



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Ludovic ORBAN  
President of the Chamber of the Deputies  
Palace of the Parliament  
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*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion concerning the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027: Resetting education and training for the digital age {COM(2020) 624 final}.*

*The Digital Education Action Plan (the ‘Action Plan’) was adopted by the Commission in September 2020, putting forward the European vision for effective and sustainable digital transformation in education and training. It was met with a positive response. Council Conclusions on digital education in Europe’s knowledge societies<sup>1</sup> were adopted under the German Presidency in December 2020. The Commission would like to thank Romania for its engagement and support in the process of the Council Conclusions preparation and adoption. Demonstrating strong support to the Digital Education Action Plan and recognising the relevance of the initiative, the European Parliament also adopted the resolution ‘Shaping Digital Education Policy’<sup>2</sup> in March 2021, and the Committee of the Regions adopted an opinion on the Digital Education Action Plan<sup>3</sup> in May 2021. Therefore, the Commission remains committed to the spirit of co-creation and cooperation, ensuring that Member States, European institutions and stakeholders are fully involved in the next steps of the implementation of the Action Plan over the next seven years.*

*The Commission would like to underline the key place of the Digital Education Action Plan in the strategic policy framework of the EU, with the Action Plan being a key*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2020.415.01.0022.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2020.415.01.0022.01.ENG)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0042\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0042_EN.html)

<sup>3</sup> <https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-4769-2020>

*enabler to achieve the vision for a European Education Area<sup>4</sup> by 2025, contributing to education and training prepared for the digital and green transitions. The Action Plan also supports the achievement of the goals and targets of the European Skills Agenda<sup>5</sup>, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan<sup>6</sup> and the 2030 Digital Compass: Vision for the Digital Decade<sup>7</sup>. Importantly, the Action Plan also contributes to Europe's recovery and resilience strategy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and to achieving the objectives of both the multiannual financial framework and the European Semester.*

*The Commission welcomes the general support of the Camera Deputaților in view of the Digital Education Action Plan and the recognition of the strategy's ambition and objectives. In particular, the Commission would like to stress the key role of the Action Plan in addressing the immediate implications of the COVID-19 crisis for the education and training sector, while also outlining a long-term vision for digital education in Europe. Respecting fully the principle of subsidiarity pursuant to Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Action Plan supports Member States in this process through a number of actions aiming to develop a high-performing digital education ecosystem and enhancing digital skills and competences for all. The strategic dialogue with Member States on key enabling factors for digital education that the Commission will launch later this year will play a particularly important role in the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as the establishment of the Digital Education Hub.*

*In response to the more technical comments in the Opinion, the Commission would like to refer to the attached annex.*

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šeřčovič  
Vice-President*

*Mariya Gabriel  
Member of the Commission*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0274>

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:102:FIN>

<sup>7</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0118>

## Annex

*The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following clarifications.*

### Point 2:

*The Commission fully supports the view of the Camera Deputaților on the importance of addressing non-formal and adult education. The Commission recalls that, as part of the Digital Education Action Plan, digital transformation is among the priorities of the calls for partnerships for cooperation under the new Erasmus+ programme open to education and training institutions at all levels, including adult learning, to develop new practices and methods, also taking into consideration the digital education. The Commission recalls that the Digital Education Action Plan is implemented in synergy with the European Skills Agenda, with the objective to increase the participation of low-skilled adults, often elderly citizens, in learning. The 'Skills For Life' action will promote life skills also for older people and those most in need of access to learning, including online, and reinforcing the offer of upskilling pathways, prioritising non-formal and lifelong learning. Moreover, the Commission will invest EUR 580 million through Digital Europe in Master courses in advanced digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity that will be delivered by consortia of universities, research centres and business. Actions to upskill the labour force will also be included in the form of short-term training courses.*

*To support older teachers in the development of digital skills and competences, the Commission underlines that the digital competences of teachers and teacher training are among the priorities of the Digital Education Action Plan and fundamental to creating a high-performing digital education ecosystem, one of the two strategic priorities of the Action Plan. For instance, the Digital Opportunity Traineeships scheme in Erasmus+ will develop advanced digital skills of higher education staff via individual mobility. Additionally, the Commission highlights the upcoming launch of the self-reflection for teachers (SELFIE) tool in the autumn of 2021, which will support teachers to assess the level of their digital competences and identify areas where further support will be needed.*

### Point 3:

*The Commission shares the opinion of the Camera Deputaților on the importance of the cross-sectoral exchange of practice between different education and training stakeholders, and would like to point out the key role of the Digital Education Hub in achieving these objectives. The Hub, which will be launched in early 2022, will enhance cooperation and will provide a space for exchange of experience between different stakeholders, such as policy-makers, practitioners and researchers. Therefore, it will serve as a "think-and-do tank", with the objective to foster systemic impact and overcome fragmentation in digital education. A first step towards the establishment of the Hub will be the setup of a network of National Advisory Services on digital*

education, which will support exchanges on the implementation of digital education in Member States.

Point 4:

*The Commission supports the view of the Camera Deputaților on the importance of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary research in digital education and, as such, the Commission is funding and supporting a variety of studies on relevant topics in digital education. The Joint Research Centre, the Commission's science and knowledge service, plays a key supporting role in this area along with the Eurydice, a network of 39 national units based in all Programme Countries of the Erasmus+ programme. Cross-sectoral information gathering and data analysis will also be strengthened under the Digital Education Hub, which will also have a specific focus on reporting on progress and offering strategic foresight and research on digital education.*

Point 5:

*The Commission recognises the importance of achieving clear results in digital education through the different funding programmes of the European Union, such as Erasmus+, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility, Digital Europe and Horizon Europe. The Action Plan leverages all of the aforementioned instruments and is working on bringing more closely together Erasmus+ National Agencies through the Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (SALTO) on digital education. The Commission underlines the opportunity that the Recovery and Resilience Facility offers for Member States to address the implications of the COVID-19 crisis, including for digital transformation in education and training.*

*In particular, the Recovery and Resilience Facility provides opportunities for Member States to invest in the digital transformation of education through digital technologies and connectivity, particularly to enhance network quality in rural areas. Furthermore, in accordance with the priorities of the EU gigabit policy, the expansion of high speed connectivity to all schools and households throughout Europe, with special attention to rural and underserved areas, is supported under the European Structural funds and via financial instruments (the European Investment Bank or the Connected Europe Broadband Fund), and programmes, inter alia the 'Connecting Europe Facility DIGITAL'. The Horizon Europe programme will also support the digital transformation of education and training systems through research and innovation activities. Lastly, the Digital Europe Programme will support actions to foster cooperation and work towards a European Education Technologies ecosystem promoting European excellence in educational innovation, including ways to combine local, regional, national and European efforts.*

Point 6:

*The Commission is in full agreement with the Camera Deputaților and the responses from the Digital Education Action Plan Open Public Consultation on the importance of ensuring high-quality, relevant and user-friendly online learning content for all*

learners. To achieve these aims, the Commission is working on a European Digital Education Content Framework, which will address the need to ensure that digital education content is of high quality, accessible and recognised, promoting interoperability, certification and transferability of content. Additionally, the Commission is currently running a feasibility study on a possible European Exchange Platform to bring existing content together, the results of which will inform the way ahead.

Points 7 and 11:

The Commission notes the need to promote a healthy balance between online and face-to-face learning experiences, to harness the benefits of digital technologies for education and training in different environments. This approach will be reflected in the proposal for a Council Recommendation on blended learning for primary and secondary education that the Commission is planning to adopt later this year.

Point 8:

In terms of formats of cooperation in digital education, the Commission underlines that digital education has been a topic of cooperation between Member States in the context of the Education and Training 2020 Framework and, more specifically, the Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment, which has fostered exchange of practice and cooperation. In its mandate, the Group discussed digital education through different angles, referring to issues related to entrepreneurship, grass-roots innovation and digital skills development for the labour market, among others. The work of the Group will continue with a new mandate under the European Education Area. Moreover, the Commission will promote exchange on digital education at the political level through the launch of a Strategic Dialogue with Member States on key enabling factors for high-quality digital education. The Dialogue will also look at digital skills development, as well as other key elements of digital education, such as infrastructure, equipment, accessibility and teacher training.

Point 9:

For school infrastructure, the Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților on the importance of ensuring that infrastructure is complemented with the necessary organisational approaches in situ. The Commission is committed to promoting connectivity for schools through the Connecting Europe Facility as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and strongly encourages the development of digital transformation plans of schools through the Erasmus+ Partnerships for Cooperation projects. Well-established self-assessment tools such as a self-reflection tool for teachers (SELFIE) with more than one and a half million users can also support schools in their use of digital technologies in the education process, including distance and online learning.

Point 10:

*The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaţilor on the importance of boosting digital creativity and computing skills of all Europeans. The Commission supports the EU Code Week grassroots movement, for example, by financing free online teacher training courses, educational resources in all official EU languages (except Irish), the Western Balkan languages and Turkish, and communication activities. The Commission also encourages Member States to take an active part in the movement and to involve as many teachers as possible. Increased computational thinking, coding and computing activities in schools, through Code Week or more permanently with curricula changes, are ways to reach all children with crucial digital skills regardless of their gender and their economic and social background. It will also help feed the high demand for people with advanced digital skills in the long term.*

Point 12:

*Regarding recognising and promoting the importance of artificial intelligence and quantum computing and the development of associated skills, the Commission fully supports the opinion of the Camera Deputaţilor. The Commission has launched a pilot with four consortia of universities and excellence centres that will deliver four Master programmes focusing on the use of artificial intelligence in 2022. The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) will also support Master courses and short-term training courses for hundreds of thousands of students in advanced digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data and quantum computing. The Commission is also currently working on ethical guidelines on artificial intelligence and data usage in education and training that support teachers and educators to integrate those technologies in a safe and ethical manner in the education and training process. Complementing this initiative, Horizon Europe supports the development of a training programme for researchers and students on the ethical aspects of artificial intelligence and data. In terms of the development of advanced digital skills, including those in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, the Commission has expanded the Digital Opportunity Traineeships for Higher education students under Erasmus+ to include Vocational Education and Training Apprentices, promoting work placements in the digital industry. Moreover, the Commission has launched the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform that serves as a one-stop-shop for training opportunities in emerging technologies, good practices, news, data and policy strategies on digital skills.*

Point 13:

*On the effectiveness of the European Digital Skills Certificate, the Commission would like to assure the Camera Deputaţilor that the Certificate will be informed by a feasibility study with a mapping of existing digital skills certification schemes and models in Europe as well as consultations with stakeholders in order to ensure good reflection of the varied certification market across the European Union.*

Point 14:

*Regarding the organisation of the European Digital Education Hub, the Commission*

*will adopt a gradual approach in the development of the Hub. It will be implemented in phases and will develop according to the demand of the community of stakeholders working on digital education. The aim of the Hub is to increase and improve cooperation on digital education and training at EU level. The initial implementation will be supported by existing corporate tools in use by the Commission and will not require additional development of platforms or tools, thus avoid additional expenses.*