

Evaluation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways – preliminary findings

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#EUSkillsAgenda
#UpskillingPathways



Policy framework

2001 Council
Conclusions on the
follow up of the report
on concrete future
objectives of education
and training systems

2011 Council Resolution
on a renewed European
agenda for adult
learning

Council Resolution on a
new European agenda
for adult learning 2021-
2030

2016 New Skills Agenda
for Europe

European Pillar of
Social Rights

2020 European Skills
Agenda

PIAAC results

Links with other
initiatives, funding
instruments and tools

Policy framework - participation target



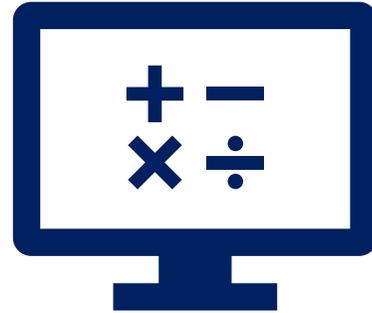
At least
60%
of all adults **should**
participate in training
every year by 2030

Rationale of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways



Target group

low skilled adults



Objective

Provide them with **opportunity to acquire:**

- minimum level of **literacy, numeracy and digital competence**
- and/or a wider set of skills
- and/or encourage them to make a **progress towards a qualification**



Rationale

Three-step personalised support

- Skills assessment
- Provision of tailored and flexible learning offer
- Validation and recognition of skills
- + outreach, guidance and support measures

About the evaluation

The Commission **took stock of the first phase** of implementation of measures and **published its results in the Commission Staff Working Document** on the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults **in 2019**.

The current evaluation responds to the Recommendation's invitation to the Commission to:

"Assess and evaluate, in cooperation with the Member States and after consulting the stakeholders concerned, **the actions taken in response to this Recommendation** and, within five years from the date of its adoption, **report to the Council on progress made towards raising the levels of literacy, numeracy and digital competence amongst low-qualified adults, experience gained and implications for the future"**.

About the evaluation



- Aim: To look into implementation in Member States, and assess progress made
- Reference period: 2016 - 2021
- Scope: EU 27
- Publication planned: approx. Q1 2023

Public consultation



Targeted consultations



Supporting study



Commission Staff Working Document/ Report from the Commission to the Council

Preliminary findings: Progress made

Overall moderate success of the Recommendation:

- **Member States have made progress in implementing the three steps** from the Recommendation, and there are moderate positive trends in relevant indicators. Some stakeholders view the Recommendation as a **catalyser for renewed focus on support for adults to acquire basic skills** and consider the three step-approach as a useful reference point.
- Where Member States have taken implementation measures, these measures **often lack scale and coordination** and cannot be linked to improvements at a “macro” level even where they are successful at a “micro” level
 - This is consistent with the finding of an often limited scale of implementation measures in the 2019 stocktaking report.

Preliminary findings: Progress made

- **Skills assessment** offers of some sort are **wide-spread across Member States**, but require more attention to staff professionalization and capacity and a non-stigmatizing integration with the other steps to realize their full potential. Skills assessment offers now exist in all Member States at least to some extent.
- Several Member States **have taken steps to improve the provision of tailored and flexible learning offers** to low skilled adults, but challenges remain due to insufficient funding to support the diverse target groups.
- Several Member States **have taken steps to improve their skills validation and recognition provisions** in relation to the implementation of the Recommendation, but they often remain insufficiently integrated into the rest of the education and training

Preliminary findings: Costs and benefits

- Stakeholders consider **the implementation costs as proportionate to the implementation benefits.**
- Implementation costs were mostly incurred by State, regional and municipal administrative bodies.
- **EU funds**, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), **have played a dominant role** in funding the implementation of the Recommendation during the evaluation period.
- Stakeholders report a **range of benefits** from implementation measures for individual learners, employers, and society at large.

Preliminary findings: Coherence with relevant policies, strategies and funding mechanisms

- Stakeholders consulted at both EU and national level consider the Recommendation to be **internally coherent**, with consistent objectives, recommendations and expected impacts.
- Stakeholders also report a high level of **coherence between the Recommendation and relevant policies and strategies at national and regional level.**
 - Challenges to coherent implementation at national level are an insufficient integration of the three steps from the Recommendation into a single pathway and a lack of strategic coordination.
- The Recommendation is also perceived to be **coherent with other relevant EU policies.**
- **Good coherence between the Recommendation and relevant**  **funding**  **mechanisms.**

Preliminary findings: Added value of the Recommendation and EU support

- increased the **policy attention** on low basic skills among adults
- provided a **common framework for national policy action**
- fostered **stakeholder collaboration** within and across Member States (e.g. via mutual learning, working group, EPALe etc.)
- and/or provided **funding and technical support** (e.g. ESF, Easi etc.)



Preliminary findings: Relevance of basic skills focus

- still far too many adults in the EU do not possess a functional level of these skills.
- digital transition has accelerated, partly due to the COVID-19 adaptation measures, and the EU has embarked on an ambitious “European Green Deal”.
 - Those trends increase the **importance of basic and other transversal skills as a foundation to manage change** at a personal level, and thrive on rapidly changing labour markets.
- Stakeholders are hence near unanimous in their view that the Recommendation’s objectives are still relevant.



Preliminary lessons learned

- **Recent socio-economic trends are increasing the importance of basic skills**, and there is a need to rethink skills development measures from the perspective of the diverse adults they aim to reach.
- There is a **need to devote sufficient policy attention and resources** to effective outreach, including through structural funding of adequate infrastructure
- There is a need to **move from good practice on a specific step of the Recommendation at small scale towards system level-reform backed by increases in domestic funding.**

