



European
Commission

EPASS 3-2

Europass Project Update

Third Meeting of the Europass Advisory Group

14 March 2018



Europass

1 Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of progress with Phase 1 (until launch in early 2020) of the implementation of the Europass Decision.

The document provides an overview of the project building blocks, feedback on events and consultations, and other developments.

This Project Update Note includes:

- Project Overview and status of strategy documents
- Events and activities since December 2018
- Europass e-Portfolio
- Approach to User Testing
- Europass Digitally Signed Credentials
- Europass Interoperability

The document includes reminders of [Key Messages to-date](#) from previous meetings or notes; [Updates](#) and [Next Steps](#).

Drafts:

- [First note sent: 21 February 2019](#)
- [Update to note: 7 March 2018](#) (see edits highlighted on p. 7, 8 and 9 below)

2 Project Overview

Key messages to-date

The new Europass Decision¹ addresses the Commission, Member States, participating countries and stakeholders and sets out a basis for modernisation and updating of Europass in line with user needs.

The Commission established the 'Europass Advisory Group' in July 2018 which has met in September and December 2018. All meeting documents are available via the Commission Register of Expert Groups².

Implementation of the new Decision will be phased and incremental. Phase 1 implementation will include development of concepts and approaches to first key building blocks of the new Decision with an aim for first launch of the new online Europass platform by early 2020. The key building blocks include:

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D0646>

² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/>

 <p>Europass Online Platform</p>	<p>Online platform, developed and managed by the Commission to provide Europass web-based tools and information. See Article 3 (1).</p> <p>Phase 1 development will include development of the new platform, as the central source of information on all new features and continuity of established Europass documents for Europass users.</p>
<p>TASK 2 Europass e-portfolio</p> 	<p>The Europass e-Portfolio will provide a set of free web-based tools for Europass individual end-users to manage their career and lifelong learning. See Article 3 (1).</p> <p>Phase 1 development will include development of the new e-Portfolio for users to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record their skills and qualifications in an e-Profile; ▪ Create custom CVs for different purposes; ▪ Collect relevant documents such as diploma, reference letters, motivation letters, CVs and digital credentials in a Library; ▪ Identify their career goals and preferences; ▪ Explore and configure how Europass analyses their skills.
<p>Europass Information Provision</p> 	<p>The Europass online platform shall provide available information or links to available information on a range of topics. See Article 3 (2).</p> <p>Phase 1 development will include development of content plans for information on learning opportunities, validation, recognition, guidance, and integration of third country nationals. The plans will establish the types of information that will be available for each user type by Phase 1, stakeholders to be consulted and consider any associated Member State tasks. Information on qualifications will continue as per established EQF and ESCO processes but will be made available in the new platform. Information on skills intelligence will planned in Phase 2.</p>
<p>Framework for digitally-signed credentials</p> 	<p>A technical framework to support authentication services for any digital documents or representations of information on skills and qualifications. See Article 4 (6).</p> <p>Phase 1 development will include development of principles, functions, standards and infrastructure for issuing, storing, sharing and verifying digitally signed credentials.</p>
<p>Europass Interoperability</p> 	<p>Europass will support and ensure technical interoperability and synergies with other relevant instruments and services offered at Union and, where appropriate, national levels. See Article 4 (8).</p> <p>Phase 1 development will include development of the interoperability concept, technical documentation for implementers and publication of open standards for the following main interoperability scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information provision by Member States ▪ Information on opportunities, in particular learning opportunities ▪ Import and export of user profiles ▪ Submission of online applications

Development of the Europass framework will focus on user needs. For the purposes of implementation, the target groups identified in Article 1 (2) of the Europass Decision³ have each been categorised as distinct types of users, with the stakeholder grouping having two possible types of interaction with Europass:

- **Individual end-users** that use Europass to communicate their skills and qualifications (e.g. learners, job-seekers, workers, volunteers)
- **Recipients** that receive and process information on skills and qualifications (e.g. employers recruiting staff, education and training institutions considering applicants for programmes)
- **Facilitators** that use Europass, or otherwise support implementation of Europass, in their activities to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications (e.g. guidance practitioners giving advice and information, employers developing their staff, education and training institutions issuing Qualification Supplements, policy makers supporting links between education, training and the labour market)

Strategy Documents

A number of strategy documents will be drafted and developed in consultation with the Europass Advisory Group and stakeholders to support implementation of Phase 1. See below a summary of the status of each current draft document:

	<p>The new Europass: Vision into Action</p>
	<p>Mission and purpose of Europass framework in line with Europass Decision</p>
	<p>First Draft: EPASS 3-3, Europass AG, 14 March 2019</p>
	<p>Europass Content Strategy</p>
	<p>Planning, management and development of all content on the Europass platform</p>
	<p>First Draft: JAG 1-3, 12 December 2018</p>
	<p>Progress Update: Europass AG, 14 March 2019</p>
	<p>Next Draft: Europass AG, June 2019</p>
	<p>Europass Communication Strategy</p>
	<p>Strategy and planning of communication activities on European level, and guidance for the communication on Europass on national level</p>
	<p>First Draft: EPASS 3-4, Europass AG 14 March 2019</p>
	<p>Europass User Approach</p>
	<p>Approach to identification of Europass users, user scenarios and user testing</p>
	<p>First Draft: JAG 1-3, 12 December 2018</p>
	<p>Progress Update: Europass AG, 14 March 2019</p>
	<p>Next Draft: Europass AG, June 2019</p>

³ Lit. a) individual end-users, such as learners, job seekers, workers and volunteers, and lit. b) relevant stakeholders, such as education and training providers, guidance practitioners, employers, public employment services, social partners, youth work providers, youth organisations and policy makers.

3 Events and activities with external stakeholders

Since December 2018

- [Meeting with LinkedIn](#); Brussels, 17 January 2019: Presentation of Europass
- [Expert workshop on Europass interoperability \(labour market\)](#); Brussels, 22 January: See Interoperability update below (p. 10)
- [European Training Foundation](#); Brussels, 25 January: Presentation of Europass
- [EUandMe conference](#); Greece, 29-30 January: Presentation of Europass with focus on digitally signed credentials
- [Europass Communication and Promotion Working Group](#); Finland, 28 – 29 January: Updates and consultation with National Europass Centres on communications topics (See EPASS 3-4 Communications Strategy)
- [Blockchain and Educational Credentials Workshop](#); Brussels, 5 February: Information sharing with other projects on digitally signed credentials
- [ESCO Member States Working Group](#); Brussels, 7 February: Update on Europass implementation, including testing of ESCO.
- [Recruitment Agency Expo](#); UK, 5-7 February: Awareness raising with recruiters/employers
- [Municipality of Rome](#); Brussels, 20 February: Presentation of Europass
- [Sitzung des EUROPASS / ESCO-Begleitausschusses](#); Berlin, 20 February: Participation of the Commission in a discussion of Europass in a national context.
- [Meeting with Google](#); Brussels, 7 March: Presentation of Europass
- [ENIC-NARIC Board \(EBNAB\)](#); Strasbourg, France, 7 March: Presentation of Europass
- [Advisory Committee for Vocational Training \(ACVT\)](#); Brussels, 13 March: Presentation of Europass

In addition, within the European Commission, cooperation is underway with services including [EPSO](#), [DG HOME](#) (information to support integration of third country nationals), [DG EAC](#) (languages, Higher Education and Training – including the EU Student Card Initiative and co-operation with ENIC-NARIC, Youthpass, Solidarity Corps, Graduate Tracking Initiative), [EMPL](#) (VET and Adult Education, Employment Strategy), [CNECT](#) (digital skills).

4 Europass e-Portfolio

Key messages to-date:

The goal of the Europass e-Portfolio is to present the Europass web-based tools (Article 3 (1)) in an intuitive, integrated way to support the career management and lifelong learning needs of Europass users.

To achieve this goal, the Europass e-Portfolio will support four particular activities: *help individuals be reflective; support individuals in their personal development; showcase individuals' information;* and, *assess individuals' skills.*

The Europass e-Portfolio will include web-based tools (from herein 'tools') as follows:

- 1) **Profile:** allow individual end-users to create a personal profile of their skills, qualifications and experiences. The profile will also include a **Library** for storage of digital documents; **Goals** for identifying interests, preferences and goals; and, a **Skills Profiler** for compiling information on the user's skills into structured information.
- 2) **Editor:** allow individual end-users to create and edit documents (e.g. CVs, cover letters), choose templates to complete their CV.
- 3) **Skills Match:** allow individual end-users to search or receive suggestions of learning and career opportunities from Union services, Member States (e.g. through EURES) and third parties (e.g. online platforms that have interoperability agreements with Europass).
- 4) **Application Tracker:** support individual end-users to prepare and track applications for learning and job opportunities through their e-Portfolio.

Individual end-users will have the option to use the web-based tools without registering and creating a profile. However, if they register and create a profile they will have access to additional features such as storage of documents in the Library.

Users will control all their personal data. The Commission is undertaking a full Data Protection Impact Assessment to ensure full compliance with GDPR and other data protection requirements. Some anonymised information will be collected for statistical purposes as is the practice with the current Europass.

The potential use of ESCO in the e-Portfolio in the Europass platform will be subject to testing and in line with the position of Member States (as per Recital 17 of the Europass Decision).

The following table gives an overview of the role of Europass Documents in the future e-Portfolio and Europass platform:

State-of-play with established Europass Documents
<p>As presented at the first meeting of the Europass AG in September 2018 (EPASS 1-4), the following is planned regarding the established Europass Documents in Phase 1 development:</p> <p>Europass CV: The Europass CV editor will be a core part of the new Europass e-portfolio and individuals will be able to use information stored in the e-Portfolio to create and edit CVs. Options will be explored for users to choose other style templates (<i>Mock-ups circulated for consultation, 19 February 2019</i>)</p> <p>Europass Mobility: The Commission does not envisage any changes to the content of the Europass Mobility as part of Phase 1 development.</p> <p>Europass Language Passport: The Language Passport will be integrated within the Europass e-Portfolio and reviewed to ensure user-friendliness.</p> <p>Europass Certificate Supplement: The Commission does not envisage any changes to the content of the Europass Certificate Supplement as part of Phase 1 development.</p> <p>Europass Diploma Supplement: As part of Phase 1 development, the Commission will work with UNESCO and the Council of Europe on implementation of changes to the DS template as set out in the Paris Communique of the EHEA Ministerial Conference in May 2018 (expected June 2019). The Commission will explore technical solutions for the</p>

digital signing of the DS by issuing organisations as part of the Europass Framework for Digitally Signed Credentials.

Updates since December 2018:

Work is ongoing on the detail of the **Profile** section of the e-Portfolio to ensure it can capture a diversity of life, work and learning experiences to be an effective lifelong learning tool. The Commission with a communication expert, career guidance expert and user experience expert has identified potential additional fields to add to the Profile section to encourage users to reflect on all their learning experiences. These include:

- *transnational/multicultural experience and exposure (incl. home internationalisation);*
- *social and professional networks;*
- *created works;*
- *social and political activities; and,*
- *free-time activities and hobbies.*

These and other fields will be tested with users and also consulted with Member States and stakeholders at upcoming meetings.

Other ongoing issues in development of the Profile include: (1) how to ensure users include all forms of work experience in this section, rather than just paid employment; (2) how to encourage description of entrepreneurial skills and experiences; and (3), how to ensure users capture all forms of non-formal and informal, as well as formal learning.

Mock-ups of the Profile, as well as Homepage, and CV templates were circulated to the Europass AG, and Europass and Euroguidance Centres in February 2019 for consultation. **The Commission ran two webinars, on 27 and 28 February 2019, to answer questions on the survey.** Results of the consultation will be shared with at the Europass AG by 14 March 2019.

Next Steps:

Next iterations of the e-Portfolio, including the 4 tools above, will be presented for feedback at:

- Europass Western Cluster Group of national centres/Strategy Group: 8 and 9 April, 2019; Bordeaux
- Euroguidance Network Meeting: 8 and 9 April, 2019; Bucharest
- Europass Network Meeting, June 2019 (Date TBC); Budapest

The Commission is scheduling bilateral meetings with Europass AG stakeholder organisations to consult on the e-Portfolio.

5 Approach to User Testing

The Commission invited feedback from the Europass Advisory Group and National Europass Centres on the draft User Approach presented in December 2018. The following main messages were received as feedback:

- It is essential to organise specific user testing for persons with disabilities to ensure the accessibility of the platform;
- Testing should be co-ordinated with National Europass Centres. If possible every National Centre should make arrangements for testing to ensure all nationalities are involved in testing;
- It is important to ensure facilitators and recipients, including employers, are included in testing;
- The Commission should develop user testing guidelines and provide a timeline for which user groups will be invited to test which elements.

Next Steps:

The Commission will schedule testing of each release as development advances (see *EPASS 3-7 Project Management Plan*). Members of the Europass AG and relevant national services will be invited to test and disseminate links for testing to stakeholders. User testing by National Europass Centres will be discussed at the April meeting of the Western Cluster Group and Strategy Group.

User testing will also be planned with Europass AG stakeholder organisations during bilaterals in March and April to ensure outreach to all represented groups.

6 Europass Digitally Signed Credentials

Key messages to-date:

The objective of the Europass DSC framework is to enable the easier understanding and verification of qualifications, and other evidence of learning.

The DSC Framework will benefit users in the following ways:

- By offering a secure, trustworthy and fraud-resistant system that ensures data privacy and data protection.
- By offering a common technical approach for issuing digitally-signed credentials so that certificates from one Member State can be understood and verified in any other.
- By supporting learners to provide evidence of their learning in electronic format to employers or education and training providers.
- Employers, education and training providers and other bodies will be able to check that certificates and other qualifications are valid and authentic. They can also have easy access to background information **on qualifications, and other evidence of learning.**

The DSC Framework will not replace quality assurance, accreditation or other national public or private systems but will offer technical solutions that issuers, holders and recipients of digital

credentials can use. The technical framework will be built on open standards, compatible with as many established standards as possible, and be made available for use on a voluntary basis, free-of-charge to users.

There are a number of privacy safeguards planned in the system: all user information is encrypted end-to-end; credentials are sent to the user as digitally-signed RDF-compatible files - these can be opened on their own device without connection to the cloud; users are never required to share their underlying credential - they choose which elements of information to share with whom, and only for a limited time; no personally identifiable information is stored on a blockchain.

Updates since December 2018:

Following the input received at the December 2018 AG meetings, the Commission reviewed the definitions and concepts to be used in the DSC Framework. The review incorporated the definitions in the EQF Recommendation and the Recommendation on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning and a literature review for definitions of additional concepts needed to describe functions and use cases of the DSC Framework:

[For the purpose of the Europass DSC Framework](#), the Commission proposes to use the following definitions:

- **A credential** is a documented statement, awarded from one party to another, describing the latter's qualities;
- **A learning credential** is a credential describing that the owner has certain skills or has achieved certain learning outcomes through formal, non-formal or informal learning;
- **An NQF qualification** is a learning credential that is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards, whereas the **competence** of the authority has been proven by including it in a national database of competent authorities or by listing the qualification in the national qualification database with an NQF level;
- **A recognition statement** is a formal recognition decision or opinion, for example issued by ENIC/NARIC.

The DSC Framework can be used to issue learning credentials and recognition statements. For NQF qualifications (which are considered a subtype of learning credentials) the DSC Framework will support enhanced verification, i.e. automatic cross-checking with the data provided via national qualification databases.

Work is ongoing on the identification of stakeholders in the field of digital credentials, presenting the work being done on the DSC framework, and building awareness of the possibility to test and adopt the framework later in 2019.

The Europass project website⁴ will be the primary outlet for information on the DSC Framework for stakeholders including an invitation to express interest in exploring use of the Framework.

Next Steps:

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass>

In parallel to the development of technical specifications, the Commission is focused on reaching out to stakeholders to ensure the relevance and awareness of the DSC Framework. The Commission is actively compiling a comprehensive list of stakeholders and initiatives related to this work and will circulate a survey via the Europass AG and other networks in March 2019 to gather information on national practices in addition to those already identified.

The Commission will arrange a series of briefing workshops for stakeholders interested in adoption and webinars for vendors of digital credential services (expected from June 2019). The Commission will present and participate in a number of key events as part of consultation and awareness raising. These include a presentation to the ENIC-NARIC network (June 2019). News items on all such activities will be included in the Europass project website.

7 Europass Interoperability

Key Messages to-date:

Europass interoperability means that the online platform can interact with other systems to provide a better user experience.

Interoperability was established as a key operating element of Europass in the 2004 Decision and is retained as a main feature and principle of Europass in the new Decision.

By building Europass in an interoperable manner, users will be able to connect with information and services elsewhere on the Internet, when they manage their learning and their career.

The Europass interoperability system will build on the established interoperability between Europass, EURES and other services which will be achieved through use of open standards and reusable information and components. In designing the approach to interoperability, the Commission has proposed testing use of ESCO to explore labour market interoperability in Phase 1 and testing for interoperability with education and training applications in the longer term.

Outcomes of Expert Workshop on Europass Interoperability, 23 January 2019

The objectives of the expert workshop were to explore options for interoperability of Europass with labour market actors and processes. Participants were from public employment services, employers/recruiters, jobs boards, social media platforms and IT developers. The workshop included a presentation of the existing Europass interoperability and set out the objectives, and potential services envisaged, of interoperability in the new Europass. Participants were also invited to share examples of their practices, the types of data they exchange and how it is exchanged.

The workshop presented possible scenarios of how Europass interoperability could operate including (1) [a linked open data market scenario](#) (where labour market data would be published on the Web as open data accessible by any third party); (2) [a governed data exchange scenario](#) where data would be exchanged among a group of platforms that meet quality assurance criteria, and (3) a hybrid built on preferred elements of the first two scenarios.

Participants suggested that further analysis of existing third party services and needs was necessary in order to define the role and objective of Europass interoperability and that synergies with the existing tasks of EURES was essential. On possible technical implementation, participants advised that any system should avoid complexity, avoid duplication of other services and be built on a full analysis of legal, organisational and semantic aspects of interoperability.

Background documents and minutes of the workshop are available on the Europass Project Website.

Next Steps:

An expert workshop on [interoperability with education and training](#) will be scheduled for April 2019 following further analysis and discussion with the Europass AG and stakeholders.

The Commission will continue work on the specifications for interoperability with Europass and on open standards. Priorities will be the following cases of interoperability:

- Import/export a profile from/to other platforms (including continuation of the current interoperability with EURES, Monster, Xing and others),
- Information provision on opportunities, in particular learning opportunities, job opportunities and volunteering,
- Mechanisms for providing information by Member States according to Article 3(2),
- Submitting applications online to employers, education and training institutions and other recipients.

Draft documents (e.g. specifications, standards) will be accessible through the Europass project website, as they become available, where written feedback can be provided.

The Commission will also start to establish contact with existing interoperability partners to make them aware of upcoming changes in the interoperability specifications and to give them sufficient time for the updates.