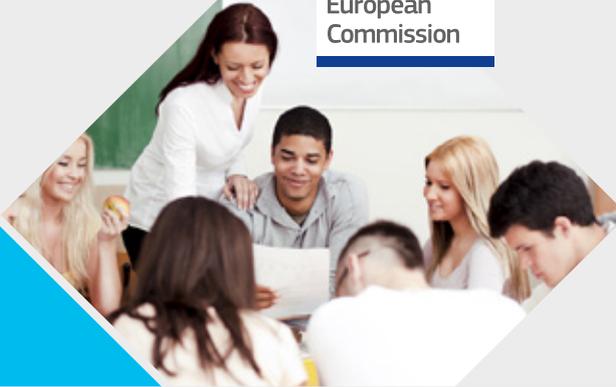




European  
Commission



Investing in

**EUROPE'S YOUTH**

**A RENEWED EU AGENDA FOR**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

The success of the European project depends on the EU's capacity to build a better future for European citizens. Higher education plays a unique role here. Demand for highly skilled, socially engaged people is both increasing and changing. High quality education and training give citizens the skills and resilience they need to effectively adapt in a changing world. Europe also needs more high achievers who can develop the cutting edge technologies and solutions on which our future prosperity depends.

«We have many excellent universities in the EU. But across the board, higher education institutions need to do better at equipping young people with skills that will help them to be the next generation's drivers of innovation and economic growth.»

*Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport  
Investing in Europe's Youth - 7 December 2016*



The expansion of higher education in recent years is one of Europe's success stories: the EU is on track to meet its target of 40% of young people obtaining a higher education qualification. But Europe's higher education systems still face challenges, including:

- A **mismatch** between the skills Europe needs and the skills it has.
- Persistent and growing **social divisions** – higher education institutions can help by being more inclusive and better connected with local and regional stakeholders.
- An **innovation gap** - where higher education institutions are an important part of the education-research-business 'knowledge triangle'.
- Ensuring the **best possible education** for students within **available resources**.

While the EU has an excellent record of supporting higher education through policy cooperation and funding programmes, a new direction for EU support will address these four challenges by focusing on four corresponding priorities for action:

#### ► TACKLING FUTURE SKILLS MISMATCHES AND PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Examples of key actions:

- Launch an **up-scaled EU STE(A)M coalition** bringing together different education sectors, business and public sector employers to promote the uptake of science, technology, engineering, arts and maths

- Develop and roll out a **digital capacity model** to help higher education institutions, their staff and students implement digital learning strategies.
- Boost **strategic support** for higher education teachers, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral graduates through Erasmus+, for example the Commission will launch a 2-year project to develop guidance on how to foster and assess creativity and critical thinking skills, helping to drive systemic change in teaching approaches.

Start a European initiative to **follow what graduates do** after their studies:



Collect **information and key data** at national and EU level on how graduates progress in their careers or further education after finishing their studies.



Establish a **European network of experts** to help Member States learn from each other on measuring what graduates do.



Launch a pilot phase of a **European graduate survey** to collect comparable information about graduates' careers.

#### ► BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND CONNECTED HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Examples of key actions:

- Direct Erasmus+ support to help universities in developing and implementing **integrated institutional strategies** for inclusion and study success from admission to graduation.
- Support **recognition of qualifications** held by **refugees** to facilitate their access to higher education.

#### ► ENSURING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS CONTRIBUTE TO INNOVATION

Examples of key actions:

- Expand the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) regional innovation scheme model and the **EIT label** to more universities and regions.
- Further roll out **Higher Education for Smart Specialisation** – improving the innovation capacity of regions across Europe.
- Develop opportunities within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions that help close the **research and innovation divide** between Member States and regions.

#### ► SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Examples of key actions:

- Launch a review of **funding, incentive and reward structures** for higher education systems, in cooperation with the OECD.
- Ensure researchers are encouraged to perform **teaching tasks**, and/or are trained to do so, as an integral part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.