



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'A New Skills Agenda for Europe' {COM (2016) 381 final}.

In proposing this Communication, the Commission delivers on its commitments in its 2016 Work Programme to launch the Skills Agenda. The Agenda is intended to support upward social convergence and the sustainability of the European Social Model, contributing to the Commission's first political priority, "A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment".

Some of the specific proposals accompanying the Communication are currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

The points laid out in the Camera Deputaților's Opinion are very much in line with approaches taken under the concrete actions proposed in the agenda and the Commission is pleased to have this opportunity to offer the following additional clarifications.

In line with the call from the Camera Deputaților for a bold approach to a reform of Vocational Education and Training (VET), the Commission, together with the Member States, social partners and education and training providers is implementing the Riga Conclusions as well as the actions identified in the Skills Agenda in this field.

Regarding the acquisition of digital skills, the New Skills Agenda will address digital skills by streamlining and giving priority to them at all levels. In particular, the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, announced under the Skills Agenda will tackle growing digital skills deficits in Europe and provide all EU citizens with the skills they need to thrive in a digital economy and society.

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The Coalition will seek to develop a large digital talent pool and ensure that individuals and the labour force in Europe are equipped with adequate digital skills. It will support the creation of national digital skills coalitions among education, employment and industry stakeholders, including actions to bring computing to all schools in Europe and train teachers accordingly. The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition will also step up awareness-raising activities and encourage the wider use of the Digital Competence framework for a better understanding and assessment of digital skills. With regard to the issue of legal and ethical issues related to digital skills, one of the competence areas of the Digital Competence Framework is precisely safety, including the protection of personal data and privacy.

The Youth Employment Initiative is one of the main EU financial resources to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee schemes. For that reason, the Commission has proposed¹ to supplement the original allocation of the Youth Employment initiative by EUR 1 billion over 2017 – 2020, to reach a total amount of EUR 8 billion (with EUR 1 billion of matching funding to be provided from the European Social Fund).

Regarding the inclusion in the education system of key skills and transversal skills, the Commission will review by the end of 2017 under the Skills Agenda the Key Competences Framework for Lifelong Learning. In carrying out this review, and more generally in the implementation of the Skills Agenda, the Commission will involve all relevant stakeholders, public institutions, civil society, the business community, the social partners and representatives of the education system.

The third pillar of the Skills Agenda aims to improve labour market intelligence, with a view to bringing the supply of training more into line with labour market needs. At a sectoral level, the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills seeks to develop European skills strategies in key sectors based on actual labour market needs.

The Commission also welcomes the support expressed for action on monitoring of higher education graduates, to be launched in 2017, as part of the Skills Agenda pillar on advancing skills intelligence, documentation and career choices.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaţilor and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen
Member of the Commission*

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/lib/COM-2016-603/COM-2016-603_en.pdf