁹ [https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-09/Syrian Qualifications Rough Guide Ver 1.0 Final V.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-09/Syrian%20Qualifications%20Rough%20Guide%20Ver%201.0%20Final%20V.pdf)

²⁰ [https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-09/Ukraine Qualifications Rough Guide Version 4.1.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-09/Ukraine%20Qualifications%20Rough%20Guide%20Version%204.1.pdf)

²¹ [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education | UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/en/convention-on-recognition-qualifications-higher-education)

Where documentary evidence is unavailable the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees²², developed by the Council of Europe, is a tool which is used to assess refugees' qualifications. QQI has signed up for the project.



A Global Recognition Convention is upcoming.

Micro-credentials

At European level, the need to develop new skills to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing labour market has led to the European Council Recommendation on micro-credentials²³.

At national level, government policy supports agility and innovation in undergraduate provision in higher education in Pillar 3 of the Human Capital Initiative (HCI)²⁴.

In an exploratory study carried out by QQI on micro-credentials in higher education in Ireland (2014-2020)²⁵ it found that there has been a rapid growth in the uptake of micro-credentials for work-related purposes since 2017.

The Recommendation supports the intention that the European National Information Centre (ENIC-NARIC) will have a role in the recognition of micro-credentials for education or employment purposes.

Angela thanked all the speakers for their presentations and the meeting took a networking break.

²² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

²³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:10b78e47-59aa-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

²⁴ <https://hea.ie/skills-engagement/human-capital-initiative-pillars-1-2-and-3/>

²⁵ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/early-exploration-into-micro-credentials-in-higher-education-2014-20.pdf>

Session 2-Keynote address

Róisín Doherty, Director Learner Support – SOLAS, chaired and introduced session 2.

Session 2 was a presentation delivered by Keynote speaker, Koen Nomden, Team Leader 'Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications', European Commission.

European Skills Agenda

As part of the European Pillar of Social Rights and Action Plan, the European Skills Agenda²⁶ was adopted in 2020, outlining the EU Commission's actions in the field of skills.

The European Skills Agenda has twelve actions organised around four building blocks:

1. Joining forces
 - join forces in a collective action.
2. Skilling for a job
 - ensure that people have the right skills for jobs.
3. Tools for lifelong learning
 - support people in the lifelong learning journey.
4. Unlock investments
 - have a fit-for-purpose framework to unlock investment in skills.

Work on the actions has progressed since the adoption of the European Skills agenda with the Council making recommendations on VET, individual learning accounts and micro-credentials. The call for collective action has seen 1,000 members and 14 large scale partnerships coming together to re/upskill 6 million people. Skills is addressed by Skills-OVATE²⁷, DEAP, DigComp²⁸, GreenComp²⁹, and Taxonomy Green Skills.

Micro-credentials



The European Council adopted a Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability³⁰ in June 2022. In the Recommendation, certified micro credentials will be used to help address the skills gap in the EU labour market through the development of short, tailored learning programmes which will re/upskill the labour force. The approach identifies building blocks, key areas for action and a focus on education, training and labour market policies in the development of micro credentials.

²⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

²⁷ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/skills-online-vacancies>

²⁸ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digcomp-framework_en

²⁹ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en

³⁰ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9237-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

Individual Learning Accounts

The Individual Learning Accounts (ILA) initiative³¹, which is central to the proposal, is underpinned by two principles:

1. Universal but differentiated support; Member States establish ILAs for individuals to facilitate them to avail of work-related training, with additional entitlements provided for those most in need of up/reskilling.
2. Accumulation and transferability of entitlements; Member States invite public and private sector employers to provide individual training entitlements to the ILAs of their staff, particularly where training has been identified as a priority for the workplace or individual. ILAs are kept by the individual even when living temporarily in another Member State.

ILAs provide certainty to working age adults that they have access to appropriate training opportunities tailored to their needs.

Europass and Digital Credentials update



Ten countries, including Ireland, have published data on learning opportunities and three countries are in the testing phase in QDR.

The Europass infosite is the first point of contact for individuals wishing to use the Europass digital tools such as the e-Portfolio and Digital Skills Test. A central database stores information on courses, qualifications and accreditation throughout Europe.

Digital Credentials³² are tamper-proof statements of learning, acquired formally or informally, at any level on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), issued to a learner. Individuals build a portable portfolio of their learning which can be used across Europe at any time throughout their career across. They are aligned with the EQF and the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), and recognised throughout the European Education Area.

European Learning Model

The European Model (ELM)³³ is a single data model which describes the results of learning in any form such as formal qualifications, certificates of attendance, recommendations etc. While it is currently used on the Europass platform and other European Commission services it has potential for Erasmus+ mobility and the Single Digital Gateway.

³¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8944-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

³² <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/digital-credentials>

³³ <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-learning-model>

Europass agenda

The current Europass agenda was noted to include an application tracker, update Lifelong Guidance, improve data on learning opportunities, a new template for Europass Mobility, Certificate supplement, skills intelligence and blockchain ledger for digital credentials.

EQF Implementation Status

- 41 EQF countries have national qualifications frameworks.
- 36 countries (soon 37) have referenced and 5 (+ UK) have re-referenced.
- 34 countries indicate EQF levels on certificates, diplomas, or supplements.
- 22 countries indicate EQF levels on databases or registers of qualifications.
- Soon to come: publication of EQF-Ukrainian QF comparison
- EQF evaluation: public consultation ongoing until 22 March.
- Work areas: referencing updates, third country cooperation, international qualifications, qualifications outside formal E&T, learning outcomes (short descriptions), linking Q-registers to Europass, communication.

Nineteen countries, including Ireland, have published data on qualifications and one country is in the testing phase in QDR.

Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

The Commission expects to publish updated validation guidelines shortly and is working on another EU inventory on validation across Europe. It is intended the guidelines will capture the experiences in recent years and make these available to stakeholders in different positions and at different levels.

Reference was made to Cedefop's publication on Making Learning Visible³⁴ for non-formal learning.

Lifelong Guidance updates

An Inter-agency Group (IAG) on Career Guidance was established in 2021 to bring coherence to information and engage in joint activities related to career guidance. Outputs to date from the group include the publication of 'Investing in Career Guidance'³⁵ (2021) and the Global Careers Month³⁶ which promoted global and regional level events in partnership with professional career guidance associations (2022). A planned output for 2023 is a joint statement on 'Career Guidance for Workers'.



³⁴ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3013_en.pdf

³⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8409&furtherPubs=yes>

³⁶ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/global-careers-month>

European Classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO)

ESCO³⁷ was explained as a multi-lingual dictionary describing, identifying and classifying relevant EU labour market professional occupations and skills with the aim of supporting intra-European mobility. It underpins the Europass platform.



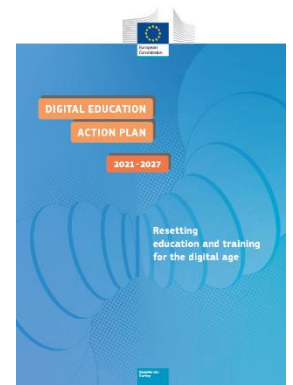
Recently, the Commission published ESCO v1.1.1³⁸, an updated version of ESCO which reflects minor updates in the database arising from feedback and review. Changes were made to the areas of green transition, digital transition, emerging technologies, the importance of transversal skills and artificial intelligence.

The Commission uses data science technologies such as statistical analysis, data science and machine learning to maintain and expand ESCO, and make its use easier for the end users.

European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC)

The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027³⁹ proposes the development of an internationally accepted EDSC under Priority 2 of the Plan. The certificate will be based on digital competence in the engagement with and use of digital technologies in the workplace, as an active citizen and as a learner.

A plan of study tasks and consultations⁴⁰ is in place for 2023 to determine a definition, operational mode, strategic implementation recommendations and pilot proposal for EDSC.



European Year of Skills

The purpose of the European Year was described as an opportunity to raise awareness across Europe about a particular topic or theme.

A shortage of staff and skills gaps led the Commission to propose that 2023 is designated as the European Year of Skills⁴².

³⁷ <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en>

³⁸ <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/news/esco-v111-live>

³⁹ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

⁴⁰ <https://edsc-consultation.eu/>

⁴¹ <https://all-digital.org/certification-cop/>

⁴² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=10431&furtherNews=yes> -
:~:text=The%20Commission%20has%20adopted%20today,people%20and%20the%20EU%20economy.



The European Year of Skills aims to

- Promote a positive attitude to re/upskilling in employers and the labour force.
- Match aspirations and skills-set of the labour force with labour market opportunities thus boosting the competitiveness of companies, particularly SMEs.
- Realise digital and green transitions in a socially fair, inclusive and just manner.
- Attract skilled people from non-EU countries to Europe.

Member States, international, national, regional and local organisations, institutions and stakeholders will be involved in the **European Year of Skills**; promoting relevant EU initiatives, organizing events and awareness raising campaigns, and promoting tools and instruments for increased transparency and recognition of qualifications.

Social media hashtag [#EuropeanYearOfSkills](#)

The keynote presentation concluded by highlighting the priority areas of addressing skills shortages, green and digital transitions and skills activation.





*10th Meeting of the
Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies
of the Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science*

Agenda

Date:

**Wednesday 1st
February 2023**

Time:

9.30am – 13.00pm.

**Venue: Liffey Suite,
The Ashling Hotel,
D08 P38N**

Online Registration available until
27th January 2023 ([here](#))

8.45 Registration

9.30 Welcome

Session 1 - Poster Updates

- *Erasmus+ Adult Education, School, VET and Youth, Deirdre Finlay, Léargas*
- *Higher Education, Sheena Duffy, HEA*
- *European Qualifications Framework, Orla Barry, QQI*
- *ENIC-NARIC and recognition Andrina Wafer, QQI*
- *Qualifications Information and Learning Opportunities, Angela Lambkin, QQI*
- **Q & A**

11:00 Networking Break

11.15 Session 2 – New Agenda for Skills and Qualifications

Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director of Learner Support, SOLAS

- *European Commission Presentation*

Speaker: Koen Nomden, Team leader "Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications", European Commission.

12.30 Q & A/ Panel Discussion/AOB

1.00 Close & lunch

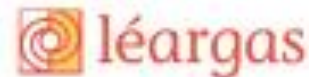
Secretary: Anne Higgins

Welcome

10th Meeting of the of the Irish EU Reference Group
of Agencies of the Department of
Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Wednesday 1st February 2023

Venue | The Ashling Hotel, 10 - 13 Parkgate St, Stoneybatter, Dublin 8, D08 P38N





QQI

Welcome

‘offering the potential to share our thinking, shape our national responses together, and multiply the impact of what we do individually’



Poster Updates

Erasmus+ Adult Education, School, VET and Youth, Deirdre Finlay, Léargas

Higher Education, Sheena Duffy, HEA

European Qualifications Framework, Orla Barry, QQI

ENIC-NARIC and Recognition, Andrina Wafer, QQI

Qualifications Information and Learning Opportunities, Angela Lambkin, QQI

Q & A

11:00 Networking Break

Session 2 – New Agenda for Skills and Qualifications

Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director of Learner Support, SOLAS

European Commission Presentation – *“Update on EU developments in skills and qualifications”*

Speaker: Koen Nomden, Team leader Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications, European Commission.

12.30: Q & A/ Panel Discussion/ AOB

13:00 Close and Lunch

Secretary: Anne Higgins



Agenda

Speakers

Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education, VET and Youth
Deirdre Finlay, Léargas



European Qualifications Framework,
Orla Barry, QQI



Higher Education,
Sheena Duffy, HEA



ENIC-NARIC and Recognition,
Andrina Wafer, QQI



Qualifications Information
and Learning Opportunities,
Angela Lambkin, QQI



European Commission Presentation

Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director of Learner Support, SOLAS



Speaker: Koen Nomden, Team leader Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications European Commission



10th Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group
of Agencies of the DFHERIS

1 February 2023

Venue: The Ashling Hotel, D08 P38N

Thank you





Léargas manage national and international programmes in youth work, education and training including **Erasmus+**, **European Solidarity Corps** and **eTwinning**

 léargas



Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027

Priorities



Inclusion and Diversity

Digital Transformation

Environment and fight against climate change

Participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement



Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds.



Two Principal Actions



Key Action 1:
Learning Mobility of Individuals

Key Action 2:
Cooperation Among Organisations & Institutions

Key Action 1: Learners



Individual Learner Mobilities Schools/Adult/VET
Short term and Long-term options available

Group Learner Mobilities School/Adult (2-30 days)

VET Skills Competitions (1-10 days)

Key Action 1: Other Opportunities



Invited Experts (2-60 days)

Preparatory Visits

**Hosting teachers and
educators in training
(10-365 days)**

**Inclusion Support
(accompanying people & practical supports)**

Timelines for KA1 Projects

Short Term Projects

Application Date:

23 February 2023

Likely 2nd deadline in Oct 2023

Accreditation

Application Date:

19 October 2023

If successfully accredited ->
Apply for budget in February 2024

Accreditation lasts until 2027

Key Action 2



Developing Publications
& Programmes

Teaching, Learning &
Training Events

Meetings

PARTNERSHIP

Research

Conferences &
Seminars

Piloting

KA2: What Funding is Available?

Small-Scale Partnerships

Between 6 and 24 months

Minimum 2 organisations
from 2 different Countries

€30,000 - €60,000

Cooperation Partnerships

Between 12 and 36 months

Minimum 3 organisations
from 3 different Countries

€120,000 - €250,000 - €400,000

Next deadline: 22 March 2023

New Developments



Commission Targets – regarding inclusion, newcomers, projects addressing the green priority etc.

New aspects - long term pupil mobility for schools, accreditation, apprenticeships, adult learners, small scale partnerships.

Key priorities for us in 2023 – making mobility the norm! ADU and VET mobility focus. Quality partnership projects!

E+ Budget growth – tripling by end of 2027 (topped up/front loaded budget 2023)

Synergies within Léargas – ETD Team (EPALE, eTwinning, CASE Project)



Roadshows and events. We want to meet you!





Adult Education

Jemma Lee

jlee@leargas.ie

01 8871208



School Education

KA2: Deirdre O'Brien

dobrien@leargas.ie

01 8871217



**Vocational Education
& Training**

KA1: Elva Duggan

eduggan@leargas.ie

01 8871225



School Education

KA1: Dara McIntyre

dmcintyre@leargas.ie

01 8871213



**Vocational Education
& Training**

KA2: Siobhán Wallace

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School Educ/Cross

KA1: Carol Anne Yorke

cayorke@leargas.ie



EU Reference Group of Agencies
1st February 2023

National and European Policy Context

HEA Act 2022

- promote co-operation and collaboration with regard to higher education (including with regard to the provision of student places and the enrolment of students) with authorities having responsibility for higher education in Northern Ireland, including the promotion of co-operation between designated institutions of higher education and institutions of higher education **in Northern Ireland,**
- promote co-operation and collaboration with regard to higher education (including the provision of support and funding for projects and initiatives) with authorities having responsibility for higher education in places outside the State, including the promotion of such co-operation by designated institutions of higher education with institutions of higher education **in places outside the State**

National and European Policy Context

Higher Education System Performance Framework 2023 – 2027

		KEY THEMES				
Indicative HEI responses	Teaching and Learning	Research and Innovation	International	Access and Participation	Engagement	
TRANSVERSAL THEMES	Skills	<i>Ireland's National Skills Strategy 'Adult Literacy for Life' - a 10-year adult literacy strategy Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025</i>	<i>Impact 2030: Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy</i>	<i>Review of international education strategy, 2016 to 2020</i>	<i>National Access Plan, 2022 to 2028 Adult Literacy for Life Apprenticeship Action Plan</i>	<i>Student Success Enterprise Skills Public Policy</i>
	Sustainability	<i>2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030</i>	<i>ESD Strategy Capital DNSH principles</i>	<i>ESD Strategy</i>	<i>Capital – universal design</i>	<i>ESD Strategy</i>
	Student Success	<i>Student Success strategies Academic Integrity Wellbeing</i>	<i>Access Diversity Wellbeing</i>	<i>Student Success strategies</i>	<i>Student Success strategies</i>	<i>Student Success strategies</i>
	Enterprise & Society	<i>Skills Strategy</i>	<i>Impact 2030 Creating Our Future</i>	<i>National Access Plan</i>	<i>National Access Plan</i>	<i>Apprenticeship Action Plan</i>
	Region	<i>Skills Strategy</i>	<i>National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027</i>	<i>FDI, Ireland 2040</i>	<i>National Access Plan</i>	<i>Apprenticeship Action Plan</i>
	Digital Transformation	<i>Skills Strategy</i>	<i>National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027</i>	<i>Student Success strategies</i>	<i>National Access Plan, 2022 to 2028</i>	<i>Apprenticeship Action Plan</i>
	Institutional Culture	<i>Academic Integrity</i>	<i>Athena Swan Research Integrity Export Control EDI</i>	<i>Research Integrity Export Control EDI</i>	<i>National Access Plan EDI</i>	<i>Review of Gender Equality SVH in higher education Race Equality Report Survey of Staff Experiences of Bullying</i>

- Institutions will identify priorities and targets with respect to the framework's key themes, cross referencing transversal themes as appropriate to the institution.
- Indicative areas for cross reference are included in the framework

National and European Policy Context

Awaiting new International Education, Research and Innovation Strategy

The establishment of DFHERIS offers the opportunity to bring the international education strategy and the research and innovation strategy together in an aligned framework

- (a) Develop talent and skills and promote research, knowledge, and innovation
- (b) Succeed on a world stage
- (c) Support learning for all and good governance to enhance quality
- (d) “Fit-for-purpose” structures

National and European Policy Context

- The European Universities Initiative is an initiative introduced and mainly funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme with the aim to strengthen the strategic partnerships of European universities and increase the international competitiveness of European higher education.
- HEIs can only be a member of one alliance
- Irish HEIs are a partner in 11 alliances
- Network of alliances established

2023 Budget

- KA131 – student and staff mobility ↑ 3.6%
- KA171 – International credit mobility
- KA220 – cooperation partnerships ↑ 45%
- Ukraine



Key Action 171 Funding



International Credit Mobility (ICM) supports the mobility of individuals enrolled or employed at a higher education institution (HEI), from a Programme Country to a Partner Country or vice versa, namely:

- Student mobility for studies,
- Student mobility for traineeships,
- Staff mobility for teaching for academic staff and for invited staff from non-academic organisations to teach at a partner higher education institution (HEI) abroad.
- Staff mobility for training for teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences), job shadowing, observation periods and/or training at a partner HEI.

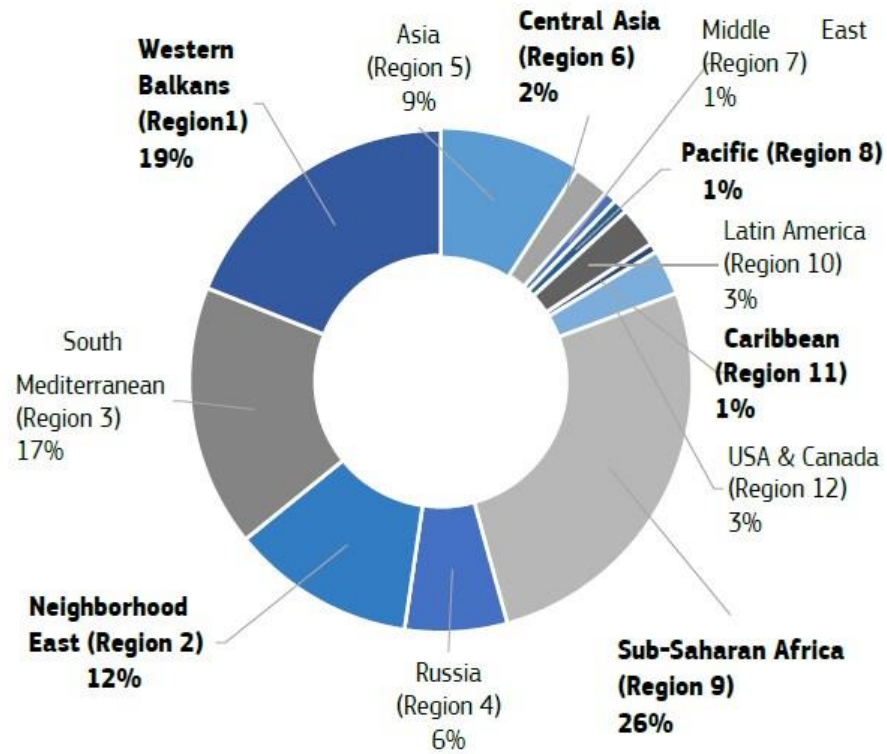


Key Action 171 Funding



- The EU budget available for this action is split into 12 discrete 'envelopes' corresponding to the regions of the world, covered by the EU's external financing instruments.
- The size of each envelope is set according to the EU's external action priorities, with some regions benefitting from bigger budget envelopes and therefore funding more mobilities.
- The largest budgets are allocated to Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU's neighbourhood regions – East and South, and the Western Balkans.





Funding Breakdown 2022



Erasmus+

- We did not receive any applications for Western Balkans.
- We did not exhaust funding for Neighbourhood East.
- All other regions were oversubscribed.

HEA

AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Europass & EQF-NCP



10th Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

1 February 2023



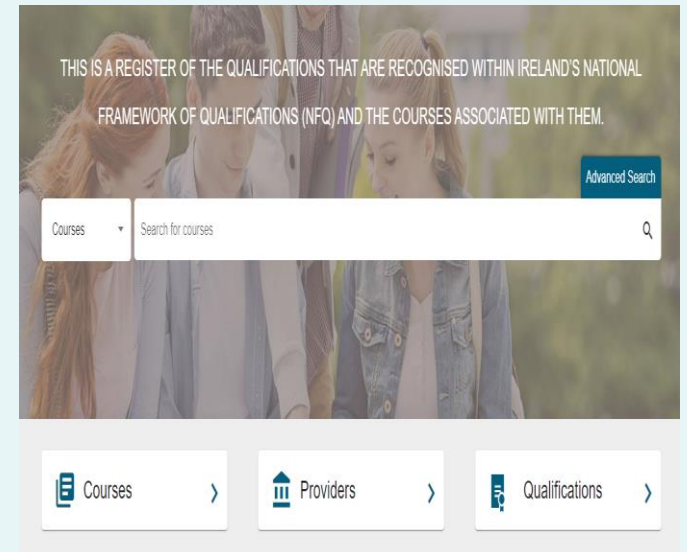
EQF-NCP Project 2021-2023

Progress

- Scheme for **Listed Awarding Bodies** to include non-formal sectoral and international awards in the NFQ - launch in **September 2023**
- Mark 20th anniversary of NFQ – **November 2023**
- Review of ATP Practice in Ireland – **August 2023**
- Ongoing update of IRQ including review of current IRQ & plan for future development – **July 2023**

IRQ

- 11356 Qualifications.
- 249 Providers.
- 15 designated awarding bodies completed an upload to the IRQ in 2022. Including the recently established Technological Universities.
- Data transfer from IRQ to the European QDR took place January 2023.
- The IRQ continues to grow its audience with **8432 new users** in 2022. An increase of over 5000 for the same period in 2021.



EQF for Lifelong Learning – Open Consultation

- The European Qualifications Framework is a driving force making qualifications in Europe easy to understand, compare and use. How can transparency of qualifications in Europe be further improved? Now is the time to share your view.
- Open until 22 March 2023 – please share with your network
- [European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning - evaluation \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-qualifications-framework-for-lifelong-learning-evaluation)

The UK and Ireland Qualifications Frameworks Group 5 Countries

- Regulators, QA bodies & government share information & intelligence about our national frameworks of qualifications.
- Ensuring common understanding and supporting coordination and collaboration on topics and issues of mutual interest
- Produces Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries Leaflet
- Annual Meeting – Jan 2023



- Compares qualifications across national boundaries.
- Major qualifications at each level are broadly compared across jurisdictions.
- Includes apprenticeships
- [Qualifications can Cross Boundries 2019.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

Qualifications can Cross Boundaries

A guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland

How to use this leaflet:

- This leaflet provides information that allows you to look at the ways qualifications are organised in the UK and Ireland.
- It shows which qualifications in other countries are broadly comparable in terms of the level of challenge to your qualifications (or those that you are interested in taking).
- On the left side of the principal table you will find the main stages of education or employment – you can find where you are in these stages.
- To the right of this you can see the nearest levels and similar kinds of qualifications that are used in the other countries.
- This makes it possible to draw broad comparisons in terms of the level of challenge, rather than direct equivalences, between qualifications and their levels for each country.
- The back page indicates how UK and Irish qualifications frameworks relate to qualifications frameworks in Europe.
- This leaflet is updated periodically. Check one of the websites for the most up-to-date version.

EQF-NCP Ireland



Thank you
obarry@qqi.ie
kkeogan@qqi.ie





QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Highlights in EU Initiatives and actions in Recognition nationally (RPL, NARIC): 2023

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- **2012 Council Recommendation** on the validation of non-formal and informal learning is a key driver
 - Supported by
 - European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning ([European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](#)) and
 - Bi-annual Country and thematic Inventories monitor progress in implementation, inform next steps ([Validation of non-formal and informal learning | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](#))
 - Peer Learning Activities such as e.g. a Validation Festival and other events
 - Following extensive consultation (international survey, interviews with stakeholders, collaborative workshops, support of a sub-working group of the EQF Advisory group and other experts) a revised version of the European Guidelines is pending publication
 - Work on the **Country Inventory** has begun- **support the work** by ensuring that RPL policies, publications, reports, case studies and contact details are up to date and visible on Institutional, Provider, Competent Authority and Representative Association websites
 - **Thematic reports** will explore developments in validation as an integrated part of national skills policies, validation initiatives to support Ukrainian refugees, validation in the green and sustainable economies and systems to increase awareness of opportunities for validation of non-formal and informal learning- ‘Outreach’
 - **Key questions** nationally are framed in terms of progress from our last Inventory. The inclusive transparent engagement of diverse stakeholders with the RPL Practitioner Network Ireland makes it easier for us to connect and support nationally and internationally, sharing opportunities. ([Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Practitioner Network Ireland - National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#))
 - **National ambition** is high for RPL- commitment in the Programme for Government, QQI’s Corporate Plan and Sectoral Plans working in synergy.
-



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The National Academic Recognition and Information Service: NARIC

- [Recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie)
- Established as a result of the Lisbon Recognition Convention- binding obligations
- Part of the European Network of Information Centres in the European region (ENIC)
- A free, online database of over 1600 Comparability Statements for Qualifications from over 160 Countries globally
- Comparability Statements (CS) are advisory and non-binding because recognition decisions are made by an ecosystem of 'competent authorities'- e.g. employers, professional bodies, admissions officers. CS advise against the level and award type on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications.
- Guides to using the service are published in 10 languages
- Advice is given on how to connect with the relevant professional body if the qualifications are associated with 'professional practice'
- We work with other colleagues across the ENIC NARIC network to support continued development and sharing of practices and learning through Erasmus+ project work.
- Our priority work in 2022 centred around supporting refugees, asylum seekers and people who have been displaced by war and other emergency situations.
- [Ambulance Bearers 2022 John Behan RHA 'The way it is Ukraine and other Sculptures](#)



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Lisbon: our statutory obligations

Article VII

- *Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.*

2017 Recommendation & Explanatory memorandum

- Qualifications should be recognised unless a substantial difference is shown
- Assessment is an entitlement for access purposes
- The 2010 Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the assessment of Foreign Qualifications applies where qualifications cannot be fully documented
- Includes periods of study
- [CETS 165 - Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(coe.int\)](#);
- [Woman with suitcase 2022, John Behan RHA, 'The way it is: Ukraine and other Sculptures, 2022](#)



Council of Europe: European Qualifications Passport for Refugees

European Qualifications Passport for Refugees No 0123¹
Assessment Part

Issued: 14.03.2017
Valid through: 14.03.2022

Personal information

Surname: Wazry
Given names: Ahmad
Father's name: Alway
Mother's name: Raboo
Date of birth: 28.08.1983
Place of birth: Deir Ez-Zor, Syria
Nationality: Syria

Assessed qualifications
Highest achieved qualification: (2011) Bachelor in Electrical Engineering, University of Damascus, Syria²

Additional relevant information from the applicant
Languages: Arabic (native speaker), Arabic (language of instruction), English (language learned)
Work experience: 5 years of teaching experience in Syria³

Member and documenter assessment is certified by member institutions from CECHEG participating in the project.

INSTITUTION	INSTITUTION CONTACT PERSON
Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2
Signature	Signature

¹ European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a non-legal document (an assessment) to be reviewed, signed and stamped, for a document intended to be of help in connection with applications for employment, training and studies. The indicator is based on publicly documented facts and a structured interview with a professional certified evaluator. This document is only valid together with the application part.
² The academic documentation.
³ The academic documentation.



- The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees
- Bologna (2020); new legal instrument - Council of Europe/ MS by end 2023
- Coordinated by the Council of Europe, individual applications directly to them
- Process results in a **standardised document** outlining educational level, work experience, and language proficiency
- Through a panel-based (2) evaluation process involving a structured interview and assessment of available documentation (background paper)
- Twenty participating Countries, sharing and growing expertise
- *Supported by UCD, UL, MTU(Cork), RPL in HE, NARIC Ireland- Training from Spring 2023*

Assuring Fair Recognition, enhancing transparency tools

- Key European Recommendations with significant implications for Recognition policy, practice and procedures
- Automatic Recognition
 - Bologna processes for higher education
 - Upper secondary and training qualifications giving access to HE
 - Without prejudice to admissions criteria and verification processes
 - Section 3,4 and 7 set out obligations on NARICs as part of the ecosystems developing guidance, course catalogues, recognition criteria and Diploma Supplements and support in implementing and monitoring implementation, and dissemination of information to reduce administrative burdens etc. The objective is to develop the capacity and strengthen the role of National Academic Recognition.
 - Nationally our approach to recognition is very much a distributed one.
- Micro-credentials
- [early-exploration-into-micro-credentials-in-higher-education-2014-20.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)
- The HCI project provides for ‘the design and recognition of Irish micro-credentials’
- Notwithstanding a strong national integrated policy response, the Recommendation specifically addresses NARICS:

‘fostering the ENIC-NARICs role in the recognition of micro-credentials for further studies and/or employment purposes including by developing guidance and training’



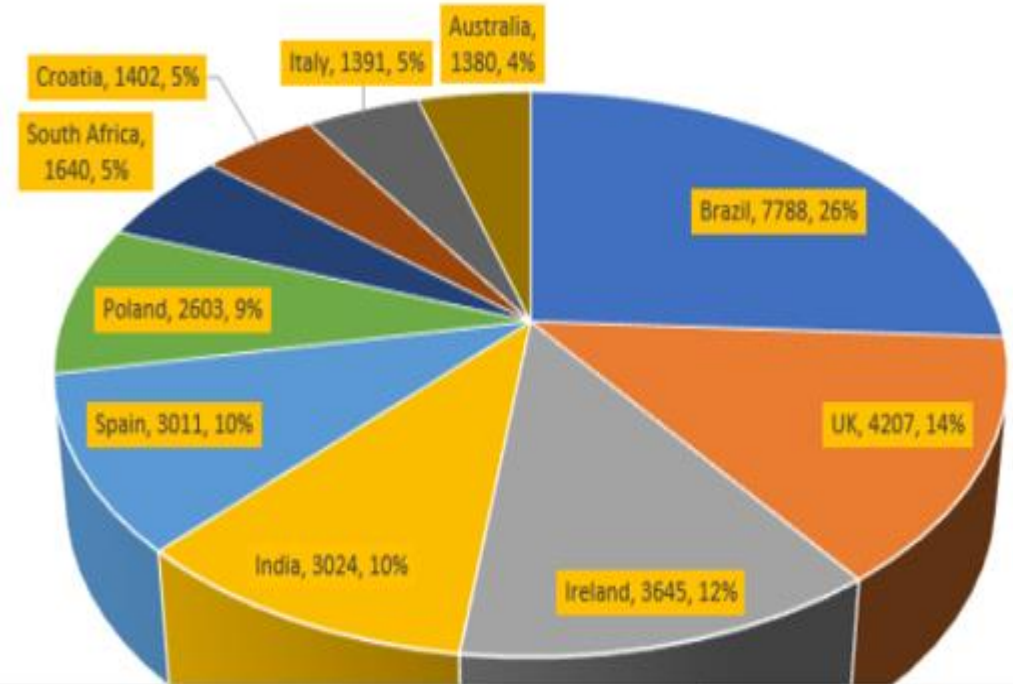
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Going Global...

- A new Global Recognition Convention has come into effect - deepening opportunities for recognition
- [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education | UNESCO](#)
- Additionally there are 5 Regional Recognition Frameworks supporting UNESCO regions:
- [Africa - ENIC-NARIC](#)
- [Arab States - ENIC-NARIC](#)
- [Asia and the Pacific - ENIC-NARIC](#)
- [Europe and North America - ENIC-NARIC](#)
- [Latin America and the Caribbean - ENIC-NARIC](#)

QSearch NARIC
Top 10 page views by country (2021)



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

The myth of stasis- recognition infrastructure matters.

- 103M people are forcibly displaced
- 53.2M people are internally displaced,
- 32.5M people are refugees
- 5.3M people need international protection
- 4.9M of us are asylum seekers

More than 7 out of 10 people who need International Protection come from just 5 countries:

- Syria
- Venezuela
- Ukraine
- Afghanistan
- South Sudan

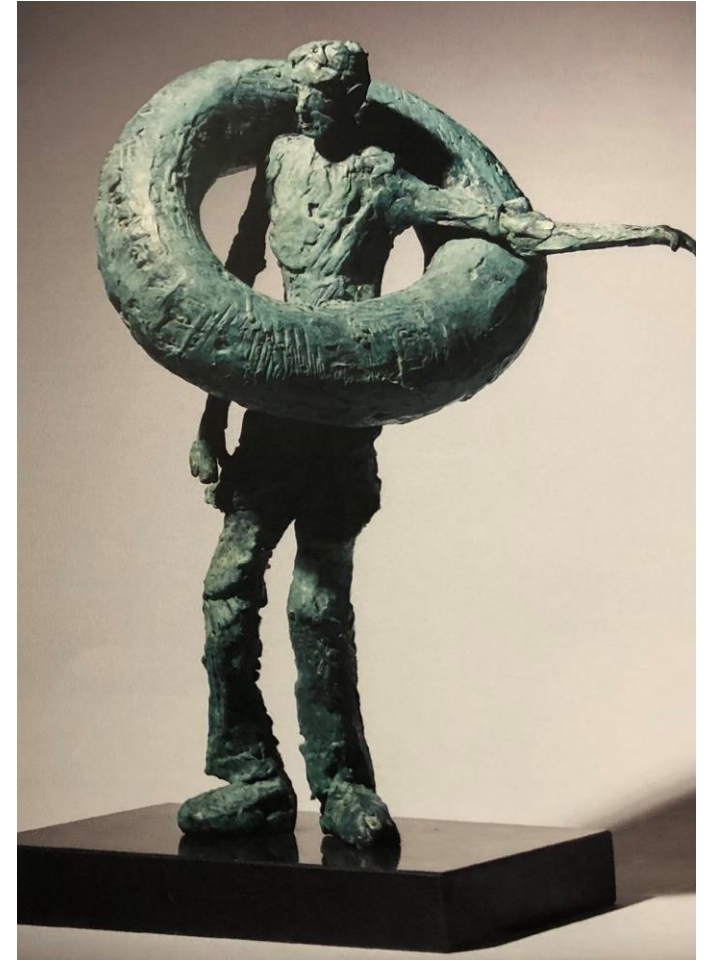
Most come with qualifications, including some which partially documented. Everyone has history.

NARIC Ireland has Comparability Statements for qualifications from each of these countries among our total 1500+, and 'Rough Guides' for Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan*.

[UNHCR - Refugee Statistics](#)

[Recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)

Boy with life tube III, John Behan RHA.



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Thank you!

awafer@qqi.ie



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



Europass – EQF NCP Project 2020 - 2023

QQI

- Series of shared work packages promoting Europass and the EQF
- New Europass has a long way to go in Ireland – mobility impacted by pandemic
- Feedback and evaluations ongoing by Commission
- New phase in 2024 with aligned EU Priorities

Shared work packages

- **EQF - NCP and Europass joint NFQ / IRQ/QDR project activities promoting across QQI stakeholders and beyond**
- **Establishing synergies with EU agencies – agencies Léargas, EURES – Dept Social Protection, European Commission Representation in Ireland, HEA, European Parliament Representation in Ireland as well as public and community voluntary bodies.**
- **Thank you**



Highlights 2022

Celebrate Europe Day 2022 – All about YOUth

A hybrid event organised by the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland, the European Commission Representation in Ireland, and Eurofound



Establish synergies with EU agencies



Interagency event



Irish Examiner

EU institutions keen to support Irish people pursuing jobs

Jobseekers invited to use Europass platform, a free personal and secure digital tool for learning and career development



Diploma Supplement

The ADDS UP project digitalization of the Diploma Supplement completed

Outputs: a training module, associated guidance material, and a survey stock-take report

Intended to support institutions who seek to offer their Diploma Supplements digitally these [materials are available here](#)

QQI and the National Europass Centre would welcome your feedback, which can be sent to info@europass.ie



QQI

Kinia Educator Credentials



Kinia Educator Credentials are stackable awards achieved by educators when they engage in our professional development training and demonstrate the activation of the new skill in their learning setting.

- ✓ European Digital Credentials for Learning
- ✓ Electronic Portfolio
- ✓ Portable
- ✓ Metadata
- ✓ Bilingual



www.kinia.ie/

2023

IUA and Micro-credentials pilot – QDR

**External engagements – IGC 2023,
Higher Options, Grad Ireland**





EU Skills policies developments, 10th Meeting of the Irish Reference Group of Agencies 1 February 2023

Presentation

Koen Nomden

*Team Leader – Transparency & Recognition of Skills and Qualifications
EC - DG EMPL - Skills Agenda Unit*

EU Skills Agenda 2020-25

1. A Pact for Skills including Blueprints

1000 members
14 large skills partnerships
Up- and reskilling 6 mln people

2. Strengthening skills intelligence

Cedefop OVATE (online tool)

3. National Skills Strategies

Three new national projects

4. Recommendation on VET

Council Recommendation adopted 2020

5. European Universities **Erasmus+**

6. Skills to support twin transitions

DEAP, rev. DigComp, GreenComp, Taxonomy green skills

7. STEM graduates, entrepreneurial and transversal skills

8. Skills for Life **Several actions**

Joining forces

Skilling for a job

Unlocking investment

Tools for lifelong learning

9. Individual learning accounts

Council Recommendation

10. Micro-credentials

Council Recommendation

11. Europass

12. Framework to unlock Member States' and private investments in skills

Study being launched

Micro-credentials - Scope

- Micro-credentials are not new. The CR establishes a **common European approach to the ongoing and emerging provision of micro-credentials**
- The CR covers micro-credentials, as well as their policies that can support their effective **design** and **use**.
- The CR does not seek to replace or disrupt existing systems or qualifications.

Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability

'Building Blocks'

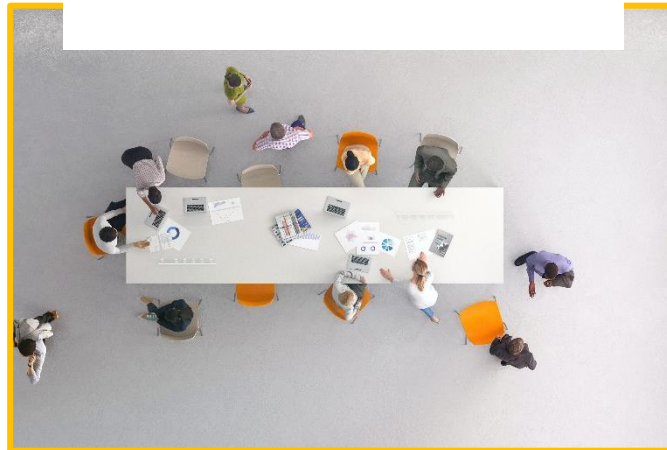


Common Definition of micro-credentials

Standard Elements

Principles for the design and Issuance of micro-credentials

Key areas for action

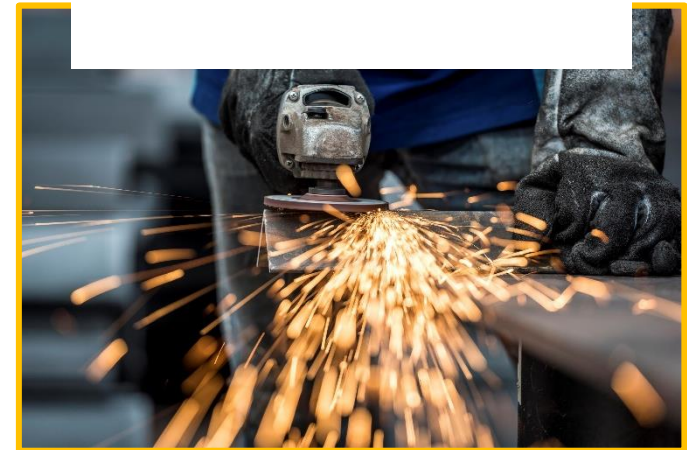


Development of ecosystems for micro-credentials

Deliver on the potential of micro-credentials

Commission Support

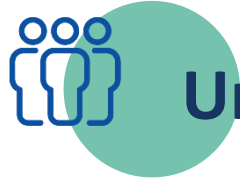
Focus



Education, training and skills policies

Active Labour Market Policies

Individual learning accounts



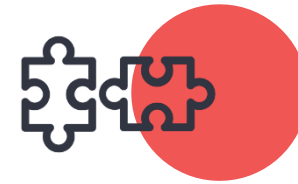
Universal but differentiated support



Use it in transitions from job to job or in times of unemployment



ILA



Accumulation & transferability of entitlements



Keep it **while temporarily abroad** and even use it from there

Update on Europass and digital credentials



Europass infosite

Presents information as described on the Europass decision and the first access point to register and use the digital tools.

e-Portfolio

Set of online tools & information to manage every step of your learning and career.

Jobs, Courses, and Qualifications Search

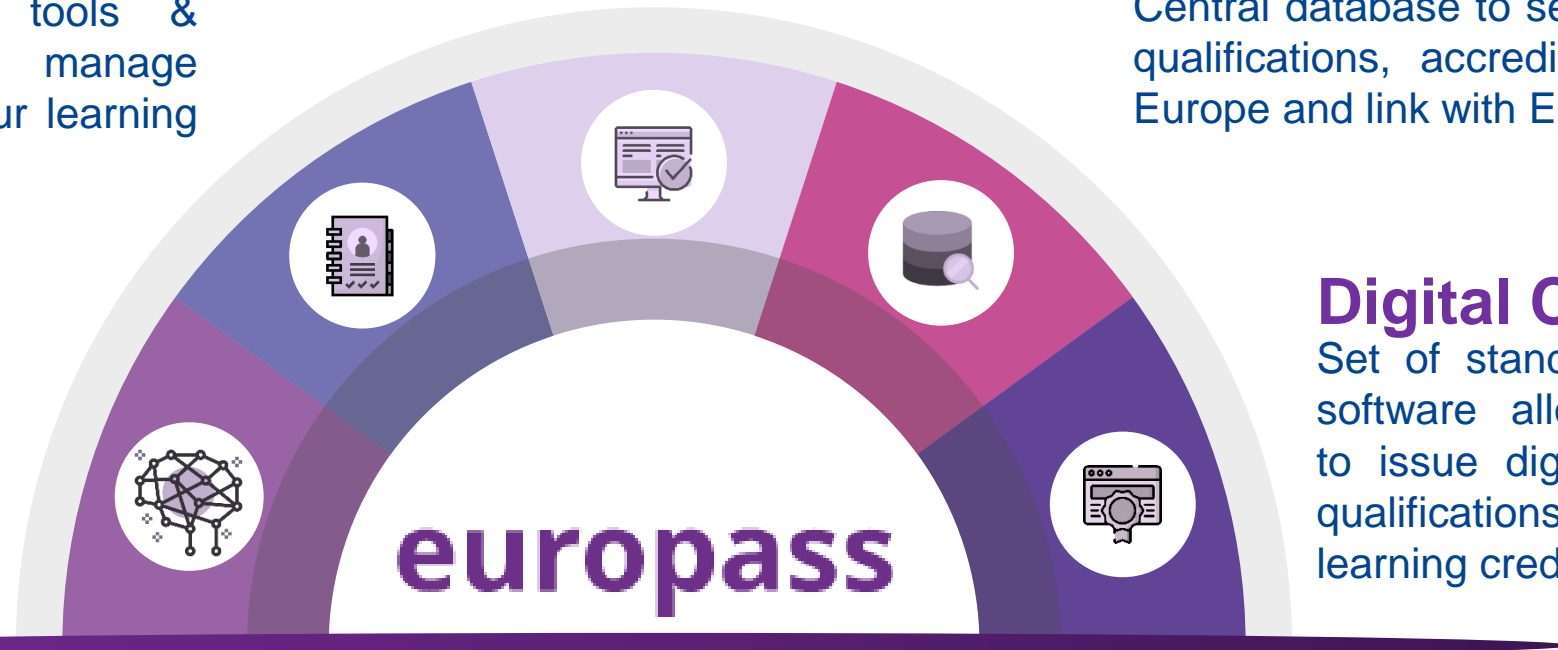
Central database to search for courses, qualifications, accreditation throughout Europe and link with EURES

Digital skills Test

Open-source tool to assess and improve digital skills. Based on the Digital Competence Framework.

Digital Credentials

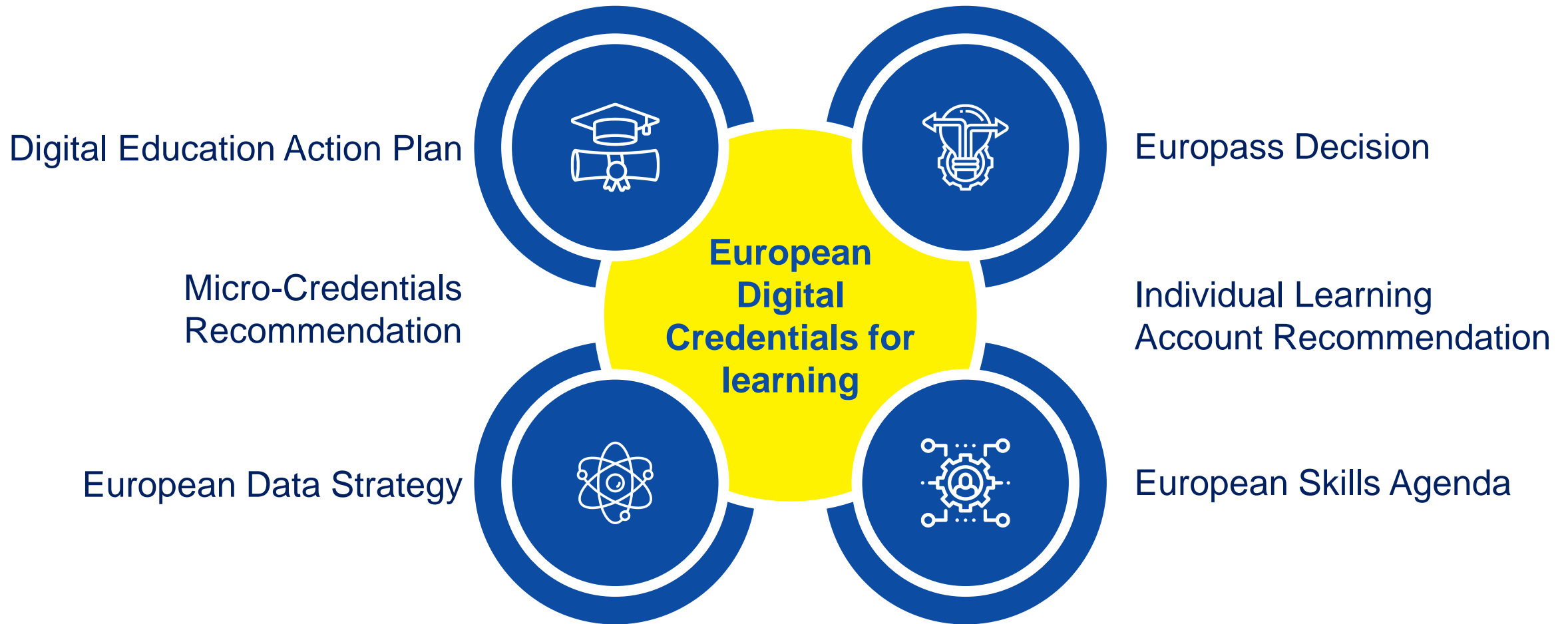
Set of standards, services & software allowing institutions to issue digital, tamper-proof qualifications and other learning credentials.



State of Play: Learning Opportunities

- **10** countries **published** data on learning opportunities (Belgium (NL) France, Greece, Norway, Malta, Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, Serbia, Sweden)
- **3** countries are in the **testing phase** in QDR (Croatia, Slovenia, Germany)





Completing the European Education Area (2025)

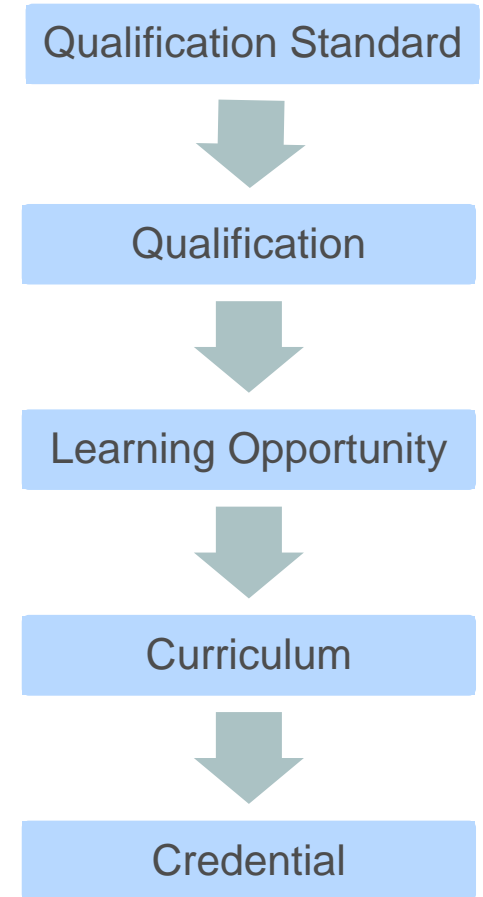
OBJECTIVES

- Empower citizens to own their credentials
- Reduce market fragmentation
- Create an EU Skills Data Space
- Make digital credentials multilingual by default
- Remove barriers to recognition
- Provide accreditation & transparency tools

BENEFITS

- Captures formal, non-formal & informal learning
- Addresses all levels of education
- Applicable to the whole course lifecycle
- Interoperable
- Aligned with European recognition instruments
- Free & open source

- A single data model which can be used at all stages of a learning lifecycle
- Can be applied to any educational/learning process, whether formal, non-formal or informal
- Includes information on accreditation (where relevant)
- ELM is used on the Europass platform & in other EC services (eg European Blockchain Service Infrastructure)
- ELM has the potential for a much wider use (Erasmus+ mobility, Single Digital Gateway)





europass

There's more on our agenda...

- *Application tracker*
- *New content – Lifelong Guidance*
- *More and better data on learning opportunities*
- *Europass Mobility*
- *Certificate supplement*
- *Skills intelligence*
- *Blockchain ledger for digital credentials*

EQF State of play?

- All 38 EQF countries have **national qualifications frameworks**
- 36 (soon 37) of them have **referenced** and 5 (+ UK) **re-referenced**
- 34 countries **indicate EQF levels** on certificates, diplomas or supplements,
- 22 countries **indicate EQF levels** on databases or registers of qualifications;
- Soon to come: publication of **EQF-Ukrainian QF** comparison
- **EQF evaluation** : public consultation ongoing until **22 March**
- **Work areas**: referencing updates, third country cooperation, international qualifications, qualifications outside formal E&T, learning outcomes (short descriptions), linking Q-registers to Europass, communication

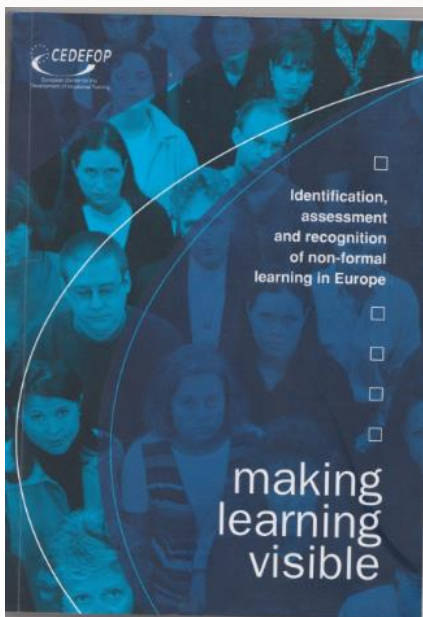
State of Play: Qualifications

- 19 countries published data on qualifications (BE (fr+nl), AT, CZ, DE, EE, EL, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, HU, PL, PT, SI, SE, IS, TR)
- 1 country is in the testing phase in QDR (HR)





Validation of non-formal and informal learning



Career guidance – latest updates

Inter-Agency Group on career guidance (Cedefop, COM, ETF, ILO, OECD, Unesco, World Bank) was set up 2021 with the aim of

- (i) coordinating activities and messages;*
- (ii) developing and implementing joint activities and products.*

Example: Joint leaflet on “Investing in career guidance” (2021):

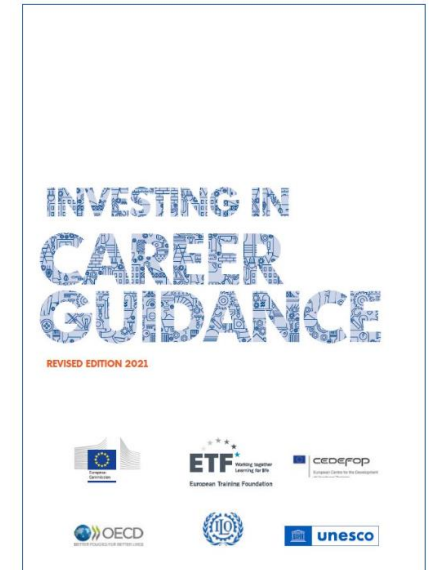
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8409&furtherPubs=yes>

Outputs for 2022:

1. Global Career Month 2022 (8 Nov-12 Dec)

Planned outputs for 2023:

Joint statement on “Career guidance for workers”



The European Classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations

ESCO works as a dictionary, **describing, identifying and classifying** professional occupations, skills, and qualifications relevant for the EU labour market and education and training.

ESCO is **multilingual**

esco.ec.europa.eu



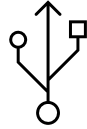
ESCO v1.1.1

Green transition



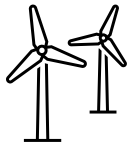
Identification of a **taxonomy of skills for the green economy**

Digital transition



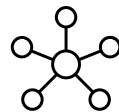
109 new concepts related to digital technologies

Emerging technologies



Focus on **occupations and skills for researchers**

Increasing importance of transversal skills



New model for **transversal skills and competences**

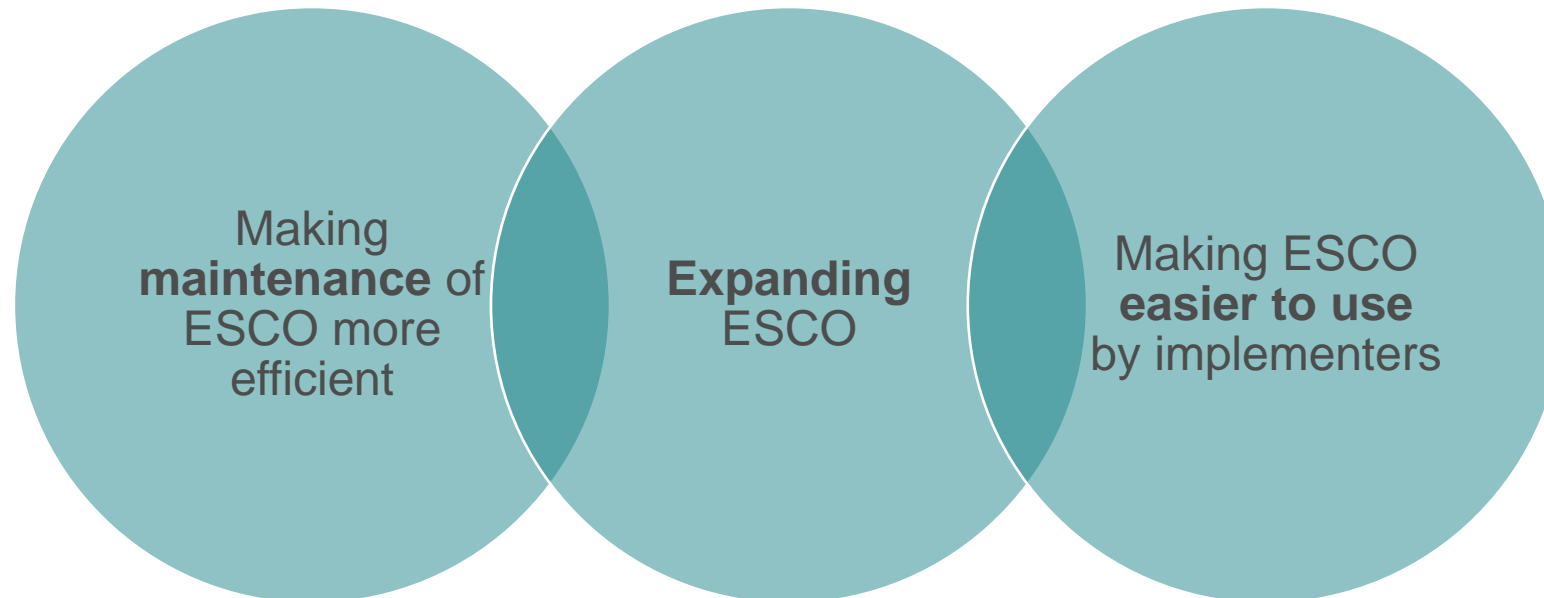
Artificial intelligence



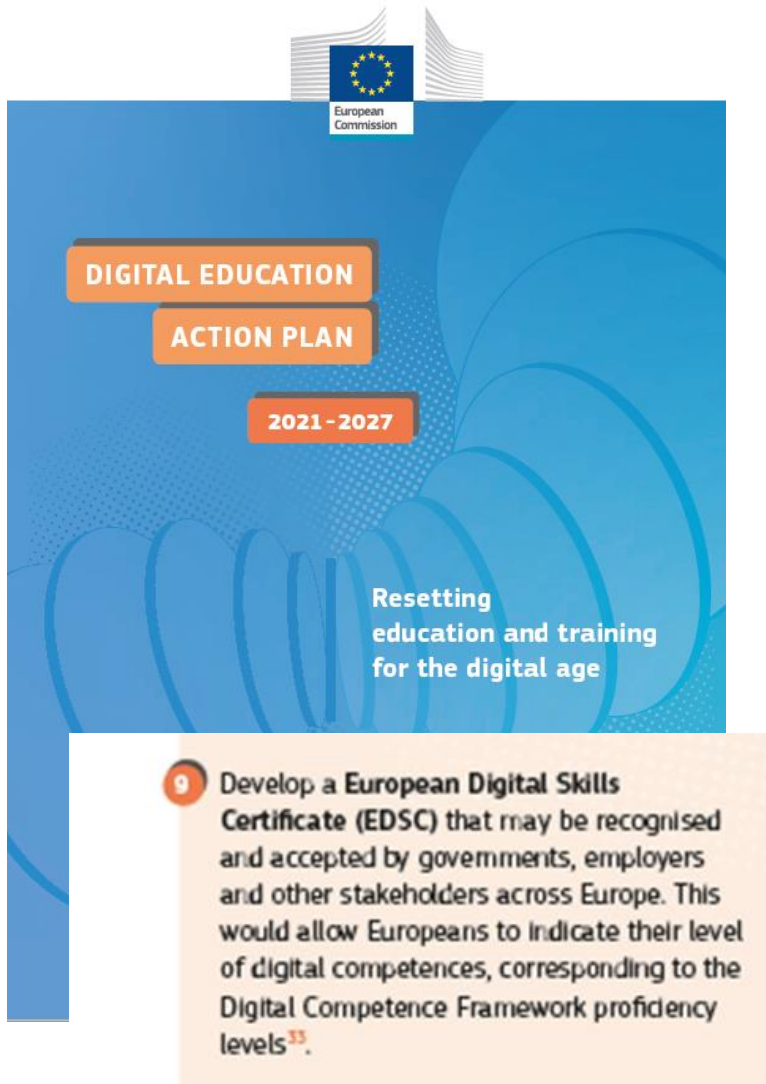
Application of artificial intelligence to improve efficiency of the continuous improvement process

Mission of Data Science for ESCO

Use an analytical approach based on statistical analysis, data science and machine learning to **assist** in:



EDSC - mandate



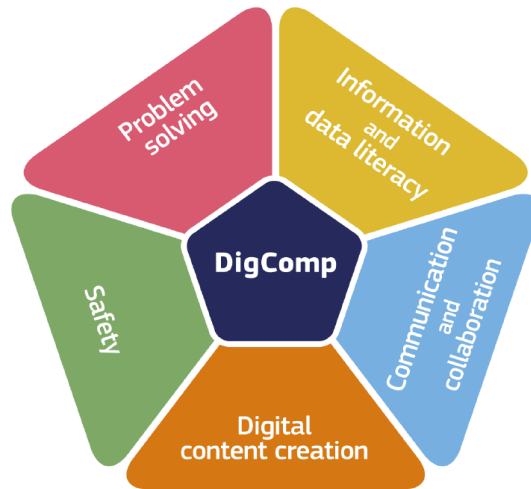
Action 9:

“Develop a **European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC)** that may be recognised and accepted by governments, employers and other stakeholders across Europe. This would allow Europeans to indicate their level of digital competences, corresponding to the Digital Competence Framework proficiency levels”.

The EDSC will be addressed to all European citizens and will be based on DigComp

Digital competence

involves the **confident, critical and responsible use** of, and engagement with, digital technologies for **learning, at work, and for participation in society**. It is defined as a combination of **knowledge, skills and attitudes**.



(Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Life-long Learning, 22 May 2018).

Areas

Competences

Information and data literacy

- 1.1. Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content
- 1.2. Evaluating data, information and digital content
- 1.3. Managing data, information and digital content

Communication and collaboration

- 2.1. Interacting through digital technologies
- 2.2. Sharing information and content through digital technologies
- 2.3. Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies
- 2.4. Collaborating through digital technologies
- 2.5. Netiquette
- 2.6. Managing digital identity

Digital content creation

- 3.1. Developing digital content
- 3.2. Integrating and re-elaborating digital content
- 3.3. Copyright and licences
- 3.4. Programming

Safety

- 4.1. Protecting devices
- 4.2. Protecting personal data and privacy
- 4.3. Protecting health and well-being
- 4.4. Protecting the environment

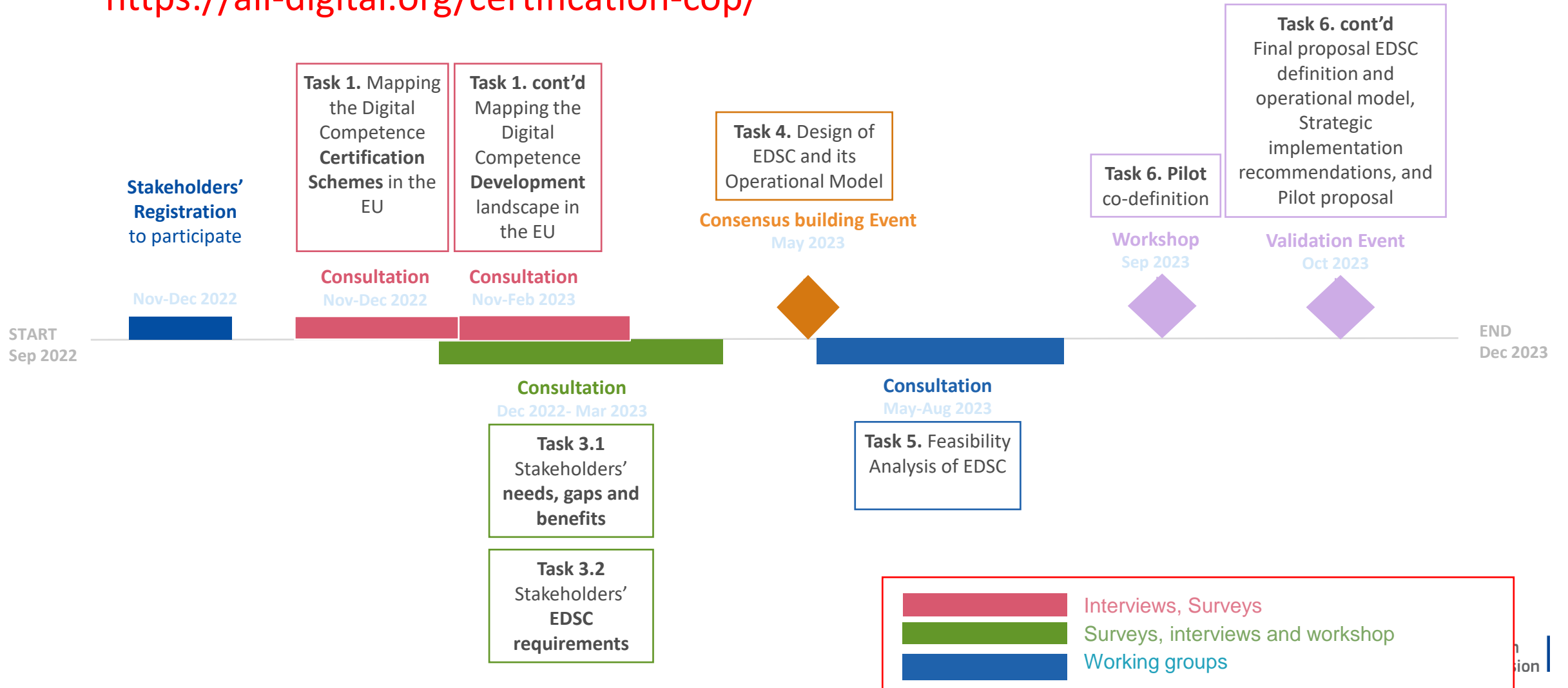
Problem solving

- 5.1. Solving technical problems
- 5.2. Identifying needs and technological responses
- 5.3. Creatively using digital technologies
- 5.4. Identifying digital competence gaps

Study tasks & consultations:

<https://edsc-consultation.eu/>

<https://all-digital.org/certification-cop/>



What is a European Year?

- The first European Year — the European Year of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Craft Industry — dates back to **1983**.
- European Years **raise awareness across the EU** about a particular topic. **Events and projects are organised to encourage debate and generate momentum.**

The logo for the European Year of Youth features the text "EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH" in white, bold, uppercase letters on a blue, speech-bubble-like background. The background is surrounded by a semi-circle of twelve blue stars, similar to the European Union flag.

**EUROPEAN
YEAR OF
YOUTH**

The logo for the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage features the text "2018 EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE" in white, uppercase letters on a teal background. A small European Union flag is positioned to the right of the year "2018". Below the main text is the hashtag "#EuropeForCulture".

2018 
**EUROPEAN YEAR
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE**
#EuropeForCulture

The logo for the 2015 European year for development features the text "2015" in white, uppercase letters on a yellow background. Below it, the text "European year for development" is written in white, uppercase letters on an orange background. A red background is at the bottom of the logo. To the left of the text is a small European Union flag.

2015
**European year
for development**

for development





*European companies are grappling with a **shortage of staff** [...] Both low-end and high-end. We need everyone on board.*

*We need much **more focus in our investment** on professional education and upskilling.*

*We need **better cooperation with the companies**, because they know best what they need.*

*And we need to **match these needs with people's aspirations**.*

*But we also have to **attract the right skills to our continent**, skills that help companies and strengthen Europe's growth [...] we need to speed up and facilitate the recognition of qualifications also of third country nationals [...]*

***This is why I am proposing to make 2023
the European Year of Skills.***

Why a European Year of Skills?

The Year would promote a mindset of reskilling and upskilling, boosting competitiveness of companies (in particular SMEs), realising the digital and green transitions in a socially fair, inclusive and just manner.



Investment

Increased, more effective and inclusive investment



Skills relevance

Strengthening skills relevance by close cooperation



Matching aspirations

Matching people's aspirations and skills-set with labour market opportunities



Attracting people

Attracting people from third countries with the skills needed by the Union

Who will be involved in the Year?

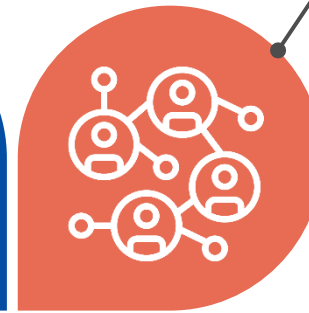
The European Institutions

- European Parliament
- European Commission: DG EMPL and other DGs: initiatives, support with communication and engagement
- EU policy agencies, such as CEDEFOP ELA and ETF
- Commission Representations and EP Information Offices
- CoR, EESC, EIB...



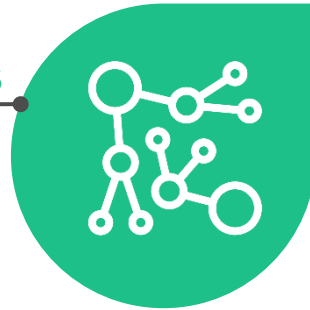
Member States

- Strong involvement of **Member States**.
- Appointment of **national coordinators** to raise awareness, shape the Year, coordinate actions.
- Close cooperation with the **Presidencies**.
- Implementing bodies such as ESF+ managing authorities



Existing platforms and networks

- Engaging a **wide range of stakeholders**
- Social partners
- Individuals, companies, chambers of commerce and industry, public authorities, education and training providers



International actors

- **OECD, UNESCO, ILO**
- Cooperation with **third countries**, in particular partner countries



State of play

The European Year of Skills 2023 will start as soon as the proposal is adopted

Before the Adoption:

- **Inter-institutional negotiations** (ordinary legislative procedure)
- Open **Public Consultation**
- **Opinions** by European Economic and Social Committee and European Committee of the Regions

During the Year:

- **Promoting relevant EU initiatives**, including EU funding opportunities
- **Events and awareness-raising campaigns**
- **Promoting tools and instruments** for increased transparency and easier recognition of qualifications

How can you get involved?

- Communication is key to European Years: spread the word and share updates on social media under the hashtag [#EuropeanYearOfSkills](#)
- Find [HERE](#) more information on the European Year of Skills
- Thank you for your interest! We look forward to collaborating with you to make the European Year of Skills a success.

Conclusions, reflections, discussion

Thank you!

Contact: koen.nomden@ec.europa.eu

10th Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group
of Agencies of the DFHERIS

1 February 2023

Venue: The Ashling Hotel, D08 P38N

Thank you



