

ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have.

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Digital Education Action Plan Update
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC)
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Commission Communication Accompanying Commission Staff Working Document
INDICATIVE PLANNING	September 2020
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Current Digital Education Action Plan

This Roadmap is provided for information purposes only and its content might change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Roadmap, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check

Context [max 10 lines]

The current EU framework for digital education was set in 2018 through the [Digital Education Action Plan 2018-2020](#). The Action Plan presents a coherent narrative on the role of education and training in the digital age and takes an action-oriented approach. The [Political Guidelines of the European Commission's President](#) set the priority of getting Europe up to speed on digital skills for both young people and adults by updating the Digital Education Action Plan. Through COVID-19, EU and the world have experienced an unprecedented challenge to their education and training systems, which led to a sudden and large-scale switch to digital education modes including online learning and teaching. However, most educators, learners and parents were not necessarily prepared to harness online learning nor able to deal with its limitations. Moreover, in some cases, the resources and infrastructure were simply not available. As a result, too many students were excluded. The Next Generation Communication of the Commission announced the adoption of the Digital Education Action Plan for Q3 2020 in the context of the recovery plan.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle [max 25 lines]

The COVID-19 crisis demonstrated that robust digital capacity and digital competences are essential for maintaining education continuity and social interaction. There is a consistent and pressing need to prepare for a future-proof education, invest in the skills that will shape it – and make education and training fit for the digital age.

The COVID-19 crisis exposed deficits in digital education regarding access, inclusion and equity, with learners depending on being able to access suitable digital devices, a reliable internet connectivity and a supportive learning environment. Teachers¹ were suddenly faced with the need to use and mediate technology to support the learning of pupils and students,

¹ Teachers should be defined here as meaning in its widest sense – all teaching and support staff, trainers, teaching assistants, school mediators

underlining the urgent need for all teaching professionals to acquire the competence and confidence to use technology effectively. The crisis has shown that Europe's education and training institutions urgently need support in boosting their digital capacity and readiness.

There are at least three issues to be tackled:

- 1. Digital capacity:** There is a need to overcome technology differences (infrastructure including laptops, tablets and access to broadband) and develop new organisational capabilities in education that support hybrid modes of learning and teaching (online + offline). Equity needs to be the driving force, with a view to increase access and reduce inequality while addressing divides driven by gender, socio-economic and urban/rural contexts.
- 2. Digital competences for the 21st century:** There is a need to provide support to educators and learners to enhance digital education practices. Teachers in particular need stronger support in mixing effectively online and offline learning depending on the learners' needs. There is also a need to develop a solid understanding of the digital world to be able to critically approach information and navigate an algorithm-driven web. Digital technologies can be better used for lifelong learning while innovation and practice are a core part of transforming the learning process.
- 3. Digital ecosystem of education content, tools and platforms:** Technology and competences alone are not sufficient for quality and inclusive education if the process itself does not change. Digital learning cannot take place by simply replicating what happens in the classroom or lecture. A trusted digital ecosystem that draws on both public and private resources requires quality content, user-friendly tools and secure platforms. It must include social aspects and maintain privacy and ethics. In supporting this evolving ecosystem we need continuous research on the role of data, cognitive development and emerging technologies in digital learning.

Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check) [max 10 lines]

The legal basis for the initiative is the education policy related Article 165 of the TFEU. The DEAP update will remain a key enabler of the future European Education Area. In the context of the European Education Area, the initiative will support Member States' efforts in developing and implementing relevant policies and mechanisms as appropriate to their national systems and structures that stimulate and support the development of digital education at all levels of education and training.

The initiative will be a policy document that does not propose extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States. Its European added value lies mainly in the ability of the EU to mobilise political engagement and support at national level to support education and training systems while fully respecting subsidiarity. It is essential to adapt education and training to the digital age and to promote learning and knowledge exchange, drawing on the best European practices to drive change and using existing EU tools and instruments.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how [max 25 lines]

As part of the Next Generation EU strategy, the updated Digital Education Action Plan is an important part of the recovery from the COVID-19 shock. It will provide a coherent and integrated framework for addressing the gradual transition of education and training to the digital age by addressing challenges in education and training arising from the COVID-19 crisis and the overarching digital transformation.

The Action Plan will help steer specific interventions through Commission programmes such as Erasmus, Digital Europe, Horizon Europe or the Structural Funds by informing specific programme priorities. It will present a long-term vision for its actions. It intends to include a coordination and implementation modality.

The Action Plan should offer a co-ordinated policy response at EU level that adds value to actions at Member State level. It should involve stakeholders at various levels (EU, national, regional, local) and involve more closely citizens in its future implementation.

The Action Plan will include a limited set of impactful actions addressing the need to strengthen:

1. Digital capacities for resilient education and training systems

Support could be offered to address access to technologies and infrastructure where needed. Specific support could possibly include digital capacity development of education and training institutions through cooperation, professional development, best practice exchange and organisational capabilities for developing new modes of digital education.

2. Digital literacy and competences for the 21st century

Measures could focus on support to the development of digital competences of educators and learners, including through a better understanding of the role of computing education. Digital skills training should include promoting the application of ethical standards in the use of data and artificial intelligence in education, supporting gender equality and facing disinformation and fake news

3. A trusted digital ecosystem of education content and tools

Actions could support innovative applications and address the need to increase the use of digital learning, including through supporting a trusted ecosystem of quality content, user-friendly and secure tools that help avoid confusion and maintain privacy and ethics. User-driven innovation, stakeholder engagement and strategic foresight should be integral part of the continuous innovation in education through digital means.

Digital education can be an important lever for the EU internationally through sharing of principles, tools and content. With its focus on people, in particular teachers and learners, the EU should lead by example with digital education that is rooted firmly on its values while embracing the opportunities of the digital age.

C. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders [max 10 lines]

Targeted consultations of stakeholders have taken place between February and April 2020 and included Member States, education and training stakeholders and representatives of international organisations, social partners, NGOs, organisations and associations with expertise in the field and/or working at all levels of formal and non-formal education, local and regional authorities, trade associations. To fully extract lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, a Public Consultation is being launched to identify the key needs and priorities that the Action Plan Update should address.

To this end, the Commission will address the following target groups:

- Citizens
- Parents
- Teachers and educators
- Learners
- Private sector

A synopsis report providing a summary of all consultation activities' results will be published in the Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication on the Digital Education Action Plan.

Evidence base and data collection [max 10 lines]

This initiative is supported by a solid evidence base that includes recent independent reports on the state of digital education in Europe, academic literature, survey data and implementation reports on the predecessor initiative.

The Action Plan Update will build on this knowledge, including, but not limited to:

- Public Consultation
- Targeted stakeholder consultations with education stakeholders, Member States, and the ET2020 Working Group
- [Eurydice report on Digital Education at School in Europe \(2019\)](#)
- [2018 International Computer and Information Literacy Study \(2019\)](#)
- [Commission 2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education \(2019\).](#)
- [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(2019\)](#)
- [Commission Report on PISA 2018 and the EU \(2019\)](#)
- [Joint Research Center Report on the impact of AI on Learning, Teaching and Education \(2018\).](#)
- [Joint Research Center Report on Makerspaces for Education and Training \(2018\)](#)
- Joint Research Center Report on Emerging technologies in support of educators 9 (forthcoming)
- PPMI, Prospective report on the Future of Assessment in Primary and Secondary Education (forthcoming)

An impact assessment is not considered necessary for the Action Plan Update. The actions foreseen in the initiative aim to directly support organisations and learners on the basis of voluntary participation and in the context of existing legislative and funding mechanisms. The initiative has a limited direct effect on Member State policies. However, potential impacts will be assessed as part of the Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication on the Digital Education Action Plan Update.

The Action Plan should be reviewed, possibly by 2024.