Europass Project Update

Sixth Meeting of the Europass Advisory Group

Introduction

The purpose of this note is to provide an overview of progress with Phase 1 implementation of the Europass Decision and highlights action needed by the Commission, Member States and stakeholders in the coming weeks to ensure a successful launch.

The note also serves as the meeting note for the meeting of the upcoming Europass Advisory Group webinar. A detailed agenda and discussion questions will be shared with the AG members shortly.
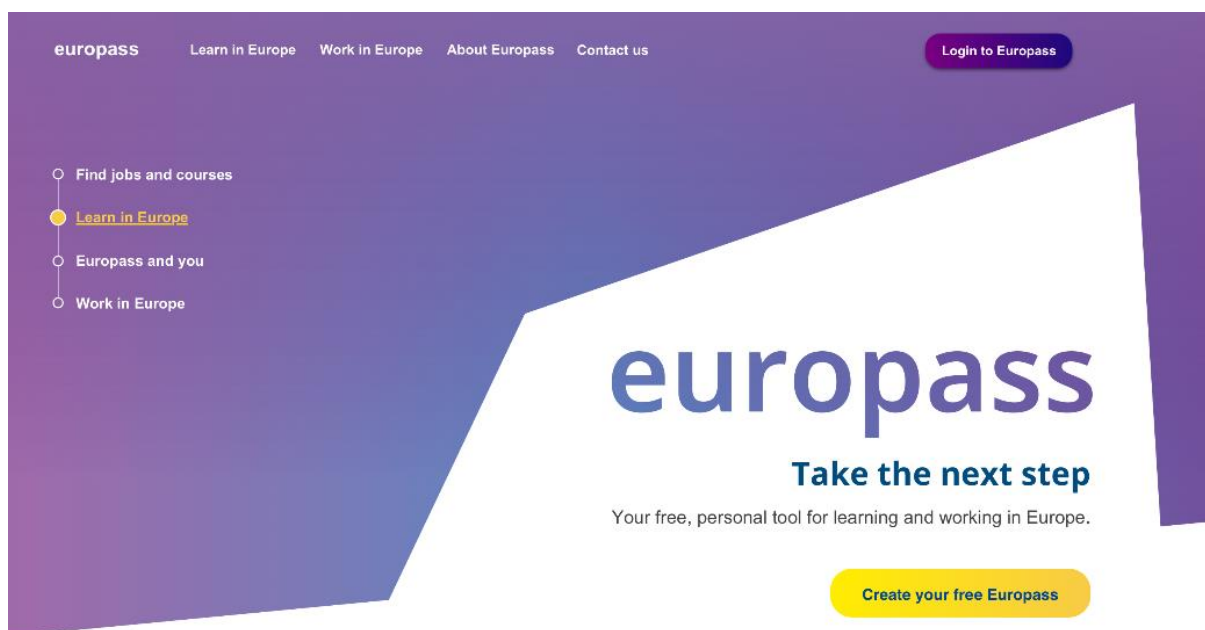
The document provides an overview of the project building blocks, feedback on events and consultations, timing of the project and other ongoing work.

Comments and questions are invited during the meeting of the Europass Advisory Group webinar.

Contents

1. Europass Online Platform

The new Europass online platform is being developed and managed by the Commission to provide Europass web-based tools and information. See Article 3 (1).

Phase 1 includes development of the new platform, as the central source of information on all new features and continuity of established Europass tools for Europass users.

The launch version of the platform will include:

Tools for end-users:
- The Europass e-Portfolio (*see Section 2 below*)
- Information articles and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for end-users
- Europass Country pages, with links to national services and information (see *section 3.1 below*)
- Search for Jobs[1]
- Information on qualifications and learning opportunities (See *section 3.2* below)
- Information on Europass documents: Diploma Supplement, Europass Certificate Supplement, and Europass Mobility.

Information for stakeholders including:
- The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) including the updated and improved Qualifications Framework Comparison tool
- Recognition of skills and qualifications
- Validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Technical information for interoperability partners
- Information on Europass Digital Credentials

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[1] Only in the languages and locations supported by EURES

Development of the platform is now in the final stages. The majority of content (articles, search pages, FAQs) will be translated into 29 languages; technical content on topics such as interoperability and Europass Digital Credentials will only be available in English initially.

The platform will connect with the Qualifications Data Register (QDR) for information on learning opportunities and qualifications, and will connect with EURES to support searching for jobs.

Messages have been published on the current Europass platform to inform Europass users that the platform will be launched in April, with a number of new features while also ensuring continuity of existing features such as the Europass CV.

2. Europass e-Portfolio

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).

The Europass e-Portfolio will be launched at end April 2020, followed by a public launch at end May 2020 (see *Communications Section 6*).

The Phase 1 e-Portfolio will include:
- Europass Profile: users can record their skills, qualifications and experiences in a personal profile;
- CV and cover letter editors: users can create custom CVs and cover letters for different purposes;
- Europass Library: users collect relevant documents such as diploma, reference letters, motivation letters, CVs and digital credentials in a personal library;
- My Interests: users can identify their career goals and preferences;
- My Skills: users can explore and configure how Europass analyses their skills.

A number of the tools (such as permanent storage of their profile and files) will only be available to registered users. To register, users create an account using 'EU login' which is the EU Commission user management tool.

Users control all their data, and have options and safeguards for management of their data in Europass. Third parties do not have access to Europass users' data. (see *Data Protection Section 7*)

Testing

The Beta version of the e-Portfolio, to be released by early March 2020 for testing by Europass stakeholders, will include the tools listed above, as well as access to the Homepage and two information pages – *Work in Europe* and *Learn in Europe*. The majority of the e-Portfolio and content pages are available for testing in 24 EU languages. Importantly, not all content is yet translated, and the additional Europass languages will not be available until launch in April.

Prior to release the Commission undertook 116 test cases of the e-Portfolio, to confirm that all elements were working as planned, to identify defects and to test use of the e-Portfolio on different web browsers and devices. This testing also tested the links between Europass and Europass Digital Credentials, the Qualifications Dataset register (QDR), EURES and ESCO.

The Commission has developed a testing guide and survey for Member States to organise testing of the Beta version (published on the Europass project website here: https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass/get-involved-testing-new-europass-platform-0). Testing is expected to run from 9 March – 20 March 2020.

3. Europass Information Provision

The Europass online platform shall provide information on learning opportunities, qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, recognition practices, guidance services, skills intelligence, and integration of third country nationals. See Article 3 (2) of the Europass Decision.

Information provided by Europass countries will be included in the Europass platform in the following ways:

Learning Opportunities	Users can search for learning opportunities through the 'Find a Course' section. Interesting learning opportunities will be suggested to registered users in their e-Portfolio.
Qualifications and qualifications frameworks and systems	Users can search for qualifications through the 'Find a Course' section. Interesting qualifications will be suggested to registered users in their e-Portfolio. Information on qualifications frameworks and systems will be included in a dedicated EQF section.
Recognition practices and relevant legislation in different countries, including third countries	Will be included in Europass Country pages (see below)
Services offering guidance for transnational learning mobility and career management	Will be included in Europass Country pages (see below)

3.1 Learning Opportunities

The Commission has provided technical guidance to Europass countries on how Europass countries can now publish information on learning opportunities on the new Europass platform (ref email: *New Europass: Instructions for publishing learning opportunities + next steps*, sent 28 February 2020).

The manual is structured in two parts with information on publishing qualifications (p. 7 - 27) and learning opportunities and qualifications (p. 28 – 51).

Regarding learning opportunities, the manual provides detailed instructions on how to publish learning opportunities on QDR (the Qualifications Dataset Register QDR) using the Learning Opportunities Metadata Schemata (LOMS). The approach follows the established system currently used for publishing information on qualifications on the QDR.Information on the LOMS, including required fields are included in p. 32 of the manual.The manual is most relevant to technical audiences such as database managers but also includes background information on Europass and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The manual has also been published on the project website here: https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass/manual-publishing-learning-opportunities-and-qualifications

The Commission has begun outreach to Europass countries to begin the process of publishing learning opportunities with those countries that are ready to publish and to identify the support required for those countries not yet ready to publish.

The Commission will hold a webinar on publishing learning opportunities on 16 March 2020 to answer questions from countries on the manual.

FEEDBACK
Europass AG members are invited to present updates on their work on learning opportunities at national level during the upcoming Europass AG webinar.

3.2 Country Pages: links to national services

For Phase 1 launch, each Europass country has been invited to submit links to national information on recognition practices, national guidance services, as well as a number of optional topics to include on country pages in the Work in Europe and Learn in Europe sections of the new Europass platform. The Commission will include a number of default links on each page[2].

The purpose of each country page will be to refer users to contacts and information on national level services and support.

The Commission sent a request for these links, with instructions, to all Europass countries on 17 December 2019. Thereafter the Commission held a webinar to answer questions, on 23 January 2020.

At the time of writing, 34 countries have submitted a combination of more than 800 links for inclusion on country pages.

The inclusion of these links is being tested in line with the draft design of the Country Pages.

The Commission will present an overview of the links submitted at the Europass Advisory Group in advance of the upcoming webinar

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[2] For each Learn in Europe country page, the Commission will include links to national 'Study in Europeportals' (https://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/country-profiles_en) and ENIC-NARIC country pages (https://www.enic-naric.net/).

For each Work in Europe country page, the Commission will include links to EURES pages on living and working conditions and also ENIC-NARIC country pages (https://www.enic-naric.net/).

4. Europass Digital Credentials

Work is ongoing on the development of the Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI). The EDCI will support authentication services for any digital documents or representations of information on skills and qualifications as outlined in Article 4 (6) of the Europass Decision.

A credential is a documented statement containing claims about a person issued by an educational organisation following a learning experience.

Europass Digital Credentials describe a graduates learning. Europass credentials can describe activities (e.g. classes attended), assessments (e.g. projects), achievements (e.g. skills developed) and professional entitlements (e.g. registration as a medical doctor).

As a digital file credentials can include a wide range of valuable information that help can help the recognition and understanding of the credential by employers and other institutions.

Europass Digital Credentials support instant verification; recipients can automatically verify information such as the identity of the awarding body or the quality assurance of a qualification.

Europass Digital Credentials are signed with an e-Seal, meaning they enjoy a legal presumption of authenticity across the EU as well as equivalence to paper-based credentials containing the same information.

The Commission is developing the tools, software and services that will form part of the EDCI. 18 countries are participating in piloting digital credentials to test these elements at national level.

✓ First release of elements of the EDCI is planned for May 2020. This will include the EDCI Issuer, EDCI Viewer and implementation of the EDCI Wallet in the Europass e-Portfolio for those first graduates and learners that receive credentials. These elements will be available in English only.

✓ Depending on progress, pilot countries will make first use of the EDCI Accreditation Database during this time. Pilot countries will provide data on accredited programmes and institutions so that the digital credential can be verified.

✓ A second release is planned for July 2020 and will include further enhancements, including availability in other languages.

✓ The Commission will organise a dedicated launch event for EDCI in Autumn 2020. The Commission will also explore further use of EDCI, including Qualification Supplements, recognition statements, and non-formal learning, in co-operation with Europass countries and stakeholders.

The Commission will organise a technical workshop with a number of pilot countries on 17 March 2020 for first use of the EDCI Issuer and EDCI viewer.

5. Europass Interoperability

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) of the Europass Decision.

Phase 1 development will include development of the interoperability concept, technical documentation for implementers and publication of open standards.

Technical work is ongoing to ensure that users with an existing Europass CV will be able to easily re-use the CV in the new Europass e-Portfolio (including for the purposes of creating a Profile or updating their CV).

The Europass and EURES units are also working to enhance the interoperability between both services so that users can easily move between both platforms in a user-friendly way.

The Commission has begun communication with existing interoperability partners such as Monster, Indeed.com and Xing, on upcoming changes to the interoperability with Europass, so that connections between these services are updated.

6. Communication

The Commission has begun preparation for communication of the new Europass to individual end-users and recipients. This includes creating awareness that the existing Europass will be updated, co-ordinating a high impact launch of the new platform, and implementing a communications campaign in line with the Europass Communication Strategy.

The new Europass will be launched by end May 2020.

- Public messages informing users of upcoming changes have been published on the current Europass platform from week of 2 March 2020. New messages and articles will be published over the coming weeks so that users are aware of upcoming changes.
- The new Europass platform will be online from end April 2020.
- The public launch of the new Europass platform will be 29 May.
- More intensive communication to end-users and recipients, by the Commission, National Europass Centres and stakeholders, should begin in April 2020. A more detailed communications timeline has been developed and shared for feedback with Europass stakeholders.

6.1 Preparation by the Commission

- Launch event at the European Youth Event (EYE) on 28 and 29 May, 2020

Nicholas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, will launch the new Europass during the European Youth Event on 29 May, 2020 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. This is the day of the official launch of the new platform and we look forward to a Europe wide launch with social media, and all forms of local activities in participating countries.

A number of countries have submitted queries about attending the EYE. The EYE is not a dedicated Europass conference organised by the Commission so Europass stakeholders from the AG will not be approached specifically to attend. If you do wish to attend however you can read more about the EYE via this link: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/european-youth-event/en/eye2020/home.html

We are happy to be informed of local events you are organising around the launch via EMPL-EUROPASS@ec.europa.eu and we encourage you to share your events ideas in the community group established on the Europass project website.

- Commission-led social media campaign
- Co-ordinated social media strategy with the National Europass Centres
- Events and outreach to other EU tools and services in the area of skills and qualifications (e.g. EURES, EURAXESS, Youthpass).
- Advertising in national level online publications to promote the launch.

The Commission is exploring the possibility to purchase advertising in online media outlets and publications to promote the new Europass. The idea is to advertise around the launch of Europass in May 2020 for a week. The ads will be displayed as a banner with text in the relevant language, linking to the new Europass platform.

Following a request from the Commission, 25 countries have submitted suggestions of national online media outlets and publications to purchase advertising in. The Commission is currently reviewing all the submissions and exploring the feasibility of purchasing the advertising by launch. Each Europass country will be informed of any decisions made.

- Europass Communications Tool-kit for use by national authorities

The tool-kit was distributed in January 2020, and includes templates, graphics, and instructions. The Commission organised a webinar on 10 February with National Europass Centres to advise them on use of the tool-kit and other preparation for launch. The Commission has set up a group on the Europass project website where centres and Europass stakeholders can access content including key messages, draft social media content, a press release and infographics in March and April 2020.

The Commission prepared an implementation note for the National Europass Centres with a series of recommendations and steps they can take to prepare for the launch. Centres are encouraged to make full use of their Erasmus+ co-financing and to use the range of information and promotional materials and will implement a Union-wide communication campaign.

Importantly, all interested national stakeholders and members of the Advisory Group are encouraged to promote awareness of the new Europass, in particular to ensure outreach to stakeholder groups.

FEEDBACK
Members of the Europass Advisory Group are invited to inform the Commission of events and other communications activities to support the launch of the new Europass. Suggestions are welcome to EMPL_Europass@ec.europa.eu.

FEEDBACK
Europass AG members are invited to present updates on communications activities or planning for launch at national level during the upcoming AG webinar.

7. Data protection in Europass

A draft Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the new Europass has been submitted to the Data Protection Office (DPO) (https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/data-protection-officer_en) of the EU Commission.

The role of the DPO is to ensure, in an independent manner, that the European Commission correctly applies the law protecting individuals' personal data. The DPO keeps a public register (https://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register/) explaining all operations carried out by the Commission that involve processing personal data. A record explaining the processing of data by Europass will be published on the register.

The DPIA describes the processing of data within Europass. Processing of personal data refers to "any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data[3]"

The DPIA describes the processing that occurs within the two key functions of Europass (1) for the operation of the Europass personal e-Portfolio and (2) for the operation of the Europass Digital Credential Infrastructure (EDCI).

7.1 Europass e-Portfolio

The DPIA describes the particular processing that can occur within the Europass e-Portfolio. See below an overview of the types of processing and safeguards and measures for users to control their data. The DPO will provide feedback on these safeguards in their review of the draft DPIA.

Customised suggestions of jobs and courses to Europass users
Users' data will be used to understand and convey reliable estimations about users' preferences and interests with the aim to offer Europass users tailored suggestions of skills, courses and jobs.

Control by users: Users will have the choice to switch off jobs and course suggestions and decide to reset all information being used to receive tailored suggestions.

Customised skills in My Skills
As users complete and update their Profile they will receive suggested skills to add to the 'My Skills' section of the e-Portfolio. The skills suggestions will be made based on ESCO knowledge, skills and competences terms associated with occupations users add in the work experience section of their profile.

Control by users: Users can 'reject' suggested skills, add skills, and also choose to 'turn off' skills suggestions completely (see screen below).

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[3] Full definition of processing: "any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction". Article 3 (3) Regulation (EU) 2018/1725

Assess Europass performance to support the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of Europass

Europass will collect and aggregate data based on users' activity to understand the performance of the platform. Data on the following key performance indicators will be published on the platform:

- Visits to the Europass platform per month
- Number of registered users with profiles
- Number of registered users with profiles per language
- Number of registered users with profiles per country
- Number of registered users with profiles by age

Control by users: All information on user activity will be anonymised. If users nevertheless do not wish to have their data used for monitoring and evaluation they may update the 'cookies' settings in the browser.

Conduct labour market analysis

Information such as age, nationality, learning and work experience, and skills will be collected and used for statistical purposes. In order to ensure anonymity, all data will be aggregated and anonymised, to produce only high-level statistical indicators that do not include any personally identifiable information. This data will be used by the European Commission to identify trends in the field of education and employment, predict future skills needs and improve the services offered by Europass. The following indicators will be published on the Europass platform:

- Language skills of users: mother tongue; foreign language; not identified
- Digital skills of users: Top 20 recurring digital skills included per language

Control by users: All information on Europass users will be anonymised. Personal information of users will not be used for this purpose. If users nevertheless do not wish to have any data used for this purposes they may update the 'cookies' settings in the browser.

Sharing Information

Registered Europass users can share information from their Europass e-Portfolio as follows:

Share Profile: users can share a version or part of their profile via a weblink with employers, institutions or other recipient of their choice. Users will receive a notification to ensure they know the identity of anyone they share their profile with and that some recipients, in particular those outside the EU, may not be subject to data protection requirements. The information article for users will advise Europass users to avoid including or sharing any sensitive personal information from their profiles (e.g. health, criminal convictions). Users will be prompted to set a time limit on how long they share they share the profile for. The record of sharing the profile will be stored in the users *Activity Feed*.

Share a digital credential: users can share a digital credential stored in their Europass Library. Users will receive a notification to ensure they know the identity of anyone they share their profile with and that some recipients, in particular those outside the EU, may not be subject to data protection requirements. Users will be prompted to set a time limit on how long they share they share the credential for. The record of sharing the credential will be stored in the users *Activity Feed*.

Share documents: users share documents (e.g. CVs, cover letters etc) stored in their Europass Library. The information article for users will advise Europass users to avoid including or share documents containing any sensitive personal information from their profiles (e.g. health, criminal convictions). Users will make all decisions on how they share documents (download, print, attach to emails, save to other devices or cloud storage) and with whom. Users will receive a notification to ensure they know the identity of anyone they share their documents with and that some recipients, in particular those outside the EU, may not be subject to data protection requirements.

Interoperability: where users share information with a Europass interoperability partner (e.g. EURES) they will receive a notification that their data will leave the Europass platform. Users will receive a notification to ensure they know the identity of anyone they share their documents with and that some recipients, in particular those outside the EU, may not be subject to data protection requirements.

7.2 Europass Digital Credential Infrastructure (EDCI)

The DPIA describes how competent authorities (e.g. education institution, awarding body) will use the EDCI to issue, re-issue or revoke digital credentials which may include personal data.

The DPIA describes how the processing of digital credentials will be based on the data protection policy of the competent authority.

The competent authority will be the sole party using the data, at all times. The EDCI Issuer, run by the Commission, will only store personal data in memory and will delete it once the credential is issued. Educational institutions will however have an option to run their own wallet software and send themselves a copy of each credential issued. Such received credentials will be processed and retained according to the educational institutions' data protection.

Individuals that receive credentials may store their credentials on their personal IT device, as well as in the wallet in their Europass Library and other EDCI-compliant wallets. A user can only view credentials which they have uploaded to their wallet, or which has been directly deposited to their wallet by an awarding body. When users store their credential in their Europass Library, they will have the option to share it for set periods of time, and track who they share with, as described in 7.1 (*Share a digital   credentials*)   above.

8. Updates and Events

Recommendation Paper on the future of the Europass Mobility

Representatives of National Europass Centres from 15 countries submitted a *Recommendation Paper on the future of the Europass Mobility* to the Commission in November 2019. With the permission of the group, the paper has been published on the Europass project website here: https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass/recommendation-paper-future-europass-mobility-0

The paper was produced by two working groups (the Innovation Working Group and Mobility Working Group) working together in a task force.

The paper will form the basis for discussion of the future of the Europass Mobility as part of Europass Phase 2 development.

Events since November 2019

- Update on Europass at the meeting of the NARIC Advisory Board; Brussels, 28 November 2019
- Presentation at Open Educa Berlin (OEB); 28 and 28 November 2019
- Presentation at Academic Cooperation Association; Brussels, 24 January 2020
- Presentation at EU Skillstalk event hosted by Microsoft; Brussels, 30 January 2020
- Update to EQF Advisory Group; Brussels, 4 and 5 February 2020
- Presentation to EURAXESS portal administrators; Brussels, 4 March 2020
- Presentation at Open Recognition Belgium, with BE-Fl NEC; Brussels, 6 March 2020
- Meeting of National Europass Centres Strategy Group (working group Chairs); video conference, 10 March 2020

The Commission welcomes information and invitations on events EMPL_Europass@ec.europa.eu

Member States' and stakeholders' Tasks for launch

Member State Task (Article 7 Europass Decision)		Implementation Actions	By
Coordinate the activities related to the implementation of Europass web-based tools (Article 7 (1) (a))	1	Coordination Plan for implementation of new Europass at national level	End April 2020
	2	Overview of state-of-play of national authorities involved in implementation of Diploma Supplement, Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Mobility and Europass Language Passport.	End April 2020
Promote the use and strengthen the awareness and visibility of Europass (Article 7 (1) (b))	3	Updated workplan for National Europass Centre	End April 2020. Notify Commission in writing of any requested changes to workplan asap.
	4	Development of communication strategy and materials using COM communications tool-kit and guidelines • Review remaining tasks in workplan foreseen until end 2020 to identify any possible adjustments that can be made. Review in particular tasks for April and May 2020 with a view to focus on launch activities. • Review existing national online content to examine feasibility of editing and updating by April 2020. • Identify all materials/webpages that mention the Europass Skills Passport and	End April 2020

		aim to change/delete by April 2020. • Identify all materials/webpages that mention the Europass Language Passport and aim to update information by April 2020. • Review key messages for Europass and request any clarifications or translation needs for your national language. (Key messages to be supplied in March 2020) • Suggest events and activities for the Commission to attend in 2020 to promote the new Europass. • Suggest national online career and education publications for targeted advertising of the new Europass. (Suggestions received by 28 countries in February 2020). • Removal of references to Europass Skills Passport and Language Passport from communication activities.	
	5	Programme of launch events and activities	Share with Commission and AG, through Europass Project Group, by end April 2020.
Promote and provide information on services offering guidance for transnational learning mobility and career management, including, where appropriate, individual guidance services (Article 7 (1) (c))	6	Provision of information to Europass platform: • Information on guidance (confirm national process and contacts)	34 countries submitted links in February 2020. Further links may be submitted by end March 2020.

Make information on learning opportunities, qualifications and recognition practices available on the Europass online platform, including through links to relevant national websites (Article 7 (1) (d))	7	• Information on qualifications (confirm national process and contacts) • Information on recognition (confirm national process and contacts) • Information on learning opportunities (confirm national process and contacts, begin testing)	MS received instruction manual on publishing learning opportunities and qualifications, in February 2020 and are invited to share, review and proceed with first testing of publishing learning opportunities on QDR. Following testing, publication of learning opportunities will begin from end April 2020.
Involve stakeholders from all relevant sectors, and promote cooperation among public and private stakeholders, in the activities under their responsibility (Article 7 (1) (e))	8	• Communication Strategy and materials, including targeted approach to stakeholders from the public and private sector • Europass AG stakeholders are invited to propose ideas on communication and outreach to their member organisations as well as how they can contribute to promoting the launch of the new Europass.	End April 2020.