

CEPIS submission to the Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) update roadmap

CEPIS welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Digital Education Action plan update. There are several points we would like to emphasise.

The lessons learned from on-line teaching during the COVID-19 crisis have shown that:

- A. some schools and teachers that already made great use of digital tools and e-Learning environments have been able to switch to distance learning within a few days or even a few hours
- B. many schools and most teachers were not prepared at all for the leap into the distance and digital learning in large scale, but promptly committed themselves to devising solutions
- C. the main difficulty was not to learn how to use new tools (in particular, videoconference platforms) but concerns methodologies: models traditionally used in presence, as frontal lecture sequences, do not work remotely, which is valid especially for elementary education
- D. far more students than previously estimated have little to no access to computing resources (hardware, bandwidth, connectivity, time on machine, safe spaces in which to learn).
- E. existing inequities in the workforce are also being revealed and shown that the lack of basic digital skills by large percentages of the population limit job opportunities not only generally but most especially when national economies were impacted by work stoppages and shut-downs.

COVID-19 experience has highlighted three major issues when it comes to teaching and learning:

1. unequal access to resources needed for teaching and learning on-line – devices, internet connection, platforms, digital learning content etc.
2. lack of digital skills of teachers, pupils and parents
3. the current teaching methodology and curriculum does not suit remote/blended learning models.

Therefore, the updated DEAP should increase the digital capacity and make efforts to distribute EU funds in a way that would favour ensuring equal access to the necessary resources for all children and teachers, be it digital infrastructure, devices or access to learning materials. CEPIS is convinced that DEAP should focus strongly on increasing digital skills of the educators and push for the inclusion of digital competences for 21st century in the school curricula. This should be connected with some form of certification proving the achieved results of pupils and the same principle should be applied in lifelong learning with the aim of increasing the digital competence of the workforce. If remote/blended teaching and learning is to become the new norm in formal education (both for new pandemic wave and for remote learning for children not present due to illness or other reasons in school), then different curricula and teaching methodologies must be developed to suit these models, and proper pedagogical pre-service and in-service training must be a fundamental part of this change. The quality of education should be the key priority of both the European Commission and the Member States.

According to our opinion and experience in the area of digital skills the digital competence development in the future should rely on two key principles:

- 1) The digital competence framework for citizens (DigComp 2.0 refined to fit this new purpose) should be used as the framework for digital competence development
- 2) The acquired competences should be validated through practical and neutral systems compatible with DigComp. The European Commission should create a system in which practical digital skills training and certification programmes would be reviewed and accredited at European level in line with DigComp (example of a similar exercise can be found in



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UNESCO's paper 'A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills for Indicator 4.4.2'). This would allow to accurately measure the quality and results of the digital skills training and evaluate the 'return on investment' of the European and national funds. More details can be found in the [CEPIS position paper on digital skills policies](#).