Achieving a European Education Area by 2025 and resetting education and training for the digital age

Brussels, 30 September 2020

Today, the Commission adopted two initiatives that will strengthen the contribution of education and training to the EU's recovery from the coronavirus crisis, and help build a green and digital Europe. **Setting out a vision of the [European Education Area](#) to be achieved by 2025, the Commission** proposes new initiatives, more investment and stronger cooperation of Member States to help all Europeans, of all ages, benefit from the EU's rich education and training offer. The Commission also adopted a new **[Digital Education Action Plan](#)**, reflecting lessons learned from the coronavirus crisis, and devising a plan for a high-performing digital education ecosystem with enhanced digital competences for the digital transformation.

The **Communication on the European Education Area** outlines how cooperation can further enrich the quality, inclusiveness and digital and green dimension of Member State education systems. It shows how together, Member States can shape a European Education Area based on freedom for learners and teachers to learn and work across the continent and for institutions to freely associate with one another in Europe and beyond.

The European Education Area is **underpinned by six dimensions**: quality, inclusion and gender equality, green and digital transitions, teachers, higher education, a stronger Europe in the world. Initiatives will *inter alia* look at ways to enhance quality, notably with regard to basic and digital skills and to make school education more inclusive and gender sensitive and improve school success. They will help strengthen understanding of climate change and sustainability, foster the greening of education infrastructure, support the teaching profession, further roll out European Universities and enhance connectivity among education and training institutions.

The Communication sets out the means and milestones to achieve the European Education Area by 2025, supported by **Europe's Recovery Plan (NextGenerationEU)** and the **Erasmus+ Programme**. In addition, it proposes a framework for cooperation with Member States and engagement with education stakeholders, including a reporting and analysis structure, with agreed education targets, to encourage and track reforms. Efforts to establish the European Education Area will work in synergy with the **European Skills Agenda**, the renewed **Vocational Education and Training policy** and the **European Research Area**.

The **Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)** proposes a set of initiatives for high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education in Europe. It is a call to action for stronger cooperation between Member States at European level, as well as with and between stakeholders, to make education and training systems truly fit for the digital age. The coronavirus crisis has put distance learning at the centre of education practices. This has shed light on the pressing need to improve digital education, as a key strategic objective for high-quality teaching and learning in the digital age. As we move beyond the emergency phase imposed by the outbreak of the pandemic, we need a strategic and longer-term approach to digital education and training.

The Action Plan has **two long-term strategic priorities**: (i) fostering the development of a **high-performing digital education ecosystem** and (ii) **enhancing digital competences** for the digital transformation. In order to strengthen the cooperation and exchange in digital education at EU level, the Commission will create a European Digital Education Hub, which will foster collaboration and synergies between policy areas relevant to digital education, create a network of national advisory services and strengthen the dialogue between stakeholders from the public and private sector.

Both initiatives will also feed into the third **European Education Summit**, which the Commission will host online on 10 December to bring Ministers and key stakeholders together to discuss how to make education and training fit for the digital era.

Members of the College said

Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe **Vestager**, said: "*Education and training have faced huge disruption due to COVID-19 and a quick shift to distance and online*

learning. The mass use of technology has revealed gaps and exposed weaknesses. This is also an opportunity to reset education and training for the digital age. 95% of respondents to the public consultation on the Digital Education Action Plan see the crisis as a turning point for the way technology is used in education and training. This is a momentum to shape and modernise education for the digital age."

Vice-President for Promoting the European way of live, Margaritis **Schinas**, said: *"Education is a mainstay of our European way of life. Our vision for the European Education Area is deeply rooted in the values of freedom, diversity, human rights and social justice. Together with the Digital Education Action Plan, we propose new initiatives to learn and work together across the continent. For our youth, for our citizens, for our prosperity."*

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel**, said: *"The European Education Area and the Digital Education Action Plan are both essential for European recovery and future growth. They set out a common vision of the future of education linked to our commitments towards the digital and green transitions. We now need to focus on implementation and on creating synergies between them."*

Background

The European Education Area is rooted in decades of education cooperation at EU level. The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) helped build trust and mutual understanding to support the earliest European Education Area initiatives.

In 2017, Heads of State and Government discussed education and training at the Gothenburg Social Summit, guided by the Commission's communication setting out its vision for a European Education Area by 2025. This resulted in December 2017 Council conclusions calling on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take forward the Gothenburg agenda. Many initiatives have already been developed. Based on this rich legacy, today's communication sets out a vision for the European Education Area, together with a reinforced approach in order to achieve it by 2025. The European Education Area also ties in with Next Generation EU and the long-term budget of the European Union for 2021-2027.

In that context, the Digital Education Action Plan is a cornerstone of the Commission's efforts to support the digital transition in Europe. It builds on the first Digital Education Action Plan adopted in January 2018, running to the end of this year. It is more ambitious in its reach, notably with a wider scope going beyond formal education, and with a longer duration, running until 2027

For more information

Factsheet – European Education Area

Factsheet – Digital Education Action Plan

Communication – European Education Area

Digital Education Action Plan

IP/20/1743

Press contacts:

> Susanne CONZE (+ 32 2 298 02 36)
> Sinéad MEEHAN - VAN DRUTEN (+ 32 2 298 40 94)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email