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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022
on learning for the green transition and sustainable development

(2022/C 243/01)

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

1. Across the Union, while many Member States have made good progress in the implementation of policies and programmes of learning to support the green transition and to promote learning for sustainable development, there is nonetheless a need to continue and step up efforts in that regard. Policy and practice for this kind of learning should be further stimulated and supported. It is necessary to recognise the need for interconnected learning across the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development, while placing a specific focus on the environmental pillar.

2. The European Green Deal (¹), the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (²), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strategy Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 and the related United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) work (³) highlight the key role of schools, higher education and other education and training institutions in engaging with learners, parents, educators (⁴) and the wider community on the changes needed for a successful, just and inclusive green transition. In its conclusions on ‘Biodiversity – the need for urgent action’ (⁴), the Council stressed that investing in education, among other areas, is key in gathering the best data and finding the best solutions in this regard. The EU Youth Strategy identifies a sustainable green Europe as a goal and calls for all young people to be environmentally active and educated.

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³ Including the new framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030.
⁴ For the purposes of this Recommendation, the term ‘educators’ includes teachers, trainers, youth workers, teacher educators and all professionals in formal, non-formal and informal education.
⁵ 12210/20.
3. Learning for the green transition and sustainable development supports learners of all ages in acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live more sustainably, in changing patterns of consumption and production, in embracing healthier lifestyles and in contributing – both individually and collectively – to a more sustainable economy and society. It also contributes to building the skills and competences increasingly needed in the labour market. It promotes understanding of the interconnected global challenges we face, including the climate crisis, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, all of which have environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions.

4. The Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, notably Target 4.7, call for all learners to acquire by 2030 the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development (\(^6\)).

5. The Communication on the European Education Area (\(^7\)), the European Pillar of Social Rights (\(^8\)), the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (\(^9\)) and the Communication on a new ERA for Research and Innovation (\(^10\)) call for education and training policies and investments to be geared towards inclusive green and digital transitions for future resilience and prosperity.

6. The key competences, as defined in the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (\(^11\)), aim to support people across Europe in gaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for personal fulfillment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship in a time of rapid and profound change.

7. The European Skills Agenda (\(^12\)) announced support for the development of a core, green skills set for the labour market with a view to creating a generation of environment-conscious professionals and green economic operators, integrating environmental and climate considerations into general education, higher education, vocational education and training as well as research. Europe needs highly competent professionals to support the green transition and to be a world leader in sustainable technologies.

8. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (\(^13\)) and the Osnabrück Declaration recognise the VET sector as key for the digital and green transitions.

9. The European Climate Pact invites individuals, communities and organisations to participate in climate action and building a greener Europe by offering opportunities to learn about climate change, develop and implement solutions, and connect with others to multiply the impact of those solutions. The Education for Climate Coalition aims to create a community led by students and teachers, together with their schools and networks and other educational actors, to learn from as many relevant experiences as possible, and bridge fragmentation between education sectors, domains and people.

10. The Digital Education Action Plan (\(^14\)) provides a vision for high-quality, inclusive and accessible European digital education and training and underscores the importance of digital technologies as powerful enablers for the green transition whilst, at the same time, facilitating a move towards sustainable behaviour in both the development and use of digital products.

\(^7\) COM(2020) 625 final.
\(^12\) COM(2020) 274 final.
\(^14\) COM(2020) 624 final.
11. The New European Bauhaus brings a cultural and creative dimension to the European Green Deal, aiming to demonstrate how sustainable innovation offers tangible, positive changes in our daily life, including in school buildings and other learning environments.

12. UNESCO, through its Education for Sustainable Development programme, has been working to make education and training a more central and visible part of the international response to the climate crisis and to deliver on all Sustainable Development Goals, notably Target 4.7 on education for sustainable development. Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, parties commit to promoting and cooperating on climate change in the context of sustainable development in all dimensions, in particular on education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information.

13. There is a growing awareness and desire among young people to engage in sustainable development issues, particularly environmental and climate issues. The results of a Eurobarometer released in May 2022 indicate that young people in the EU consider ‘protecting the environment and fighting climate change’ to be one of the key priorities the European Year of Youth (2022) should focus on. OECD data (\( ^{15} \)) from 2018 already demonstrate a high awareness among 15-year-olds of climate change and the environmental crisis and the need to address it. However, the same OECD data show that far fewer students feel a sense of agency to make a real difference. The extent of the climate and environmental crisis can lead to learners feeling overwhelmed and disempowered, which can be exacerbated by inaccurate information and disinformation.

14. It is of great importance that education and training systems and institutions respond to the growing youth voice on the climate and biodiversity crises and involve young people in designing solutions related to learning for the green transition and sustainable development and taking action for a sustainable future. The 2022 European Year of Youth plays an important role in further stimulating youth engagement.

15. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted our close links with nature and put renewed focus on education and training systems. Lessons have been learned about new possibilities for education and training, including blended learning approaches in different settings (including online), engagement and autonomy of learners and the links between formal education and the wider community. The pandemic also increased a long-standing concern for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children, young people and adults.

16. Individual early childhood education and care centres, schools, higher education institutions, research organisations, VET providers and local communities are becoming increasingly active in relation to the climate and biodiversity crises. However, sustainability is not yet a systemic feature of education and training across the EU.

17. In many countries, learning for sustainability and equally viable concepts, such as education for sustainable development and global citizenship education, have been taken up in policies, strategies and curricula. However, educators need further targeted support, expertise, and training opportunities to incorporate the principles of the green transition and sustainable development in their teaching and training practices. They often feel insufficiently equipped to deal with eco-anxiety and eco-pessimism and to help learners engage with climate and environmental issues in a positive way.

18. Whole-institution approaches to sustainability incorporating all areas of activity are not always sufficiently present. Such approaches can include teaching and learning; governance; research and innovation; and infrastructure, facilities and operations, and should engage learners, staff, parents, and local and wider communities.

\(^{15}\) OECD (2020), Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World? PISA 2018, Volume VI.
19. The potential and opportunity to complement and strengthen other education and training agendas needs to be further explored. Teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development can fully support policies and programmes for health, well-being and inclusion; active and global citizenship; solidarity; student-centred learning; research and innovation; and the digital transformation, including artificial intelligence (16).

20. Integrating the education and training dimension systematically into other policies related to the green transition and sustainable development in a lifelong perspective can support implementation of those policies. It can also connect different sectors of society and the economy and embed sustainability effectively in education and training.

21. This Recommendation fully respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. It recognises that the level of autonomy enjoyed by education and training institutions varies widely across Member States. In some Member States, education and training institutions, teacher education institutions, as well as teachers and trainers, enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The Recommendation will be implemented according to national circumstances and in cooperation with Member States.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES, in full respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and acknowledging varying degrees of autonomy of education and training institutions, according to national circumstances,

1. Step up and strengthen efforts to support education and training systems in taking action for the green transition and sustainable development so that learners of all ages and from all backgrounds can access high-quality, equitable and inclusive education and training on sustainability, climate change, environmental protection and biodiversity, with due concern for environmental, social and economic considerations.

2. Establish learning for the green transition and sustainable development as one of the priority areas in education and training policies and programmes in order to support and enable the sector to contribute to a sustainable future, embedded in a holistic understanding of education. Implement and further develop comprehensive and collaborative approaches to teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development involving all relevant parties in the education and training system, and stakeholders from other relevant sectors.

3. Provide a range of learning opportunities in formal, non-formal and informal settings, so that individuals of all ages can prepare for and actively contribute to the green transition and take action for an environmentally sound, sustainable, circular and climate-neutral economy and just, inclusive and peaceful societies.

4. Consider the following measures at the level of the system:

a) Align, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, strategies and plans in education and training with the green transition and sustainable development, including those related to curricula and assessment and educators’ initial training and continuing professional development. Support implementation of national and other strategies and policies, including on related concepts such as education for sustainable development, through mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring.

b) Invest, where appropriate, in and provide training on green and sustainable equipment, resources and infrastructure (buildings, grounds and technology) for learning, socialising and recreation to ensure healthy, safe, inclusive, creative and resilient learning environments.

(16) The International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI), under the auspices of UNESCO, is the first global centre that addresses in its activities artificial intelligence, education and sustainable development.
c) Raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities of learning for the green transition and sustainable development, and support formal and non-formal education and training institutions, including early childhood education and care, to make climate change, environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability issues relevant to the daily lives of their learners and foster a culture of sustainability.

d) Develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners of all ages to live more sustainably, promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, adopt healthier and more environmentally-conscious lifestyles and contribute individually and collectively to the transformation of our societies.

e) Support and enhance teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development by providing infrastructure, digital tools and resources and supporting educators' digital competences.

f) Involve all learners in meaningful and coordinated ways in proposing and co-creating approaches to what, how and where they learn about – and for – the green transition and sustainable development. Encourage a gender-balanced participation of learners from all backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities. Empower all learners to participate in and engage with decision-making at the level of their institution as well as their local and wider communities.

g) Develop and support, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, curriculum programmes and frameworks, allowing the time and space for learners to develop sustainability competences from an early age. Intergenerational learning and local examples, problems and responses can make curricula more relevant to learners, demonstrating that climate change, biodiversity, environmental protection and sustainability are local and actionable.

h) Support cooperation and networking on sustainability, environmental protection and biodiversity, involving for example local authorities, youth work and youth organisations, centres of environmental education and training, centres of global learning, forests, parks, farms, museums, libraries, non-governmental organisations, research, consumer organisations and business, thus strengthening the links between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

i) Support scaling up of good practices and pedagogical research on teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development at all levels and types of education and training.

5. Further support learners by considering the following measures:

a) Provide learners, from the time they are in pre-school, with opportunities to understand, engage with and value the natural world and its biodiversity, create a sense of curiosity and wonder and learn to act for sustainability, individually and collectively.

b) Strengthen, including through financial support in accordance with national financial support schemes, high-quality lifelong learning for the green transition and sustainable development, including traineeships, apprenticeships, volunteering, extra-curricular activities, youth work activities and other forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning and the links between them. Stimulate and recognise civic engagement actions and programmes in that regard.

(17) The concept of ‘sustainability competences’ as described in GreenComp, the European sustainability competence framework, covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by learners of all ages to live, work and act in a sustainable manner (including critical thinking, systems thinking and connection to nature). ’Green skills’ relates to professional skills needed by all sectors and at all levels in the labour market for the green transition, including the creation of new green jobs.
c) Facilitate learning methods and approaches that are collaborative, experiential, practically oriented and relevant to local contexts and traditions and support interdisciplinary and cross-curricular activities. This includes giving learners hands-on opportunities to observe and care for nature, and to reduce, repair, reuse and recycle, thereby helping them to understand the importance of sustainable lifestyles and the circular economy.

d) Provide fact-based and accessible information on the climate, environmental and biodiversity crisis and its drivers, as agreed under the Aarhus Convention (18).

e) Develop problem-solving and collaboration skills; foster critical thinking, media literacy skills and systems thinking; and support positive action, including volunteering, to confront and reduce the fear and disempowerment that learners might experience in the face of the planetary crises.

6. Further support educators to facilitate learning for the green transition and sustainable development by considering the following measures:

a) Recognise that all educators, whatever their discipline or sector of education, are sustainability educators who need to support their learners in preparing for the green transition. Enable them to raise their learners' awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Include, consult and support educators on curriculum and programme development and other educational reforms related to the green transition and sustainable development and on the design of appropriate professional development.

b) Support integration of the green transition and sustainable development into initial teacher and trainer education programmes; in continuing professional development programmes; and in teacher professional standards and frameworks, in order to support educators' competence development with regard to sustainability.

c) Support mentoring schemes and professional development programmes at the level of the institutions. Support educators in using digital tools and technologies in their practice to enhance teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development.

d) Further develop and explore opportunities and incentives for educators to take part in professional development programmes related to sustainability, for example by considering them in career progression and development and creating roles for educators such as sustainability coordinator.

e) Support educators, including by providing the necessary time and space, in adopting pedagogies that enhance teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development in interdisciplinary ways and develop the socio-emotional aspects of learning, so that all learners can become agents of change and learn to reflect and act, both individually and collectively, locally and globally, for a more sustainable world.

f) Encourage and enable, where appropriate, transformative and interdisciplinary teaching and learning using both traditional and innovative learning approaches, including hands-on learning, the STEAM approach (19), hackathons, service learning and gamification.

g) Develop and make available resources to support educators, including regarding assessment. Support educators in using traditional and new tools and materials to teach and train for the green transition and sustainable development in a range of indoor and outdoor, and digital and non-digital, settings. Provide access to centres of expertise, including centres for environmental education and training.

h) Encourage the research and innovation community to engage with formal, non-formal and informal education and training providers to support educators in the green transition and sustainable development. Support participation in exploratory projects and research related to the climate emergency, environmental crisis and sustainability.


(19) The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) approach embraces the creative potential of connecting STEM education with the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences.
7. Continue to support formal and non-formal education and training institutions in effectively integrating, where appropriate, the green transition and sustainable development across all their activities and operations, by considering the following measures:

a) Encourage and facilitate effective whole-institution approaches to sustainability which encompass teaching and learning; vision, planning and governance; active learner and staff participation; involvement of families; management of buildings and resources; partnerships with local and wider communities; and research and innovation. Support education leaders in managing organisational change with dedicated professional development and guidance for their roles.

b) Support education and training institutions in designing, monitoring and evaluating their sustainability strategies and/or embedding sustainability in existing processes and measures (e.g. school development plans, higher education mission statements and strategies). Recognise that this is a long-term process requiring small measurable steps which are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis, including through self-evaluation by the institution.

c) In accordance with their institutional autonomy, encourage and support early childhood education and care centres, schools, higher education institutions, VET providers, adult learning institutions and other education providers to take part in eco-label initiatives which can bring environmental, social, educational and economic benefits. Provide support structures for such schemes, e.g. agencies or bodies to support whole-institution approaches, mentoring and networking, templates and guidance, and financial support.

d) Focus part of the internal and/or external review and quality assurance mechanisms of education and training organisations on sustainability. Recognise effective engagement by higher education institutions through appropriate means, including, for example, funding mechanisms.

e) Further embed the green transition and sustainable development into programmes, syllabuses and modules in VET and higher education (in accordance with institutional autonomy and academic freedom), across a range of disciplines, including business studies, social sciences, pedagogical sciences, humanities, arts, architecture and engineering, land use planning and management. Make use of resources and materials developed by environmental and educational non-governmental organisations and other relevant bodies.

f) Support higher education, VET and adult learning institutions in the development of small and tailored learning courses on the green transition and sustainable development, that can lead, among others, to micro-credentials, in order to deepen, broaden and update professional competences.

g) Promote partnerships with all disciplines and actors, including business, the arts, farms, cultural heritage, sport, youth, research institutes, civil society organisations, the educational resources industry (including technology, publishing and other curriculum equipment) and educational research. Support the development of extracurricular, summer and other programmes while providing support for internships in, for example, laboratories, businesses, research institutions and non-governmental organisations.

h) Support programmes that promote sustainability innovation and entrepreneurship. Strengthen higher education and VET institutions to establish or reinforce sustainability hubs that will enhance innovation and entrepreneurship for the green transition and sustainable development, the circular economy and biodiversity.

8. Where appropriate, mobilise national and EU funds for investment in infrastructure, training, tools and resources to increase the resilience and preparedness of formal and non-formal education and training for the green transition, in particular Erasmus+, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Solidarity Corps, European Social Fund Plus, European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, European Regional Development Fund, the Technical Support Instrument, Digital Europe programme, Horizon Europe and InvestEU.

9. Invest in monitoring, research and evaluation of the policy challenges and of the impact of these initiatives in order to build on lessons learnt and inform policymaking. This can include implementation of existing indicators and targets, including at international level.
HEREBY INVITES THE COMMISSION, WITH DUE REGARD FOR SUBSIDIARITY AND NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TO:

1. Facilitate cooperation and peer learning among Member States and stakeholders on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, through:
   a) The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (20), where education and training for the green transition is a key priority area.
   b) Disseminating and encouraging the use of opportunities to promote, support and enable formal and non-formal education and training for the green transition and sustainable development within EU funding programmes, such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, LIFE, European Social Fund Plus, European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, Horizon Europe, including Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, the Development Education and Awareness Raising programme and the Technical Support Instrument.
   c) Sharing good practice from Erasmus+ staff exchanges, projects and networks, including through the European Universities alliances, the eTwinning online community, the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, as well as the Centres of Vocational Excellence, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.
   d) Identifying, documenting and sharing good practices, including through existing online platforms (21), and supporting the networking of national and other organisations active in education and the green transition and sustainable development in formal and non-formal education and training.
   e) Involving young people in the implementation of the Recommendation, in particular through the European Year of Youth 2022 and the EU Youth Dialogue, to ensure that the opinions, views and needs of young people and youth organisations are fully taken into account.
   f) Creating synergies with the Education for Climate Coalition and the New European Bauhaus.

2. Develop, share and make available, for voluntary use, resources, materials and research on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, in cooperation with Member States, including on GreenComp, the new European sustainability competence framework.

3. Support educators in teaching for the green transition and sustainable development by:
   a) providing resources and support materials for voluntary use on the European School Education Platform, EPALE and the European Youth Portal;
   b) recognising outstanding efforts in teaching and learning for the green transition and sustainable development through EU award schemes, including the European Innovative Teaching Award, eTwinning Prize and the European Vocational Skills Awards.

4. Monitor the development of green skills or attitudes towards environmental sustainability by higher education, VET graduates and early career researchers, without creating new reporting obligations or any additional burden for the Member States, through existing European surveys, such as the European graduate tracking initiative, for example by including questions about such attitudes in these surveys.

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(21) This could include the Education for Climate Coalition, the forthcoming European School Education Platform, the Learning Corner, Science is Wonderful! Platform, the European Youth Portal, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE), Scientix, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and the Pact for Skills.
5. Monitor progress on education for the green transition and sustainable development within the framework of existing reports on the European Education Area and the European Green Deal, without creating new reporting obligations or any additional burden for the Member States. This includes supporting the development of possible indicators or EU-level targets on sustainability as set out in the Council Resolution on the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030).

6. Strengthen cooperation with existing international organisations, notably UNESCO and other UN bodies, including UNECE, to foster an approach to education and training for the green transition and sustainable development with policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders in and between Member States, which incorporates equity, inclusion and justice, in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals and the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Roadmap 2030.

7. Continue to reinforce the green dimension of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, in both cases through sustainable mobility, online cooperation, green practices in projects and a strong focus on the green transition and sustainable development in cooperation between various education, training and youth stakeholders.

Done at Luxembourg, 16 June 2022.

For the Council
The President
O. DUSSOPT
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022
on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability
(2022/C 243/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 149 and 292, 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

1. Within Europe, a growing number of people need to update and improve their knowledge, skills and competences to fill the gap between their formal education and training and the needs of a fast-changing society and labour market. The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital and green transitions have accelerated the pace of change in how we live, learn and work. They have also highlighted the need for people to be better equipped to deal with current and future challenges. The pandemic has affected the career prospects of both young people and adults. It has also increased unemployment and damaged the physical, mental and emotional well-being of hundreds of millions of people in Europe.

2. One of the major challenges facing European businesses and employers is an insufficient supply of relevant skills in the EU labour market. Simultaneously, workers are facing unprecedented changes in how work is organised. In addition, task profiles and skills requirements are changing fundamentally due to the digital and green transitions. As outlined in Council Decision (EU) 2021/1868 of 15 October 2021 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (1), ‘Member States and the Union are to work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce, as well as labour markets that are future-oriented and responsive to economic change’. Continuous upskilling and reskilling are essential for workers to respond to the needs of their current job or to transition to new jobs and expanding sectors, such as the green and digital sectors, in particular in the context of demographic ageing.

3. People need access to quality teaching and learning provided in different ways and settings, to develop their personal, social, cultural and professional knowledge, skills and competences. There have been calls for education and training systems to become more flexible and to find solutions to deliver more learner-centred, accessible and inclusive learning to a wider range of profiles. Non-formal providers of education and training are also addressing this need by providing new and innovative opportunities for upskilling and reskilling.

4. An effective culture of lifelong learning is key to ensuring that everyone has the knowledge, skills and competences they need to thrive in society, the labour market and their personal lives. It is essential that people can access quality and relevant education and training, upskilling and reskilling throughout their lives. Lifelong learning opportunities should be part of the long-term strategy of education and training institutions to improve their responsiveness to the fast-changing needs of employers and learners. This would enable a more diverse body of learners (including graduates of these institutions and other adult learners) to upskill and reskill. It is recommended that higher education institutions, vocational education and training (VET) institutions, adult learning providers and other providers of micro-credentials, including employers, cooperate and integrate the latest research findings in the design and update of learning opportunities.

5. Micro-credentials could help certify the outcomes of small, tailored learning experiences. They make possible the targeted, flexible acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences to meet new and emerging needs in society and the labour market and make it possible for individuals to fill the skill gaps they need to succeed in a fast-changing environment, while not replacing traditional qualifications. They can, where appropriate, complement existing qualifications, providing added value while not undermining the core principle of full degree programmes in initial education and training. Micro-credentials could be designed and issued by a variety of providers in different learning settings (formal, non-formal and informal learning settings).

6. Despite their increasing use, there is no common definition of, or standards for, micro-credentials in Europe. This limits the understanding and uptake of micro-credentials, and therefore undermines the potential of micro-credentials to facilitate flexible learning and career pathways. This recommendation aims to support the building of trust in micro-credentials across Europe among all those involved, whether providers or beneficiaries.

7. In its first principle, the European Pillar of Social Rights states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable people to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labour market, everywhere in the European Union. The fourth principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights states that everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve their employment or self-employment prospects. This right to assistance includes the right to receive support for training and re-qualification. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan refers to micro-credentials as an innovative instrument that ‘can facilitate flexible learning pathways and support workers on their job or during professional transitions’. Micro-credentials can play a role in delivering on the EU’s headline targets to be achieved by 2030, including a target of 60% of all adults participating in training every year and an employment rate of at least 78%. Both these targets were welcomed by EU leaders, social partners and civil society, at the Porto Social Summit and then by the European Council at its meeting on 24-25 June 2021.

8. In parallel to the Action Plan, the Commission adopted a Recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis (the ‘EASE’ Recommendation). The Recommendation offers concrete policy guidance to Member States on developing coherent policy packages to ease job transitions and foster a job-rich recovery from COVID-19. The policy guidance covers upskilling and reskilling opportunities and support measures.

9. The European Skills Agenda announced, among its 12 flagship actions, a new initiative on a European approach to micro-credentials. This new initiative aims to support the quality, transparency and uptake of micro-credentials across the EU. The Skills Agenda also announced an initiative on individual learning accounts that could help close existing gaps in access to education and training for working age adults and enable people to manage labour market transitions successfully. Micro-credentials can be used as part of the education and training made available to people to underpin the operation of these individual learning accounts.

10. The Commission Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 announced that the Commission will work to develop a European approach to micro-credentials to help widen learning opportunities and strengthen the role played in lifelong learning by both higher education institutions and VET institutions.

11. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience calls on the Commission to ‘explore the concept and use of micro-credentials’.

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(6) COM(2020) 625 final.
12. The Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (8) presents the exploration of the concept and use of micro-credentials as one of the concrete issues and actions for priority area 2 of the strategic framework (Lifelong learning and mobility).

13. The Council conclusions on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education (9) stress that ‘although not deviating from and undermining the core principle of full degree programmes, micro-credentials could help widen learning opportunities to accommodate non-traditional learners and the demand for new skills in the labour market; make the learning experience more flexible and modular; support access to higher education; and engage learners, regardless of their previous qualifications or backgrounds, promoting reskilling and upskilling opportunities, while ensuring quality education’.

14. Ministers for Education of the European Higher Education Area committed in the Rome Communiqué of the intergovernmental Bologna Process (10) to help their higher education institutions to: (i) diversify their learning offer; and (ii) innovate in educational content and modes of delivery. In addition to full degree programmes, and while preserving their right to design study programmes and to regulate questions of credit transfer independently, many higher education institutions offer or plan to offer smaller units of learning. These smaller units can help learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal skills and competences at various stages in their lives. Cooperation under the Bologna Process will explore how, and to what extent, these smaller, flexible units of learning – including those leading to micro-credentials – can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by using common tools.

15. Education and training systems should cater for the diverse individual needs, abilities and capacities of all learners. They should also offer learning opportunities to all, including in non-formal and informal settings as underlined by the Council conclusions on equity and inclusion in education and training in order to promote educational success for all (11). Well-designed micro-credentials can be used as part of targeted measures to support inclusion and accessibility to education and training for a wider range of learners. This wider range of learners includes disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities, the elderly, low-qualified/skilled people, minorities, people with a migrant background, refugees and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their socio-economically disadvantaged situation). Micro-credentials can also be used to help better orient students and facilitate access to and success in learning and training and support the school-to-work transition. The expected growth in the number of refugees and asylum applicants will require the development of strategies to effectively integrate these groups into education, training and labour systems. Guidance and mutual learning across the EU in relation to the design and issuance of micro-credentials can foster inclusion and ensure that learners from all groups of society can access their benefits.

16. Micro-credentials can also support the professional development and mobility of workers, including people in non-standard forms of work, such as those in the platform economy (12), who may have difficulties accessing training depending on their employment status (13).

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(11) OJ C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 3.
(12) ‘[... the notion of the online platform economy should be understood to cover all economic activity arising out of actual or intended commercial transactions in the internal market and facilitated directly or indirectly by online platforms, in particular online intermediation services and online search engines’; Commission Decision of 26 April 2018 on setting up the group of experts for the Observatory on the Online Platform Economy, C(2018) 2393 final, 26 April 2018, p. 1.
(13) European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers – new forms of employment linked to digital development (2019/2186(INI)) called for the education and training of platform workers to be addressed in the context of the EU approach to micro-credentials.
17. Micro-credentials could play an active role in delivering on EU policy initiatives to advance the digital and green transitions. Micro-credentials could: (i) underpin the goals of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 (14) to help provide flexible, accessible learning opportunities for digital skills; and (ii) deliver on the targets of the Commission’s 2030 Digital Compass plan to develop a digitally skilled population and highly skilled digital professionals in Europe by 2030. Micro-credentials could also play a role in delivering on the European Green Deal (15), which is Europe’s growth strategy aiming to transform its economy and society and put them on a more sustainable path.

18. The Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (16) provides a common reference framework to help people and organisations compare both different qualification systems and the levels of qualifications from those systems. As a European reference framework, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is open to all types and levels of qualifications and represents the common standard reference for transparency, portability and comparability. The EQF is also open to micro-credentials if and where they are first included in national qualifications frameworks.

19. The Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (17) invited Member States to put in place by 2018 – according to national circumstances and specificities and as they deem appropriate – arrangements for validating non-formal and informal learning. These arrangements for validation mean that people can have validated the knowledge, skills and competences which they have acquired through non-formal and informal learning. These arrangements for validation also enable people to obtain a full qualification or, where applicable, a partial qualification. The 2020 evaluation of the Recommendation (18) called for greater development of the links between validation and micro-credentials.

20. Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC (19) sets out the basis for providing web-based tools enabling people to manage their career and lifelong learning with authentication services for credentials which make micro-credentials portable.

21. The relevance, development and updating of micro-credentials depends on:

i) cooperation and collaboration between regional and national authorities, education and training organisations and;

ii) sectoral and cross-industry social dialogue (this social dialogue should involve organisations that represent workers and employers from both the private and public sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and professional and managerial staff).

22. This Recommendation fully respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of education and vocational training in accordance with national circumstances, and in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

23. This Recommendation is without prejudice to Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU on the recognition of professional qualifications and the regime of automatic recognition provided therein,

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION to be implemented in accordance with regional, national and Union legislation and priorities, national circumstances and available resources, including the socio-economic situation and the characteristics of national education, training, lifelong learning and employment systems, and in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders:

(14) COM(2020) 624 final.
(18) SWD (2020) 121 final.
Objectives

1. Member States are recommended to adopt a European approach to micro-credentials with the objective of:

   a) enabling individuals to acquire, update and improve the knowledge, skills and competences they need to thrive in an evolving labour market and society, to benefit fully from a socially fair recovery and just transitions to the green and digital economy and to be better equipped to deal with current and future challenges;

   b) supporting the preparedness of providers of micro-credentials to enhance the quality, transparency, accessibility and flexibility of the learning offering in order to empower individuals to forge personalised learning and career pathways;

   c) fostering inclusiveness, access and equal opportunities and contributing to the achievement of resilience, social fairness and prosperity for all, in a context of demographic and societal changes and throughout all phases of economic cycles.

2. Member States are recommended to use micro-credentials, where appropriate, as a tool to strengthen and complement existing learning opportunities, increase participation in lifelong learning and help reach the target of 60% of all adults participating in training every year as set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and as welcomed by EU leaders and approved by the Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030 (20).

Scope

3. This Recommendation covers micro-credentials, as well as policies that can support their effective design, issuance and use.

4. Micro-credentials can be used to complement and enhance education, training, lifelong learning and employability ecosystems. The measures outlined in this Recommendation are aimed at strengthening opportunities for learning and employability without disrupting initial, higher education, vocational education and training (VET) systems, and without undermining and replacing existing qualifications and degrees. The measures recommend the establishment of a common European approach to the ongoing and emerging provision of micro-credentials in the European Union and set out a definition and guidance for the design, issuance and description of micro-credentials to improve their quality and transparency and facilitate their uptake.

Definitions

5. For the purposes of this Recommendation, the following definitions apply:

   a) 'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

b) *Providers of micro-credentials* means education and training institutions and organisations, social partners (i.e. organisations representing workers and employers), employers and industry, civil society organisations, public employment services (PES) and regional and national authorities, and other types of actors designing, delivering and issuing micro-credentials for formal, non-formal and informal learning. This is without prejudice to regional and national legislation and circumstances.

c) *Learning settings* means the diverse, physical, online, blended (21), virtual and digital locations, contexts and cultures in which people learn, encompassing all settings in which formal, non-formal and informal learning can occur.

d) *Formal learning* means learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma; it includes systems of general education, initial, continuing and tertiary vocational education and training and higher education (22).

e) *Non-formal learning* means learning which takes place outside formal education and training through planned activities in terms of learning objectives and learning time and where some form of learning support is present (23).

f) *Informal learning* means learning resulting from daily activities and experiences which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner’s perspective (24). It does not automatically lead to a micro-credential but can be considered in the context of validation arrangements which may identify, document, assess and/or certify an individual’s learning outcomes.

g) *Portability* means the ability for a credential-holder to store their micro-credentials in a system of their choice, to share the credential with a party of their choice (whether national or transnational) and for all parties in the exchange to be able to understand the content and verify the authenticity of the credentials. This enables portability between and within education and training sectors, in the labour market and across countries.

h) *Stackability* means the possibility, where relevant, to combine different micro-credentials and build logically upon each other. Decisions to ‘stack’ or combine credentials lie with the receiving organisation (e.g. education and training institutions, employers, etc.) in line with their practices and should support the goals and needs of the learner. Stacking does not create an automatic entitlement to a qualification or a degree. Such decisions are made by regional and national authorities or institutions in line with their awarding processes.

i) *Assessment* means the process or method used to evaluate, measure and eventually describe the learning outcomes acquired by individuals through formal, non-formal or informal settings. Assessment is performed by the provider or other recognised assessment providers.

**Definition and European standard elements to describe a micro-credential**

6. Member States are recommended to adopt and promote the use of:

a) the definition of micro-credentials as set out in paragraph 5(a);

b) the European standard elements to describe a micro-credential (as described in Annex I) including the following mandatory elements:

i) identification of the learner

ii) title of the micro-credential

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(21) ‘Blended learning’ in formal education and training is the term used to describe when a school, educator or student takes more than one approach to the learning process.


iii) country(ies)/region(s) of the issuer
iv) awarding body(ies)
v) date of issuing
vi) learning outcomes
vii) notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS, wherever possible)
viii) level (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (European Qualifications Framework, Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area), if applicable
ix) type of assessment
x) form of participation in the learning activity
xi) type of quality assurance used to underpin the micro-credential
c) the European principles for the design and issuance of micro-credentials (as described in Annex II).

Development of the ecosystem for micro-credentials

7. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to facilitate the ongoing and emerging development of micro-credentials within formal learning settings, including by:

a) supporting the exploration by higher education institutions of the role of micro-credentials in offering learning opportunities to diverse learners, in particular by widening an attractive, accessible, inclusive and learner-centred offer of lifelong learning activities, including through the activities of the alliances of ‘European Universities’ (25), where applicable;

b) supporting the exploration by vocational education and training institutions and other VET providers of the role of micro-credentials in continuing vocational education and training in supporting upskilling and reskilling of adults, including through the activities of VET Centres of Vocational Excellence, where applicable;

c) considering providing public funding, according to national circumstances, for the development and provision of small education and training activities leading to micro-credentials at all levels of education and training, while taking into account institutional autonomy to allow for diversity and creativity.

8. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to support the ongoing and emerging development of micro-credentials within non-formal and informal learning settings, including by:

a) supporting the design and issuance of micro-credentials by providers other than those in paragraph 7 (these providers might include: companies, social partners, civil society organisations, local authorities, community centres, professional associations, research and innovation organisations and private providers), including promoting diversity of funding sources;

b) promoting the development of micro-credentials designed and agreed by employers’ and workers’ representatives through social dialogue, where appropriate;

c) considering adapting procedures for the recognition of prior learning and the validation of non-formal and informal learning to allow for the awarding of micro-credentials.

9. Member States are encouraged to support the quality and transparency of micro-credentials, where appropriate, including by:

a) applying, adapting and developing quality assurance mechanisms for micro-credentials issued by different types of providers, making use of existing mechanisms, wherever possible (see Annex 2);

b) supporting the use of ‘skills-intelligence’ systems for analyses of labour market needs and demographic changes so they can identify any need to develop or update micro-credentials;

c) encouraging providers to publish catalogues of micro-credentials they offer, including, where relevant, their policy on the recognition of micro-credentials issued by other providers;

d) integrating micro-credentials in national qualifications frameworks and systems. Decisions to integrate micro-credentials in regional and national frameworks or systems are made by national authorities or institutions in line with national circumstances.

10. Member States are encouraged to promote and support, where appropriate, effective experimentation, cooperation, governance and partnerships between:

i) education and training institutions;

ii) social partners;

iii) employers and industry;

iv) research and innovation organisations;

v) civil society organisations;

vi) employment and social inclusion services and;

vii) local, regional and national authorities.

This experimentation, cooperation, governance and partnership is important for identifying needs for micro-credentials, co-developing micro-credentials, and updating micro-credentials, as well as for assessing the impact on upskilling and reskilling, lifelong learning and career development.

Delivering on the potential of micro-credentials

11. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to integrate micro-credentials into both education and training systems and skills policies, including by:

a) encouraging the inclusion of education and training offers leading to micro-credentials in catalogues of education and training opportunities that are on offer;

b) using micro-credentials to improve access to education and training for all learners, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities, the elderly, low-qualified/skilled people, minorities, people with a migrant background, refugees and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their socio-economically disadvantaged situation), where appropriate;

c) using micro-credentials to support flexible learning pathways and the transition from upper secondary or VET to tertiary education and adult education where relevant;

d) using micro-credentials that can be integrated in or that can complement degree programmes, where relevant;

e) using micro-credentials as a further means to improve basic and advanced digital skills and competences of a wider range of learners, in line with the Digital Education Action Plan and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan;

f) using micro-credentials to support the development of learning for the green transition and sustainable development as part of the national implementation of the Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development;

g) promoting the use of micro-credentials by education and training institutions and other providers – in cooperation with their surrounding knowledge and innovation ecosystem – to boost the relevance and increase the potential positive impact of micro-credentials on the economy at local and regional level;

h) promoting the understanding and use of micro-credentials through continuing professional development for teachers and trainers, guidance counsellors (e.g. in the context of the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies), as well as academics, researchers and other related staff;
i) promoting the use of micro-credentials for the prompt transfer of the latest research findings into learning opportunities, strengthening synergies between the European Education Area and the European Research Area;

j) exploring the use of micro-credentials in the European Education Area to challenge gender and other discriminatory stereotypes concerning study choices and within educational practices and materials.

12. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to integrate micro-credentials into their employment policies and active labour market policies (i.e. employment services, training support and employment incentives), including by:

a) using micro-credentials, as relevant, to:
   i) address skills mismatches and bottlenecks in given economic sectors and regions and
   ii) upskill and reskill workers for skills and jobs that are in demand on the labour market, in particular in the context of the digital and green transitions.

b) including training leading to micro-credentials in recognised training opportunities that may be linked to individual learning accounts, where they exist, and other systems for training support;

c) promoting the use of micro-credentials as a means of updating and upgrading the skills of self-employed and non-standard workers, including people working through platforms and SMEs;

d) exploring the use of micro-credentials in targeted initiatives to support and motivate disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (such as minimum income recipients, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed and the low-qualified) to re-enter the labour market or continue in employment;

e) exploring a role for micro-credentials within systems for implementing the reinforced Youth Guarantee to support young people, including in preparatory training and good-quality offers of continued education or training;

f) exploring the role of micro-credentials as part of the national implementation of the Recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE);

g) exploring the use of micro-credentials to support the professional development of workers and meet mandatory requirements for upskilling and reskilling in certain jobs and types of work (e.g. for licences, required training and permits).

13. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to encourage and support the European Network of National Information Centres and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC-NARIC networks) or adequate bodies to develop, where relevant, transparent recognition procedures for micro-credentials issued by different types of providers. This should be done in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders mentioned in paragraph 10, including through exploring the possible feasibility of automatic recognition of micro-credentials (*)

14. Member States are recommended, where relevant, to ensure that information and advice on identifying and selecting micro-credentials is incorporated into lifelong learning guidance services. This includes guidance services at higher education institution career centres, PES, private employment services, social services and other guidance services (employment, career, education and training, coaching). Incorporating guidance on micro-credentials in these services should serve the needs of all learners, including disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

15. Member States are recommended, where appropriate, to:

a) define measures by building on relevant existing national arrangements and financial frameworks to implement this Recommendation. This could include links with individual learning accounts where they exist (with due regard for the responsibility and autonomy of education, training and labour-market organisations in the national context).

b) make best use of Union funds and instruments to support the necessary reforms, from the enabling framework to the development and use of micro-credentials.

Commission support

The Council welcomes the Commission's intention, with due regard for subsidiarity and national circumstances and in close cooperation with Member States, to:

16. develop and adapt, where relevant, existing Union tools and services to support the development of micro-credentials by all types of providers, including by:
   a) supporting the development of guidelines on how to foster transparency and apply the current EU and Bologna instruments in the field of higher education to the internal and external quality assurance of micro-credentials;
   b) exploring how to adapt the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System user guide in the field of higher education to integrate micro-credentials;
   c) exploring how to adapt and develop EU tools for skills and qualifications to integrate micro-credentials into VET systems;
   d) fostering the role of ENIC-NARIC and other adequate bodies in the recognition of micro-credentials for further studies and/or employment purposes including by developing guidance and training;
   e) supporting structured discussion on the possibility to include micro-credentials in National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs);
   f) exploring the development of the European Student Card initiative to allow students to share the outcomes of micro-credentials obtained abroad during their studies, in a secure way with other education and training institutions.

17. support cooperation between Member States and stakeholders including by:
   a) supporting sharing of information between regional and national authorities on relevant regional and national policy initiatives and evidence on their impact, making best use of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond;
   b) promoting European cooperation on quality assurance of micro-credentials, thus building reciprocal trust;
   c) incentivising experimentation with and use of micro-credentials by higher education institutions and vocational education and training institutions, including the alliances of 'European Universities' and VET Centres of Excellence to promote and encourage the uptake of micro-credentials by the wider education and training community;
   d) promoting engagement on micro-credentials in Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and other providers of teacher education and teacher training to address teachers’ needs for continuous professional development, where appropriate;
   e) exploring engagement on micro-credentials by social partners, employers and industry, including via the Pact for Skills and linked cooperation initiatives such as the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills, the strengthened European Alliance for Apprenticeships and the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition;
   f) supporting cooperation and exchange of best practices between PES and employers on how to use micro-credentials to support employability in the context of the PES Network;
   g) facilitating co-operation projects among social partners and education and training institutions on how to use and implement micro-credentials to meet skills needs at European, national, local and regional level, and across different sectors.

18. support the technical implementation of the Recommendation by exploring further developments in the Europass platform to provide where relevant:
   a) information on learning opportunities leading to micro-credentials and on providers that adhere to the European approach to micro-credentials;
b) support for authentication of micro-credentials through European digital credentials for learning;  
c) support for the portability, stackability, interoperability, exchange and sharing of information on micro-credentials through a European open standard which specifies a common format for micro-credentials.

19. support further research on:  
i) the uptake of the European approach to micro-credentials, including on their use by education and training providers, employers and social partners;  
ii) particular outcomes and benefits for learners;  
iii) their added value compared to and as a complement to full degrees or qualifications and;  
iv) further evidence on the factors that influence people’s incentives and motivation to take up training.

20. Member States and the Commission should jointly work on improving the scope and relevance of existing data collection on micro-credentials at Union level.

Reporting

21. It is recommended that Member States implement this Recommendation as soon as possible. They are invited to inform the Commission by December 2023 of the corresponding measures to be taken at the appropriate level to support the objectives of this Recommendation.

22. The Commission is invited to monitor the progress made in the implementation of this Recommendation via existing relevant Union monitoring and reporting frameworks, without any additional burden for Member States, in cooperation with them and after consulting the stakeholders concerned, and to report to the Council within five years from the date of its adoption.

Done at Luxembourg, 16 June 2022.

For the Council
The President
O. DUSSOPT
ANNEX I

European standard elements to describe a micro-credential

This annex includes a list of common European standard elements to describe micro-credentials recommended as a resource to support implementation (1).

Mandatory elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of the learner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of the micro-credential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country(ies)/Region(s) of the issuer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awarding body(ies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of issuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits, where possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (EQF, QF-EHEA), if applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form of participation in the learning activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of quality assurance used to underpin the micro-credential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Optional elements, where relevant (non-exhaustive list)

| Prerequisites needed to enrol in the learning activity |
| Supervision and identity verification during assessment (unsupervised with no identity verification, supervised with no identity verification, supervised online, or onsite with identity verification) |
| Grade achieved |
| Integration/stackability options (stand-alone, independent micro-credential/integrated, stackable towards another credential) |
| Further information |

These standard elements will be included in a European data model (2) that specifies a common format for describing micro-credentials. The data model will be available as an open standard to be used by providers of micro-credentials, where relevant, and could support interoperability and easier exchange of data on micro-credentials.

The Commission will develop the data model based on the common standard elements listed above. It will develop this data model in line with:

i) consultation with Member States and stakeholders;

ii) user needs and technological advancements;

iii) changes in labour markets and;

iv) existing approaches to providing education and training.

(1) The use of the European standard elements to describe micro-credentials does not, in itself, imply official validation or recognition, but is a key enabler for it.

(2) Data models are graphical and/or lexical representations of data, specifying their properties, structure, and inter-relationships. They are used as open standards, are free to use, transparent, and built based on consensus.
This data model aims to support consistency of information and demonstrate clear added value. The data model for micro-credentials will be governed as per the Europass Decision, in particular Articles 6(1)(b), 6(1)(d), and 6(2)(b), which already call on the Commission to develop, test and update open standards.
ANNEX II

European principles for the design and issuance of micro-credentials

The 10 principles presented below specify the nature of micro-credentials and offer guidance to Member States, public authorities and providers on the design and issuance of micro-credentials and systems for micro-credentials. The principles highlight the key characteristics of the European approach to micro-credentials that can enable the trust and quality of micro-credentials. The principles are universal and may be applied in any area or sector, if appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Quality</th>
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| **1** | Micro-credentials are subject to internal and external quality assurance by the system producing them (e.g. the education, training or labour market context in which the micro-credential is developed and delivered). Quality assurance processes must be fit-for-purpose, clearly documented and accessible and meet the needs and expectations of learners and stakeholders. **Providers**: External quality assurance is based primarily on the assessment of providers (rather than individual courses) and the effectiveness of their internal quality assurance procedures. Providers should make sure that internal quality assurance covers all the following elements:  
  — the overall quality of the micro-credential itself, based on the standards referred to below;  
  — the quality of the course, where applicable, leading to the micro-credential;  
  — learners’ feedback on the learning experience leading to the micro-credential and;  
  — peers feedback, including other providers and stakeholders, on the learning experience leading to the micro-credential.  
**Standards**: External quality assurance is to be conducted in line with:  
  — Annex IV of the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation, where applicable;  
  — the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, where applicable;  
  — the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (the EQA VET Framework) in the field of vocational education and training, where applicable;  
  — other quality assurance instruments, including registries and labels, to build public trust in micro-credentials, where applicable. |

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<th>Transparency</th>
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| **2** | Micro-credentials are measurable, comparable and understandable, with clear information on learning outcomes, workload, content, level, and the learning offer, as relevant. **Workload**:  
  — Higher education institutions should use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and comply with the principles in Annex V to the EQF Recommendation, where possible, to demonstrate the notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes of the micro-credential.  
  — Providers that do not use the ECTS may use other systems or types of information that can effectively describe learning outcomes and workload, in compliance with the principles in Annex V to the EQF Recommendation.  
**Qualifications framework/systems**:  
  — Micro-credentials may be included in national qualifications frameworks/systems, where relevant, and in line with national priorities and decisions. National qualifications frameworks/systems are referenced to the European qualifications framework and, for higher education qualifications, self-certified to the qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area, which can further support the transparency of, and trust in, micro-credentials. |
Information on the offer of micro-credentials

Systems for micro-credentials should provide transparent and clear information, to underpin guidance systems for learners, in line with national practices and stakeholders needs:

— Information on providers of micro-credentials is published where possible in existing relevant registers. Higher-education providers (and other relevant providers) should be included, where possible, in the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR), based on quality assurance in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG);
— Information on learning opportunities leading to micro-credentials should be accessible and easily exchanged through relevant platforms, including Europass.

3 Relevance

Micro-credentials should be designed and issued as distinct, targeted learning achievements and learning opportunities leading to them are to be updated as necessary, to meet identified learning needs.

Collaboration between education and training organisations, employers, social partners, other providers and users of micro-credentials is encouraged to increase the relevance of the micro-credentials for the labour market.

4 Valid assessment

Micro-credential learning outcomes are assessed against transparent criteria.

5 Learning pathways

Micro-credentials are designed and issued to support flexible learning pathways, including the possibility to validate, recognise and ‘stack’ micro-credentials from across different systems.

Stackability

Micro-credentials are designed to be modular so that other micro-credentials may be added to create larger credentials. Decisions to ‘stack’ or combine credentials lie with the receiving organisation (e.g. education and training institutions, employers, etc.), in line with their practices, and should support the goals and needs of the learner. Stacking does not create an automatic entitlement to a qualification or a degree. Such decisions are made by regional and national authorities or institutions in line with their awarding processes.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Obtaining micro-credentials is possible following assessment of learning outcomes, obtained either through a specific course leading to a micro-credential, or on the basis of assessment of learning outcomes resulting from non-formal and informal learning.

6 Recognition

Micro-credentials have a clear signalling value of learning outcomes for smaller modules of learning. Recognition paves the way for a wider offer of such learning experiences in a comparable way across the EU.

Micro-credentials are recognised, where possible, by the competent authorities, for academic, training or employment purposes, based on the information provided according to the European standard elements (Annex I) and the principles for the design and issuance of micro-credentials (Annex II).

When micro-credentials are issued by formal education providers, they are recognised, where possible, based on standard recognition procedures used in recognising foreign qualifications and learning periods abroad.

This is without prejudice to the right of the competent authorities to define recognition procedures or to verify the authenticity of documents.

7 Portable

Micro-credentials are owned by the credential-holder (the learner) and may be stored and shared easily by the credential-holder, including through secure digital wallets (e.g. Europass), in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. The infrastructure for storing data is based on open standards and data models. This ensures interoperability and seamless exchange of data, and allows for smooth checks of data authenticity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learner-centred</th>
<th>Micro-credentials are designed to meet the needs of the target group of learners. Learners are involved in the internal and external quality assurance processes and their feedback is taken into account as part of the continuous improvement of the micro-credential.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Micro-credentials contain sufficient information to check the identity of the credential-holder (learner), the legal identity of the issuer, the date and place of issuance of the micro-credential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information and guidance</td>
<td>Information and advice on micro-credentials should be incorporated in lifelong learning guidance services and should reach the broadest possible learner groups, in an inclusive way, supporting education, training and career choices.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022
on individual learning accounts
(2022/C 243/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 in conjunction with Article 149 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) A skilled workforce is crucial to strengthening the Union’s sustainable competitiveness, supporting a job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring socially fair digital and green transitions. As labour markets evolve, people need to keep pace by upgrading their skills. New and better skills open up more opportunities and equip people to play an active role in managing transitions in the labour market and participate fully in society, against the backdrop of demographic change. Moreover, adult upskilling and reskilling can be powerful tools in promoting social fairness and inclusion for a just transition.

(2) Article 14(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (1) states that everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. The first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights (the ‘Pillar’), jointly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017 (2), states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. The fourth principle of the Pillar touches on active support for employment, to uphold everyone’s right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. The fifth principle of the Pillar, on secure and adaptable employment, emphasises that, regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship, workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training.

(3) On 25 June 2021, the European Council welcomed the Union headline targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan, in line with the Porto Declaration of 8 May 2021, thereby supporting the ambition of ensuring that, by 2030, at least 60 % of all adults participate in training every year. However, participation in adult learning in the Union has stagnated over the last decade and 21 Member States fell short of the 2020 Union-level target. Taking that into account, the Council adopted the Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030 (3) to support progress towards the Union adult learning headline target. For many adults, such as those in atypical forms of work, employees of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the unemployed, the inactive and the low-qualified, skills development opportunities are too often out of reach.

(4) The European Skills Agenda, adopted by the Commission on 1 July 2020, calls for a skills revolution to turn the ecological and digital transitions into opportunities for a prompt and fair recovery. Inter alia, it announces that the Commission will explore individual learning accounts as a tool to support the upskilling and reskilling of working-age adults, complementing other actions targeting employers and the providers of education and training.

(5) Skills for the green transition and the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce will be needed in the context of the shift to a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, as laid out under the European Green Deal, which aims for climate neutrality by 2050. The Commission communication of 14 July 2021 ‘Fit for 55’ recognises that the green transition can succeed only if the Union has the skilled workforce it needs to stay competitive and points to the flagship actions of the European Skills Agenda to equip people with the skills that are needed for the green and digital transitions.

(6) The Commission communication of 9 March 2021 on Europe’s Digital Decade acknowledges the lack of staff with adequate digital skills, as well as the gender imbalance among information and communication technology (ICT) specialists and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates. It reiterates the objective of ensuring that at least 80% of the Union population have at least basic digital skills by 2030, and proposes a target of 20 million employed ICT specialists with convergence between women and men also by 2030. The Commission proposal of 15 September 2021 on the path to the Digital Decade suggests establishing a framework to take those objectives forward. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 of 30 September 2020 emphasises that technological means should be used to ease accessibility and strengthen flexibility of learning opportunities, including upskilling and reskilling.

(7) The Commission communication of 10 March 2020 entitled ‘A New Industrial Strategy for Europe’ calls for decisive action to make lifelong learning a reality for all and to ensure that education and training keep pace with and help deliver the twin transitions.

(8) The Council conclusions of 8 June 2020 (†) invite Member States, while taking into account national circumstances and respecting the role and autonomy of the social partners, to explore possible models for public and private financing of lifelong learning and the development of skills on an individual level, since sustainable funding is especially important in the context of the shortage of skilled labour, and to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups and low-skilled workers, and call on the Commission, in line with its competences, to support Member States in those efforts.

(9) Insufficient financial support for individuals is one of the main barriers influencing participation in learning. Overall public and private investments are insufficient. Most job-related training in the Union is employer-sponsored. However, many companies, in particular SMEs, do not provide or fund training for their staff, and individuals in atypical work have less or no access to employer-sponsored training. Such inequalities could undermine individuals’ welfare and health, reduce economic competitiveness, result in missed opportunities and barriers to innovation and risk leaving people behind in the transition to more sustainable economic activities.

(10) In addition to direct costs, time constraints are an important factor preventing adults from seeking training. While paid training leave arrangements exist in most Member States (‡), the awareness and take-up of training leave by working-age adults are often low, and the arrangements often do not cover atypical workers or do not allow adults to seek education and training during periods of unemployment or low economic activity.

(11) Many adults, especially among the low-qualified and those furthest from the labour market, are not motivated to take up training. They may not be aware of their own skills needs, and may not know whether support and training are available, or are of good quality and are recognised in the labour market. Furthermore, people may not be motivated to engage in training that has been chosen without consulting them and is not tailored to their needs.

(12) A fresh approach on upskilling and reskilling is needed in the Union. It should complement existing instruments and follow up on political commitments by empowering individuals and by equipping them with the support and tools they need to upskill or reskill, at all skill levels.

(13) In its opinion of 16 August 2021 on the Union initiative on individual learning accounts and strengthening training provision in Europe, the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) argues that such an initiative should contribute to more engagement, motivation and participation of adults in education and training. The main challenge is to improve the matching of skills and jobs and to ensure access to diversified quality training options through more relevant and better-targeted provision. The ACVT highlights in its opinion that the choice of financing mechanisms and tailored incentives by target group at national level should follow national needs and priorities.

(†) Council Conclusions of 8 June 2020 on reskilling and upskilling as a basis for increasing sustainability and employability, in the context of supporting economic recovery and social cohesion (ST 8682/20).

(‡) 24 Member States have training leave arrangements and 12 Member States are signatories of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Paid Educational Leave Convention (as of March 2022).
One possible approach to addressing the problems outlined above is to provide people with direct support through training entitlements in individual learning accounts. It also entails the establishment of a broad enabling framework that grants individuals access to training opportunities, information, guidance, paid training leave and the recognition of training outcomes. This approach may complement existing initiatives at national level.

It is recommended that an individual training entitlement be defined at national level, in line with people’s training needs, and taking into account other existing instruments. Modulating funding according to the needs can increase the efficiency of the initiative. Member States may establish additional training entitlements for individuals most in need, depending on the national context and the changing labour market. For instance, Member States could top up individual learning accounts in strategic sectors, to support the green and digital transitions. In addition to financial entitlements, the relevance, usefulness and recognition of training are key factors affecting participation in upskilling and reskilling. It is also recommended that social partners and relevant stakeholders be consulted on these issues.

Individual learning accounts should allow people to accumulate and use training entitlements over a set period, to be defined at national level, so that they can take up longer or more costly training or train during economic downturns, in response to emerging skills needs. Individuals should be able to preserve their individual training entitlements independently of their labour force or professional status and across career changes. Member States are invited to establish rules for the expiry of entitlements that give learners an incentive to make full use of their entitlements.

The possibility of allowing the preservation of individual training entitlements during periods in which the individual lives in another Member State, or the use of individual training entitlements for accessing recognised and quality assured training from the national registry of their learning account from abroad, should be promoted. The transferability of entitlements between Member States is a desirable feature in the longer term, which needs further exploration, taking into account possible impacts on national labour markets.

To help individuals identify a suitable training pathway and thus increase their motivation to learn, access to career guidance and validation opportunities needs to be available. There is also a need for up-to-date public registries of recognised training through dedicated single national digital portals accessible to all, including people with disabilities, and, preferably, interconnected with the Europass platform.

It is recommended that individual learning accounts be used to access validation, including skills assessment opportunities. The recent evaluation by the Commission of work under the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning points to substantial progress, but also identifies persisting challenges and proposed responses. In particular, it is necessary to provide individuals with tailored support, and to ensure closer coordination with guidance services and effective tailoring of validation initiatives for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Member States are invited to encourage the provision of micro-credentials where relevant, on the basis of identified needs, in line with the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.

This Recommendation supports the implementation of paid training leave. The proper provision of paid training leave would allow workers to keep their salary or a replacement income during periods of training. Member States are invited to enter into dialogue with social partners on arrangements to allow employees to participate in training during working hours using their individual learning accounts, taking into account national training possibilities and schemes. In this regard, the situation of SMEs and micro-enterprises should also be taken into account.

Training entitlements could, for example, allow for recognised training activities worth 30 hours per year for all individuals and 50 hours for individuals most in need.

The Commission communication of 5 May 2021 entitled ‘—Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe’s recovery’ refers to 14 industrial ecosystems for dedicated support, including on skills development of their current and future workforce.


See page 10 of this Official Journal.
(21) Wider outreach and awareness-raising activities and campaigns are key to significantly enhancing the rates of adult participation in learning opportunities, in particular among groups with low awareness of upskilling and reskilling, such as those furthest from the labour market. Cooperation between public authorities, social partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, based on the common understanding that upskilling and reskilling are a means of investment, can increase the effectiveness of outreach and awareness-raising activities. Paying attention to accessibility should facilitate the participation of adults with disabilities.

(22) Monitoring at national level, and the continuous improvement of the individual learning accounts and of the enabling framework, are key to supporting the implementation of this Recommendation. Subsequent adjustments could concern the amount of individual training entitlements, the priority groups or the user-friendly integration of the various elements of the enabling framework.

(23) Adequate funding is a key feature of successful schemes for individual learning accounts. A national scheme of individual learning accounts could facilitate cost-sharing between various funding sources, such as public authorities, employers and funds managed by social partners, by allowing various funding sources to contribute to the individual learning account. A combination of public and private funding sources should ensure the sustainability of the initiative in the Member States, which is fundamental for its success. Such a combination of funding sources facilitates the modulation of support and top-ups by employers for their employees, either voluntarily or as an outcome of collective bargaining agreements.

(24) Union funds which support adult learning schemes, such as the European Social Fund Plus (\textsuperscript{10}), the European Regional Development Fund (\textsuperscript{11}) and the Just Transition Fund (\textsuperscript{12}), as well as, where relevant, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (\textsuperscript{13}) under Next Generation EU and tailor-made expertise through the Technical Support Instrument (\textsuperscript{14}), can support the establishment of individual learning accounts and their enabling framework. Mutual learning, facilitated by the Commission, can also support the process.

(25) This Recommendation is without prejudice to the exclusive competence of the Member States and to the distribution of competences within each Member State at national, regional or local level with regard to financing, as well as to the organisation and content of their adult learning and training systems. It does not prevent the Member States from maintaining or establishing provisions on adult learning and training other than, or more advanced than, those recommended in this Recommendation.

(26) Member States should involve social partners and all relevant stakeholders including civil society organisations, in the design of reforms. This Recommendation fully respects the autonomy of the social partners, including where they are responsible for setting up and managing training schemes.

(27) The measures outlined in this Recommendation do not replace, and are not intended to interfere with, the provision of training by employers, public and private employment services or other education and training providers, nor should they replace public support for education and training institutions or other types of support. Additional administrative burden should be minimised.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

Objectives

1. This Recommendation aims to support Member States’ initiatives to enable more working-age adults to engage in training in order to increase participation rates and reduce skills gaps. It thereby contributes to the Union’s objective of promoting a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress. Specifically, it aims to:

   (a) support all working-age adults in accessing training, including for professional transitions and irrespective of their labour force or professional status;

   (b) increase individuals’ incentives and motivation to seek training.

2. In order to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 1, it is recommended that Member States consider establishing individual learning accounts as a possible means for enabling individuals to participate in labour-market relevant training. To the extent that they decide to establish individual learning accounts, Member States are recommended to put in place an enabling framework, including guidance and validation opportunities, to promote the effective take-up of that training, as laid down in this Recommendation.

Scope

3. This Recommendation covers working-age adults legally residing in a Member State, independently of their level of education and current labour force or professional status. Member States are recommended to establish an individual learning account for each person belonging to this group, in accordance with their national needs and circumstances.

   It is recommended that frontier workers and self-employed persons who work in a Member State other than the Member State where they legally reside be covered in the Member State where they work.

Definitions

4. For the purposes of this Recommendation, the following definitions apply:

   (a) ‘individual training entitlement’ means the right to access a personal budget at an individual’s disposal to cover the direct costs of labour-market-relevant training, guidance and counselling, skills assessment or validation that are eligible for funding;

   (b) ‘individual learning account’ is a delivery mode for individual training entitlements. It is a personal account that allows individuals to accumulate and preserve their entitlements over time, for whichever eligible training, guidance or validation opportunity they deem most useful and whenever they want to, in line with national rules. It grants the individual full ownership of the entitlements, irrespective of the funding source;

   (c) ‘transferability’ of individual training entitlements means that, once conferred, such entitlements remain in the possession of the individual concerned, including during transitions, such as between jobs, from job to learning, from employment to unemployment, and between activity and inactivity;

   (d) ‘enabling framework’ comprises support that promotes the effective take-up of individual training entitlements. This includes career guidance and validation opportunities, a national registry of opportunities that are eligible for funding from individual training entitlements, a single national digital portal to access the individual learning account and national registry, and paid training leave.
Individual learning account

It is recommended that Member States, in line with national practices and needs:

5. set up an individual learning account, which could complement other measures already in place, for every individual covered by the scope of this Recommendation after having consulted social partners and relevant stakeholders;

6. ensure an adequate annual provision for every individual learning account that can be accumulated and used over a set period, to allow for more substantial training;

7. provide additional individual training entitlements to the accounts of individuals who are most in need of upskilling and reskilling, on the basis of national or sectoral needs, the individual's labour-force or contract status or qualification level, and any other relevant circumstances, and in accordance with clear and transparent criteria, after having consulted social partners and relevant stakeholders;

8. invite employers to provide additional individual training entitlements to the individual learning accounts of their workers and other people working in their value chain, in particular those working in SMEs, without interfering with in-company training;

9. invite public and private employment services to provide additional individual training entitlements to the individual learning accounts of individuals most in need of upskilling and reskilling;

10. set the conditions under which individual training entitlements can be accumulated and stored, with a view to striking a balance between allowing individuals to accumulate their entitlements to finance longer training courses and encouraging them to make regular use of their entitlements throughout their working lives; for example, Member States could establish a time limit and upper amount for accumulation and storage;

11. promote the possibility that individual training entitlements which are in an account in a Member State can be used for eligible training, career guidance and validation opportunities in that Member State, even during periods in which the individual is legally residing in another Member State.

Enabling framework

It is recommended that Member States introducing individual learning accounts embed them in an enabling framework that includes:

— Career guidance and validation

12. Member States are recommended to ensure that career guidance services and validation opportunities, including skills assessment opportunities, in person or online, are available and accessible to every owner of an individual learning account, free of charge or by using their individual training entitlements, in line with the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (\(^{(15)}\)).

— A national registry of eligible quality training, career guidance and validation opportunities

13. Member States are recommended to establish and keep updated a public registry of training, career guidance and validation opportunities that are eligible for funding from individual training entitlements (\(^{(16)}\). Career guidance services and validation opportunities provided by Member States free of charge for individuals should also be included in this registry.


\(^{(16)}\) Member States are invited to make this registry compatible with the European Learning Model, a data model that aims to standardise the way in which data on learning are shared and presented. The European Learning Model can be used in different learning contexts such as for describing learning opportunities, qualifications, credentials and accreditation. It builds on the data fields described in Annex VI to the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 15).
14. Member States are encouraged to establish and publish clear rules for the inclusion in the registry of various forms of labour-market-relevant training, career guidance and validation opportunities, based on transparent quality requirements and skills intelligence and in cooperation with social partners and relevant stakeholders. They should review the rules regularly to promote responsiveness to labour-market needs.

15. Where appropriate, Member States are recommended to encourage providers of formal and non-formal learning opportunities to develop and widen their offer on the basis of identified needs, including, for example, by providing micro-credentials, in line with the Recommendation on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, and through the use of Union and national competence frameworks.

16. Member States are recommended to invite social partners, the education and training sector and other relevant stakeholders to participate in the process of defining the eligibility criteria for the training included in the registry.

17. Where relevant, Member States are recommended to open up their national registry in a transparent way to training opportunities offered by providers in other countries.

- Single national digital portal supporting individual learning accounts

18. Member States are invited to allow and help individuals to access their individual learning account and navigate the registry easily through secure electronic authentication on an accessible (17) single national digital portal (17) that can be easily accessed from mobile devices and that, preferably, is interconnected with the Europass platform.

- Paid training leave

19. Member States are recommended to enter into dialogue with social partners on arrangements to allow employees to participate in training during working hours using their individual learning accounts.

20. Member States are recommended to introduce paid training leave or income replacement provisions or review the adequacy of existing provisions, considering:
   (a) their coverage of all types of employment relationship, and the self-employed;
   (b) financial and non-financial support for employers (in particular SMEs) whose employees make use of paid training leave;
   (c) the need to ensure the effective implementation of such provisions.

**Outreach and awareness raising**

21. Member States are recommended to undertake, jointly with social partners, civil society organisations, regional and local organisations and other relevant actors, wide outreach and awareness-raising activities and campaigns, tailored to the needs of potential beneficiaries of the scheme for individual learning accounts. Particular attention should be paid to individuals most in need of upskilling and reskilling as defined at national level, to inform and motivate eligible individuals with regard to their rights and benefits concerning individual learning accounts and the enabling framework. Awareness-raising activities should also address, among others, workers in SMEs.

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(18) Such portals should be established in line with the principles of the Commission communication of 23 March 2017 on a European Interoperability Framework.
Monitoring and continuous improvement

22. Member States introducing individual learning accounts are encouraged to monitor and evaluate at national level the operation of such accounts and the enabling framework, and to make adjustments as needed in order to achieve the objectives of this Recommendation in the most efficient way, for instance as regards the amount of training entitlements, the definition of individuals most in need of upskilling and reskilling and the user-friendly integration of the various elements of the enabling framework. Social partners and relevant stakeholders should be consulted in that process.

Funding

23. Member States are recommended to take steps to ensure the adequate and sustainable funding of the individual learning accounts, taking account of national circumstances and other measures already in place, with particular attention to SMEs.

24. Member States are encouraged to facilitate the combination of various public and private funding sources in order to contribute to the individual training entitlements, including as an outcome of collective bargaining.

25. Member States are recommended to ensure sustainable funding for the enabling framework and the outreach and awareness-raising activities referred to in this Recommendation.

26. Member States are invited to make maximum and most efficient use of Union funds and instruments, in particular the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Technical Support Instrument, in order to:
   (a) set up national individual learning accounts, embedded in an enabling framework, including by developing a single national digital portal for the individual learning accounts and related recognised services, and creating national registries of recognised training;
   (b) provide additional individual training entitlements to the accounts of individuals most in need of upskilling and reskilling, reflecting national circumstances and Union priorities including for the green and digital transitions;
   (c) set up and provide career guidance and validation opportunities;
   (d) organise outreach and awareness-raising activities.

Union support

27. The Council welcomes the Commission's intention, in line with the Commission's competence and with due regard for subsidiarity, to support the implementation of this Recommendation, using the expertise of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Labour Authority (ELA), by:
   (a) facilitating mutual learning among the Member States to support the design and delivery of appropriate measures for the implementation of this Recommendation;
   (b) expanding the knowledge base on individual learning accounts and related issues and developing relevant guidance material;
   (c) exploring, in close cooperation with the Member States, further developments in the Europass platform, in particular to ensure interoperability with the single national digital portals for individual learning accounts, and making visible the learning, career guidance and validation opportunities for which the various national individual training entitlements can be used.
28. Member States are invited to take steps to reach the objectives set out in paragraph 1 of this Recommendation. Progress towards those objectives should be monitored in the context of the multilateral surveillance as part of the European Semester cycle. The Commission should ensure that monitoring uses the information already collected through other monitoring frameworks and avoids duplications, in order to limit the administrative burden.

29. The Commission should assess and evaluate progress in the implementation of this Recommendation, in cooperation with the Member States concerned and after consulting social partners and relevant stakeholders, and report to the Council by 17 June 2027.

Done at Luxembourg 16 June 2022.

For the Council
The President
O. DUSSOPT
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022
on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality
(2022/C 243/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 166(4), and Article 292 in conjunction with Article 149 thereof.

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) Greenhouse gas emissions need to be urgently reduced, in particular to decrease sea level rise and the likelihood of extreme weather events that already affect every region across the globe (1) and to reduce the economic and social costs associated with the effects of global warming (2). The Union and its Member States are Parties to the Paris Agreement adopted on 15 December 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (‘the Paris Agreement’) (3), which binds its Parties to holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

(2) Climate change and environmental degradation pose severe threats that require urgent action, as reaffirmed most recently by the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the Physical Science Basis. Human suffering and economic losses stemming from more frequent climate-related extreme events, such as floods, heatwaves, droughts and forest fires, are becoming more common. In the Union, those losses already average over EUR 12 billion per year (4). Those losses could reach an additional EUR 175 billion, which is 1.38 % of Union GDP, per year if global warming reaches 3°C above pre-industrial levels, as opposed to EUR 65 billion for 2°C and EUR 36 billion per year for 1.5°C. This would disproportionately harm certain groups, notably people already in vulnerable situations and regions already facing challenges.

(3) The communication from the Commission of 11 December 2019 entitled ‘The European Green Deal’ (the ‘European Green Deal’) sets out the strategy for the Union to become the first climate-neutral continent and transform the Union into a sustainable, fairer and more prosperous society that respects the planetary boundaries. The need for a fair transition is an integral part of the European Green Deal, which underlined that no person and no place should be left behind. The European Climate Law (5) sets out a binding Union-wide objective of climate neutrality by 2050 and a binding intermediate target of a net domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. The 8th Environment Action Programme to 2030 (6) aims to accelerate the green transition to a climate-neutral, sustainable, non-toxic, resource-efficient, renewable energy-based, resilient and competitive circular economy in a just, equitable and inclusive way, and to protect, restore and improve the state of the environment.

In light of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, the communication from the Commission of 18 May 2022 entitled ‘REPowerEU Plan’ (the ‘REPowerEU Plan’), in line with the Versailles Declaration of 10 and 11 March 2022, sets out measures to phase out the Union’s dependence on fossil fuels from Russia by diversifying gas supplies and accelerating the reduction of the dependence on fossil fuels, including through rolling out solar, wind and heat pumps, decarbonising industry, and enabling faster permitting of renewable energy projects.

The transformation to a climate neutral economy and society requires comprehensive policy action and substantial investment across many areas, such as climate action, energy, transport, environment, industry, research and innovation (1). To deliver on the binding Union-level target for 2030, on 14 July 2021 the Commission issued a communication entitled “Fit for 55': delivering the EU’s 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality' as well as a number of related legislative proposals (the ‘Fit for 55’ package). The ‘Fit for 55’ package includes proposals to update relevant legislation, including the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) (2), the energy taxation, energy efficiency and renewable energy Directives, the CO2 emission performance standards Regulation for cars and vans, the Regulation on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry, the Directive on alternative fuels infrastructure, and the effort sharing Regulation (ESR) with respect to sectors outside the current EU ETS, namely transport and building sectors.

It also includes proposals for new legislation, notably to support the use of cleaner fuels in the aviation and maritime transport sectors, as well as to establish a carbon border adjustment mechanism and to establish a Social Climate Fund, which is directly related to the proposed introduction of emissions trading system for fuels used in buildings and road transport. The ‘Fit for 55’ package, combined with measures taken at Union level to support and incentivise the necessary public and private investments, is aimed to help support and accelerate the growth of new markets, for instance for clean fuels and low-emission vehicles, thereby driving down the costs of the sustainable transition for businesses and citizens alike.

At its meeting on 20 June 2019, the European Council committed, in its ‘A New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024’, to ensure a fair transition towards climate neutrality that is inclusive and leaves nobody behind. At the international level, Member States have endorsed the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals and ratified the Paris Agreement, which refer to the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs, as well as the need for adaptation and capacity-building to be gender responsive. Guidelines from the International Labour Organization provide an internationally established policy framework for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (3). Furthermore, 54 signatories (countries and social partners) endorsed the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration (4), which was adopted at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in Katowice, including the Commission, on behalf of the Union, and 21 individual Member States. The Union and 10 Member States signed the Declaration ‘Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally’, adopted at the 26th COP to the UNFCCC in Glasgow, committing to include information on just transition in Biennial Transparency Reports in the context of reporting on their policies and measures to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions.

Fairness and solidarity are defining principles of the Union’s policies towards the green transition and a requisite for its broad and sustained public support. The European Green Deal stresses that the transition must be fair and inclusive, putting people first and paying particular attention to supporting those regions, industries, workers, households and consumers that will face the greatest challenges. Moreover, the communication from the Commission of 14 January 2020 entitled ‘A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions’ emphasises that

(1) For instance as regards infrastructure, the Union will need an estimated EUR 350 billion in additional investment per year over this decade to meet its 2030 emissions-reduction target in energy systems alone, alongside EUR 130 billion needed for other environmental goals.


(3) The guidelines define the concept of just transition and call upon policy-makers and social partners to promote a just transition at the global level.

implementing the European Green Deal will give Europe the tools to strive for more when it comes to upward convergence, social fairness and shared prosperity. The communication from the Commission of 23 February 2022 on decent work worldwide for a global just transition and a sustainable recovery puts the promotion of decent work worldwide at the heart of a just transition and an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

The communication from the Commission of 4 March 2021 entitled ‘The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan’ (9) highlights that unity, coordination and solidarity are needed to move forward towards a greener and more digital decade in which Europeans can thrive. It proposed three EU headline targets for 2030, namely: that at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030 (10); that at least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year (11); and that the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030 (12). Those 2030 headline targets were welcomed by Union leaders in the Porto Declaration of 8 May 2021 at the informal meeting of heads of state or government in Porto on 7-8 May 2021 and by the European Council in its conclusions of 24-25 June 2021.

With the right accompanying policies in place (13), the green transition could in aggregate create around 1 million additional quality jobs (14) in the Union by 2030 and 2 million by 2050 (15), in sectors such as construction, information and communication technologies (ICT) or renewable energy, while mitigating the protracted decline in middle-skilled jobs as a result of automation and digitisation. However, in a pessimistic scenario, the impacts of the green transition towards climate neutrality if not supported by an adequate policy mix could imply GDP losses of up to 0.39% in the Union, and job losses of up to 0.26% (16).

The impacts of the green transition on business and employment will vary by sector, occupation, region and country, implying job changes within sectors and industrial ecosystems, as well as large labour reallocations across them (17). Restructuring and adjustment in the companies, sectors and ecosystems concerned require the development of new business models and large labour reallocations across sectors and regions. For instance, job losses are expected in some mining activities or fossil-fuel based energy production, as well as in parts of the automotive sector. Conversely, new job opportunities are expected in circular value retention activities and sustainable transport and energy production. Member States should therefore follow granular approaches, focusing on the individual regions and ecosystems concerned, in liaison with social partners and/or local and regional authorities and stakeholders.

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(8) The communication from the Commission of 4 March 2021 entitled ‘The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan’ (9) highlights that unity, coordination and solidarity are needed to move forward towards a greener and more digital decade in which Europeans can thrive. It proposed three EU headline targets for 2030, namely: that at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030 (10); that at least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year (11); and that the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030 (12). Those 2030 headline targets were welcomed by Union leaders in the Porto Declaration of 8 May 2021 at the informal meeting of heads of state or government in Porto on 7-8 May 2021 and by the European Council in its conclusions of 24-25 June 2021.

(9) With the right accompanying policies in place (13), the green transition could in aggregate create around 1 million additional quality jobs (14) in the Union by 2030 and 2 million by 2050 (15), in sectors such as construction, information and communication technologies (ICT) or renewable energy, while mitigating the protracted decline in middle-skilled jobs as a result of automation and digitisation. However, in a pessimistic scenario, the impacts of the green transition towards climate neutrality if not supported by an adequate policy mix could imply GDP losses of up to 0.39% in the Union, and job losses of up to 0.26% (16).

(10) The impacts of the green transition on business and employment will vary by sector, occupation, region and country, implying job changes within sectors and industrial ecosystems, as well as large labour reallocations across them (17). Restructuring and adjustment in the companies, sectors and ecosystems concerned require the development of new business models and large labour reallocations across sectors and regions. For instance, job losses are expected in some mining activities or fossil-fuel based energy production, as well as in parts of the automotive sector. Conversely, new job opportunities are expected in circular value retention activities and sustainable transport and energy production. Member States should therefore follow granular approaches, focusing on the individual regions and ecosystems concerned, in liaison with social partners and/or local and regional authorities and stakeholders.

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(11) By creating quality job opportunities for everyone while taking measures to alleviate and prevent energy and transport poverty, the green transition can contribute to raising incomes and reducing inequalities and poverty overall (20). It can thus help tackle pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and social exclusion, improving health and well-being, and promoting equality, including gender equality. Particular attention should go to certain population groups, notably those in already vulnerable situations. This includes notably low- and lower-middle income households, who spend a high share of their income in essential services such as energy, transport and housing, as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Modelling results show that whether environmental taxes are progressive or regressive will depend largely on instrument design, including, for example, the extent to which income tax cuts or other revenue recycling options are targeted at lower income earners (21).

(12) Circular value retention activities, including repair, re-use, remanufacturing and servitisation business models, can foster affordable and sustainable access to goods and services. They also generate jobs and opportunities at various skill levels, including for women, persons with disabilities and groups in vulnerable situations, through social economy entities active in those areas. By promoting product circularity, they reduce carbon emissions vastly, while the jobs created are in proximity to the products that need to be maintained, refurbished or shared.

(13) According to the latest available data in the EU statistics on income and living conditions for 2019/2020, energy poverty affected about 8 % of the Union population, that is more than 35 million people, who were unable to keep their homes adequately warm, with significant differences between Member States and between income groups (22). Overall, the Energy Poverty Observatory estimates, based on a combination of indicators, that more than 50 million households in the Union experience energy poverty (23). Energy poverty, resulting from a combination of low income, a high share of disposable income spent on energy and poor energy efficiency, has been a major challenge for the Union for some time. Furthermore, the risk of energy poverty increases with high and volatile energy prices, which are driven by a number of factors including those related to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the subsequent Union policy response. This form of poverty affects not only low-income households, but also lower middle-income households in many Member States.

Households with above-average energy needs, which include families with children, including those headed by single parents, persons with disabilities, and older persons, are also more susceptible to energy poverty (24) and to its effects. Women, and in particular those who are single parents and older women (25), are also particularly affected by energy poverty. In addition to energy poverty, the concept of transport poverty is increasingly recognised where certain categories of population are unable to attain a socially and materially necessitated level of transport services. Without the right accompanying measures to alleviate and prevent energy and transport poverty, those forms of poverty are at risk of being exacerbated notably due to the internalisation of emissions costs in price formation or to the costs of adaptation towards higher-efficiency, lower-emission alternatives.


(21) IEEP (2021), Green taxation and other economic instruments: internalising environmental costs to make the polluter pay. Moreover, up to 6.2 % of people living in the Union, i.e. over 27 million people, have arrears in paying their utility bills.


(24) See Gender perspective on access to energy in the EU (europa.eu), Gender and energy| European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu), GFE-Gender-Issues-Note-Session-6.2.pdf (oecd.org).

(25) See Gender perspective on access to energy in the EU (europa.eu), Gender and energy| European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu), GFE-Gender-Issues-Note-Session-6.2.pdf (oecd.org).
(14) Principles of social fairness, cohesion and solidarity are firmly built into the design of relevant climate, energy and environmental frameworks at Union level, including via the ‘polluter pays principle’ and effort sharing between Member States, as well as in some redistribution of EU ETS allowances for the purposes of solidarity, growth and interconnections within the Union and their use for the Modernisation Fund, which contributes to the significant investment needs of lower-income Member States to modernise their energy systems. Moreover, the framework of Union energy legislation provides Member States with tools to ensure the protection of energy poor and vulnerable household customers while avoiding market distortions. While those tools help in facilitating the green transition, they are intended to provide the means to ensure the necessary protection more generally, as shown for instance by the communication from the Commission of 13 October 2021 entitled 'Tackling rising energy prices: a toolbox for action and support' and the REPowerEU Plan.

(15) Member States have a range of tools at their disposal to outline and coordinate their actions for a fair transition. National energy and climate plans (NECPs) prepared in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council (2) should assess the number of households in energy poverty and outline the measures needed to address the social and territorial implications of the energy transition. Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) prepared in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council (3) should identify the territories eligible for support under the Just Transition Fund up to 2027. Funded by NextGenerationEU, national recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) prepared in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council (4) set reforms and investments to foster the green transition, inclusive growth, social and territorial cohesion, resilience and prospects for the next generation, with an implementation horizon up to 2026. Some actions for a fair transition are also implemented in the context of other programmes and initiatives, in particular the Cohesion policy funds.

(16) Building on the principles and policies of the European Green Deal and the European Pillar of Social Rights in particular, there is scope to enhance the design of policies in a comprehensive and cross cutting manner and to ensure the coherence of spending efforts, at Union and national level. In the communication from the Commission of 17 September 2020 entitled ‘An EU-wide assessment of National Energy and Climate Plans Driving forward the green transition and promoting economic recovery through integrated energy and climate planning’, the Commission, while recognising that the final NECPs provide some indicators and policies on energy poverty, concluded that they do not always provide a clear prioritisation of funding needs for a fair transition, nor for reskilling and upskilling or for supporting labour market adjustments. The TJTPs should focus on selected territories and thus are not expected to lay out an overall strategy and policies for a fair transition at national level. While the reforms and investments they support and help finance are designed to provide lasting impact, both TJTPs and RRPs are limited in time.

(17) A fair transition towards climate neutrality in the Union by 2050 will ensure that no one is left behind, in particular workers and households most affected by the green transition, and notably those already in vulnerable situations. To that end, as set out in this Recommendation, Member States should put in place comprehensive policy packages (5), strengthen cross-cutting elements that promote fair green transition, and make optimal use of public and private funding. The policy packages should consider the people and households that are most affected by the green transition, notably by job losses but also by changing working conditions and/or new task requirements on the job, as well as those subject to adverse impacts on disposable incomes, expenditure, and access to essential services. As part of the most affected groups, policy packages should, in particular, but not only, consider people and households in vulnerable situations, notably people furthest away from the labour market, for instance due to their


(5) In particular the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategies (ASGS) 2021 and 2022, the Euro area recommendations 2021, and Country-Specific Recommendations.
skills, territorial labour market conditions, or other characteristics, such as sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Moreover, people and households in vulnerable situations may include those living in or at risk of poverty and/or energy poverty, facing barriers to mobility, or an overburden of housing costs, including households headed by single parents, which are more often women than men. Policy packages should be adapted to local circumstances, taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable and remote parts of the Union, including the outermost regions and islands.

(18) Active support to quality employment should focus on helping workers, job seekers, people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and the self-employed most affected by the green transition. In particular, under-represented people such as women, low-skilled workers, persons with disabilities, older people or people with comparatively low capacities to adapt to changes in the labour market require support to improve their employability and for finding employment, in line with Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/402 (\(^4\)). Building on previous policy guidance, in particular that Recommendation and Council Decisions (EU) 2020/1512 (\(^5\)) and (EU) 2021/1868 (\(^6\)), policy packages should thus include tailored measures to support hiring and transition incentives, support for entrepreneurship, in particular for women or persons with disabilities, and quality job creation measures, in particular for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and in most affected territories. Such measures, combined with adequate Union support, can also be instrumental in addressing challenges for the labour market, such as those stemming from the influx of Ukrainian refugees, in particular in the most affected Member States. They should also foster the effective implementation and enforcement of existing rules on working conditions and support for socially responsible restructuring in line with existing rules and standards. Social partners have a vital role to play in contributing to addressing, through dialogue, the employment and social consequences of the challenges of the green transition.

(19) Access to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning for all is essential for ensuring that the workforce has the skills required to deliver on the green transition. Fair transition aspects should thus be integrated in the development and implementation of national skills strategies, taking into consideration the proposals made by the Commission in the ‘European Skills Agenda’ (\(^7\)) and the ‘Updated New Industrial Strategy’ (\(^8\)). Skills partnerships under the Pact for Skills will also be an important lever. Up-to-date labour market and skills intelligence and foresight, including at regional, sectoral and occupational levels, allow for the identification and forecasting of relevant occupation-specific and transversal skills needs, including as a basis for adapting curricula to meet the skills needs for the green transition. Vocational education and training should equip young people and adults, with a particular focus on women and low-skilled workers, with the skills needed to master the green transition, in accordance with Council Recommendation 2020/C 417/01 (\(^9\)).

Apprenticeships and paid traineeships, including strong training components, in particular for young people, contribute to labour market transitions, notably towards activities contributing to climate and environmental objectives, and sectors facing particular skills shortages. Increasing adult participation in lifelong learning should be promoted to meet upskilling and reskilling needs, *inter alia*, by empowering individuals to seek training that is tailored to their needs and, where appropriate, via short, quality-assured courses on skills for the green transition, taking into consideration Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 (\(^10\)), which aims to make it easier to value and recognise the outcomes of such courses.

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\(^7\) Communication from the Commission of 1 July 2021 entitled ‘European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’.
\(^8\) Communication from the Commission of 5 May 2021 entitled ‘Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe’s recovery’.
\(^10\) Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (see page 10 of this Official Journal).
(20) The composition of tax-benefit systems and social protection systems should be examined against the specific needs stemming from the green transition, reflecting also the ‘polluter pays principle’ and the need that accompanying policies do not introduce subsidies to fossil fuels consumption, do not lock in consumers to a specific technology, do not decrease incentives for building renovations and thermal energy system substitutions and do not decrease incentives within general energy efficiency measures. A combination of various policies can support the most vulnerable households and workers most affected by the green transition. Depending on the national and individual situation, this could, for instance, involve a shift of taxation away from labour and towards climate and environmental objectives as envisaged in the proposal for revision of the Energy Taxation Directive (37), a review of unemployment schemes and/or temporary and targeted direct income support, where necessary. Social protection systems, including social inclusion policies, can be reviewed and, where applicable, adapted in light of the green transition, in particular to provide for income security, notably during job-to-job transitions, and to provide adequate social, health and care services through adequate social infrastructure, notably in most affected territories, for instance rural and remote areas, such as the outermost regions, in order to prevent social exclusion, and address health risks. To prevent and combat social exclusion of children, investments in social infrastructure for children aim to ensure access to key services for children in need, as set out in Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 (38).

(21) To build physical and financial resilience to the irreversible impacts of climate change in an inclusive manner, risk-awareness, risk reduction and risk-transfer solutions need to be promoted, in particular by increasing the availability of insurance solutions and by investing in disaster risk-management and adaptation to reduce the physical impacts of climate change, thereby reducing losses, as well as the climate protection gap, taking into account micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as rural and remote areas, such as the outermost regions and islands. Disaster risk-management including civil protection systems at national and Union level should be reinforced to better prevent, prepare for and respond to climate-related shocks.

(22) Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including energy, transport, water, sanitation, financial services and digital communications, and support for equal access to such services should be made available to those in need (39). Furthermore, access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality should be provided for those in need (40). In addition, low and medium income households, vulnerable customers, including final users, people facing or risking energy poverty and people living in social housing, can benefit from the application of the ‘energy efficiency first principle’. In addition to protecting and empowering energy consumers, specific measures are needed to prevent and tackle the root causes of energy poverty, in particular by promoting investments targeted at energy efficiency improvements, notably in the social housing sector. The proposed updates of the Energy Efficiency Directive (41) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (42) are also intended to tackle the main non-economic barriers to renovation such as split incentives, including owner-tenant settings, and co-ownership structures. In this context, specific attention should be paid to women and particular groups which are more at risk of being affected by energy poverty, such as persons with disabilities, single parents, elderly people, children, and persons with a minority racial or ethnic background.

Pre-existing and emerging mobility challenges can be tackled through support measures and the development of the necessary infrastructure, such as public transport. The affordability, accessibility and safety of sustainable mobility and different modes of transport, including private and public transport, are key to ensuring everyone benefits from and is part of the green transition. Urban mobility plays a significant role in this context, as also reflected by the communication from the Commission of 14 December 2021 entitled ‘The New EU Urban Mobility Framework’.

(37) Proposal for a Council Directive restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (recast), COM(2021) 563 final, envisages such a shift of the taxation of energy products and electricity towards climate and environmental objectives.


A whole-of-society approach to the fair transition should support policy action, based on the coordination of policy-making and strengthened operational capacities at all levels and across all relevant policy areas, giving also an active role to regional and local authorities. It should also be based on the involvement of social partners at all levels and stages, as well as an effective and impactful participation of civil society and stakeholders. Such coordination and engagement could ensure that the European Green Deal principles of fairness and solidarity are integrated in policy design, implementation and monitoring from the outset, providing the basis for broad and long-term support for inclusive policies advancing the green transition.

A strong evidence base is key to putting in place sound social and labour market policies that ensure a fair and inclusive transition. To that end, the gradual harmonisation and consistency of definitions, concepts, classifications and methodologies, notably based on Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1563 (\(^\text{43}\)\)), facilitate assessments and their comparability. Further research and innovation actions can contribute to the knowledge base that may feed into policy and public discourse. In turn, exchanges with the public in all its diversity and with key stakeholders, for instance on the outcomes of evaluations, foresight and monitoring exercises, can contribute to policy-making and ownership.

Appropriate granular and high quality, sex-disaggregated data and indicators are needed in particular to assess the employment, social and distributional impacts of climate change policies. Such data and indicators are currently not fully available. For instance, while some progress has been made on the measurement of energy poverty, indicators to assess transport poverty could be developed in accordance with national circumstances. Monitoring and evaluation can be strengthened via a number of actions, focussing on indicators, scoreboards as well as small-scale pilot projects and policy experimentation. Actions should build on, or draw from, existing scoreboards such as the Social Scoreboard and the European Green Deal dashboard, which contain relevant information on specific aspects of fair transition policies.

The optimal and efficient use of public and private funding and the mobilisation of all available resources and their effective deployment are of particular importance in light of the significant investment needs stemming from the green transition. At Union level, relevant actions are supported through the Union budget and NextGenerationEU. They will be implemented under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), including the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund, the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU), ERASMUS+ and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF), the LIFE programme, the Horizon Europe programme, the Modernisation and Innovation Funds (\(^\text{44}\)\)) and the funds under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). In addition, the Commission supports Member States through the Technical Support Instrument, by providing tailor-made technical expertise to design and implement reforms, including those promoting a fair transition towards carbon neutrality.

The European Semester is the Union economic and employment policy coordination framework. It will continue to play this role in the recovery phase and in advancing the green and digital transitions, structured around the four dimensions of competitive sustainability, supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. Under the European Semester, the Commission will monitor socio-economic outcomes and impacts closely and where relevant, propose targeted country-specific recommendations to ensure that no one is left behind. Complementarity with the measures supported under the Recovery and Resilience Facility will be a priority. The monitoring of this Recommendation will therefore take place as appropriate in the context of the European Semester including in the framework of the relevant committees, within their respective fields of competences, based on adequate assessments, policy impact evaluations, and the state of implementation of the guidance provided in this Recommendation. The monitoring arrangement will not add unnecessary administrative burdens for Member States.

\(^\text{44}\)\) Outside the Union budget and NextGenerationEU.
Moreover, as part of the draft and final update of their NECPs in 2023 and 2024, respectively, in accordance with Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, Member States should draw on this Recommendation to consider mainstreaming employment, social and distributional impact assessments and fair transition aspects across the five dimensions of the Energy Union, and further enhance policy measures for addressing those impacts, with a particular focus on energy poverty.

Furthermore, the monitoring of the implementation of this Recommendation can build on existing evidence in the context of established multilateral surveillance processes, such as the European Semester. The Council or the Commission can request the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, in accordance with Articles 150 and 160 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, respectively, and in cooperation with other relevant committees, in particular the Economic Policy Committee, to examine in their respective area of competence the implementation of this Recommendation on the basis of adequate reporting by the Commission and other multilateral surveillance tools. Also against this background, the Commission is working to enhance data availability, disaggregated by sex, to update and use existing frameworks and methodological guidance, including for the measurement of energy and transport poverty and environmental inequalities, and for evaluating the effectiveness and actual impact of policy measures.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

OBJECTIVE

(1) In line with the principles of the European Green Deal and the European Pillar of Social Rights, this Recommendation aims to ensure that the Union's transition towards a climate-neutral and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 is fair and leaves nobody behind.

(2) Member States are invited, for that purpose, to adopt and implement, in close cooperation with social partners as relevant, comprehensive and coherent policy packages, addressing the employment and social aspects to promote a fair transition across all policies, notably climate, energy and environmental policies, as well as to make optimal use of public and private funding.

DEFINITIONS

(3) For the purpose of this Recommendation, the following definitions apply:

(a) 'Green transition' means the transition of the Union economy and society towards the achievement of the climate and environmental objectives primarily through policies and investments, in accordance with the European Climate Law laying down the obligation to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, the European Green Deal and international commitments, including the Paris Agreement, other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals.

(b) 'Climate and environmental objectives' means the six objectives laid down by Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council (\(^1\)), namely: climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources; the transition to a circular economy; pollution prevention and control; and the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

(c) 'People and households most affected by the green transition' means those whose effective access to quality employment, including self-employment, and/or to education and training and/or to a decent standard of living and essential services is significantly limited or at risk of being significantly limited as a direct or indirect consequence of the green transition.

‘People and households in vulnerable situations’ means those who, independently of the green transition, face or are at risk of facing a situation of limited access to quality employment, including self-employment, and/or to education and training and/or to a decent standard of living and essential services, implying low capacities to adapt to the consequences of the green transition.

‘Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises’ means enterprises that employ fewer than 250 persons, including the solo self-employed, and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million, calculated in accordance with Articles 3 to 6 of Annex I to Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014.

‘Energy poverty’ means a ‘household’s lack of access to essential energy services that underpin a decent standard of living and health, including adequate warmth, cooling, lighting, and energy to power appliances, in the relevant national context, existing social policy and other relevant policies’; the definition of ‘energy poverty’ in this Recommendation will apply, unless Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, as it may be amended or replaced as a result of the Commission proposal of 14 July 2021, will contain another definition of that concept, in which case that definition will apply for the purposes of this Recommendation.

‘Essential services’ means services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport and mobility, financial services and digital communications; support for access to such services should be made available for those in need, according to principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, together with providing cost saving opportunities, including through reuse, repair, donation and sharing services.

‘Policy package’ means a comprehensive and coherent set of policy measures that integrates employment, skills and social policies with climate, energy, transport, environmental and other green transition policies, through a well-coordinated cross-sectoral approach based on one or several national strategies and/or action plans, and benefiting from coordination and governance mechanisms at Union and national level as appropriate.

POLICY PACKAGES FOR A FAIR GREEN TRANSITION

(4) To provide active support to quality employment for a fair transition and build on Recommendation (EU) 2021/402, Member States are encouraged, in close cooperation with social partners, to consider the following measures in support of people most affected by the green transition, notably those in vulnerable situations, and, where adequate, help them to transit, through employment or self-employment, towards economic activities contributing to climate and environmental objectives:

(a) effectively support access to and preservation of quality employment, notably through employment services, including tailored job search assistance and learning courses that also target green and digital skills where appropriate; consider also well-designed, targeted and time-bound employment programmes that prepare beneficiaries via training, in particular persons from the under-represented groups and people in vulnerable situations, for continued participation in the labour market;

References:

(47) While it is left to Member States to define the concept of ‘vulnerable customers’, it comprises households unable to heat or cool their homes adequately and/or having arrears in paying their utility bills in line with Commission Recommendation on energy poverty, C/2020/9600 final (OJ L 357, 27.10.2020, p. 35).
(b) make effective use of targeted and well-designed hiring and transition incentives, including by considering the adequate use of wage and recruitment subsidies and incentives linked to social security contributions, to accompany labour market transitions across sectors and labour mobility across regions and countries, in view of the opportunities and challenges of the green transition;

(c) promote entrepreneurship, including enterprises and all other entities of the social economy (50), in particular in regions facing transition challenges and, where appropriate, in sectors promoting climate and environmental objectives such as the circular economy, paying special attention to women's entrepreneurship; support should combine financial measures, including grants, loans or equity, and non-financial measures, including training and advisory services, with particular attention to awareness-raising activities, tailored to each phase of the business lifecycle; support should be inclusive and accessible to under-represented and disadvantaged groups;

(d) stimulate the creation of quality jobs, in particular in territories most affected by the green transition and, where appropriate, sectors promoting climate and environmental objectives, such as the circular economy, by facilitating access to finance and markets for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular those contributing to climate and environmental objectives with a view to promoting competitiveness, innovation and quality employment across the single market, including in sectors and eco-systems of strategic relevance in national and local contexts;

(e) analyse the impact of the green transition on health and safety at work and, accordingly, promote measures to address new risks or the potential aggravation of existing risks, taking into account the communication from the Commission of 28 June 2021 entitled 'EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 - Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work';

(f) ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of existing rules on working conditions, in particular concerning occupational health and safety, work organisation and involvement of workers, in order to safeguard fair working conditions and job quality in the transition, including in economic activities contributing to climate and environmental objectives;

(g) foster the use of socially responsible public procurement practices (51), including via social award criteria creating opportunities for people most affected by the green transition, while also promoting green award criteria;

(h) provide for the full and meaningful involvement, including information and consultation, of workers at all levels and their representatives as regards the anticipation of change and the management of restructuring processes including those linked to the green transition, in line with the communication from the Commission of 13 December 2013 on 'EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring'.

(5) To ensure equal access to quality, affordable and inclusive education, training and life-long learning as well as equal opportunities, also with a view to strengthening gender equality, Member States are encouraged to consider the following measures, to be implemented in close cooperation with social partners, while respecting their autonomy, in particular in support of people and households most affected by the green transition, notably those in vulnerable situations:

(a) integrate the employment and social aspects of the green transition, including potential labour shortages, in the development and implementation of the relevant national strategies addressing skills challenges, for example under the European Skills Agenda, and support setting up and coordinate stakeholder partnerships, including under the Pact for Skills, ensuring notably that skills are at the heart of co-created transition pathways for relevant industrial ecosystems contributing to climate and environmental objectives;

(50) Communication from the Commission of 9 December 2021 entitled ‘Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy’.

(b) develop up-to-date labour market and skills intelligence and foresight, identifying and forecasting occupation-specific and transversal skills needs. Build on existing tools and initiatives, including the expertise of and cooperation with social partners and relevant stakeholders; consider adapting education and training curricula in accordance with national and regional circumstances to the needs of the green transition and providing school and career guidance accordingly;

(c) provide high-quality accessible, affordable and inclusive initial education and training, including vocational education and training, which equips learners with skills and competences relevant for the green transition. Learning for sustainability – including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), interdisciplinary approaches, and digital skills – should be considered and promoted, where appropriate, as an integral part of curricula and education and training programmes; take specific actions to attract persons with disabilities, women, low-skilled people and other groups currently under-represented in the occupational areas concerned and to promote their careers;

(d) introduce or strengthen support schemes for apprenticeships and, where possible, for paid quality traineeships and job shadowing schemes with a strong training component, in particular in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including those contributing to climate and environmental objectives and in sectors facing particular skill shortages, such as construction and ICT. Such schemes should be subject to national or regional monitoring and evaluation, and should safeguard job quality, taking into consideration Council Recommendations 2018/C 153/01 (52) and 2014/C 88/01 (53);

(e) increase adult participation in training throughout the working life, in line with the upskilling and reskilling needs for the green transition, by ensuring that support is available for training within jobs, professional transitions and for transversal skills, notably to facilitate reconversion towards sectors and economic activities expected to expand; empower individuals to seek training that is tailored to their needs, inter alia, via short, quality-assured courses on skills for the green transition; to that end, consider providing access to paid training leave and career guidance as well as the option of establishing individual learning accounts, taking into consideration Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 (54), and support the development of short, quality-assured and widely recognised courses, taking into consideration Recommendation of 16 June 2022 (55).

(6) To ensure the continued fairness of tax-benefit systems and social protection systems, including social inclusion policies, in the context of the green transition, and taking into account, where applicable, Council Recommendation 2019/C 387/01 (56), Member States are encouraged to consider the following measures in support of people and households most affected by the green transition, notably those in vulnerable situations, in order to support labour market transitions, including transitions towards economic activities contributing to climate and environmental objectives, prevent and alleviate energy and transport poverty in accordance with national circumstances and mitigate regressive impacts of policy measures:

(a) assess and, where necessary, adapt taxation systems in view of the challenges arising from the transition towards climate neutrality, notably by shifting the tax burden away from labour and reducing the tax wedge for low and middle income groups towards other sources contributing to climate and environmental objectives, preventing and mitigating regressive impacts, preserving the progressive character of direct taxation and safeguarding the financing of adequate social protection and investment measures, especially those targeted towards the green transition;

(54) Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on individual learning accounts (see page 26 of this Official Journal).
(b) review and, where applicable, adapt social protection systems, including social inclusion policies, in view of the employment, social and health challenges posed by the green transition; To that end, consider how the provision of adequate income security, including through innovative job-to-job transition schemes, unemployment benefits and minimum income systems can be best ensured and adapted to the needs arising from the green transition; also ensure the provision of good quality, affordable and accessible social, health and long-term care services, especially to people and households most affected by the green transition, notably by investing in social infrastructure for childcare, long-term care and healthcare;

(c) provide, where necessary, and complementing measures outlined in point 7(a) while they are being deployed, targeted and temporary direct income support, notably to people and households in vulnerable situations, to mitigate adverse income and price developments, also linked to improved incentives for urgently achieving necessary climate and environmental objectives while preserving price signals supporting the green transition; To that end, ensure the availability of proper funding for those measures, including by improving the quality of public expenditure, making optimal use of relevant Union funds, and drawing on the budgetary resources created by energy and environmental taxes and the EU ETS, among others;

(d) improve risk-awareness, risk reduction and risk-transfer solutions as regards households and enterprises, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, notably by ensuring the availability and affordability of insurance solutions, in particular for people and households in vulnerable situations.

(7) To ensure access to affordable essential services and housing for people and households most affected by the green transition, in particular those in vulnerable situations and those in regions facing transition challenges, Member States are encouraged to consider the following measures:

(a) mobilise public and private financial support and provide incentives for private investments into renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, complemented by advice to consumers to better manage their energy use and to take informed decisions on saving energy, in order to lower their energy bills, targeting vulnerable households and communities especially; to that end, ensure the availability of proper funding for those measures, including by improving the quality of public expenditure, making optimal use of relevant Union funds and drawing on the budgetary resources created by energy and environmental taxes and revenues from the EU ETS, among others;

(b) prevent and alleviate energy poverty by promoting and implementing energy efficiency improvement measures, including public and private investments in dwellings to stimulate renovations, including in the social housing sector (57); to that end, provide well-designed incentives, grants and loans, together with related advice, also to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, while paying due attention to incentives, in particular among owners and tenants, and the evolution of housing costs, notably for households in vulnerable situations;

(c) empower energy consumers, including households in vulnerable situations, by developing further self-supply via individual renewable energy arrangements as well as other services via citizen and renewable energy communities (58), accompanied by educational measures and campaigns, with a special focus on people in vulnerable situations and consumers living in rural and remote areas, including the outermost regions, and on islands;

(57) In line with the communication from the Commission of 18 February 2022 entitled ‘Guidelines on State aid for climate, environmental protection and energy 2022’, as applicable.

(d) prevent and tackle mobility and transport challenges and obstacles for households in vulnerable situations, especially in remote, rural and low-income regions, including the outermost regions and islands, and cities, through adequate policy and support measures and the development of the necessary infrastructure, to improve essential connectivity, enabling access to education, training, health, quality employment, and social participation; ensure, in particular, the availability, including frequency, of low-emission public transport and, where appropriate, promote the uptake of sustainable modes of private mobility (59), with a focus on ensuring affordability, accessibility and safety;

(e) facilitate access to sustainable consumption, including nutrition, especially for people and households in vulnerable situations and in particular children, and promote cost-saving opportunities linked to the circular economy; to that end, provide for effective incentives and tools, such as social innovation actions and local initiatives, support reuse, repair, recycle, donation and sharing schemes, including through social economy entities, and promote education and awareness raising for environmental sustainability for learners of all ages and at all levels and types of education and training.

CROSS-CUTTING ELEMENTS FOR POLICY ACTIONS SUPPORTING A FAIR GREEN TRANSITION

(8) To advance the green transition in an inclusive and democratic way, integrating fair transition objectives from the outset into policy-making at all levels and ensuring an effective whole-of-society approach to fair transition policies, Member States are invited to:

(a) coordinate policy-making at all levels and across all relevant policy areas, including research and innovation with a view to building an integrated and enabling policy framework that pays due attention to distributional impacts as well as to positive and negative spill-overs, including in cross-border regions, and, where possible, integrates adequate and systematic evaluation strategies, including ex-ante and ex-post assessments;

(b) encourage regional and local authorities to play an active role in the development, implementation and monitoring of fair transition policies, given their proximity to citizens and local businesses;

(c) actively involve social partners at national, regional and local levels, while respecting their autonomy, in all stages of policy-making and implementation provided for under this Recommendation, including through social dialogue and collective bargaining where appropriate; in addition, promote further the full involvement of social partners in the design and implementation of transition pathways for industrial ecosystems under the Updated New Industrial Strategy;

(d) empower and enable people, especially women, as well as civil society and stakeholders, including organisations representing people in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities, youth and children calling for urgent climate action, and social economy actors including through the ‘European Climate Pact’ (60), with a view to their participation in decision-making, policy design and implementation, also by making use of new participatory models involving people in vulnerable situations;

(e) strengthen the operational capacities of the relevant public services to provide effective guidance and support for implementing fair transition policies; in particular, strengthen public employment services to support labour market transitions and skills intelligence, as well as labour inspectorates to safeguard working conditions; in addition, mobilise social and health services where appropriate, notably to support labour market transitions and address energy poverty;

(59) Communication from the Commission of 9 December 2020 ‘Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future’.

(60) Communication from the Commission of 9 December 2020 entitled ‘European Climate Pact’.
(f) support a fair green transition also in third countries in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, for instance by adopting transition policies that take into account their impact on third countries and by pursuing engagement with stakeholders and global partnerships.

(9) To ensure the availability and quality of the data and evidence, which are needed to put in place sound social and labour market policies for a fair transition to climate neutrality, Member States are invited to:

(a) strengthen the evidence base on fair transition policies by, inter alia, advancing, where relevant, the gradual harmonisation and consistency of definitions, concepts and methodologies, including on the basis of Recommendation (EU) 2020/1563 and follow-up actions in the Energy Poverty and Vulnerable Consumers Coordination Group, and using available methods for policy impact evaluations; include also evaluation and data collection strategies, notably as concerns skills, tasks and jobs contributing to the green transition, using sex-disaggregated data in the preparation and design of relevant policy measures and legislative initiatives;

(b) develop and mainstream the use of robust and transparent employment, social and distributional (ex-ante) impact assessments as part of national climate, energy and environmental reforms and measures;

(c) ensure effective and transparent monitoring and independent (ex-post) evaluation of the employment, social and distributional effects of national reforms and measures contributing to climate and environmental objectives, involving social partners and other stakeholders in the identification of evaluation questions and, as relevant, in the design and implementation of evaluation and consultation strategies;

(d) strengthen research and innovation actions at regional, national and Union levels including through funding from the Horizon Europe programme and through actions under the policy agenda of the European Research Area (61), to enhance the modelling and assessment of the macroeconomic, employment and social dimension of climate change policies; promote the involvement of social partners in the implementation of relevant research and innovation actions, notably Horizon Europe missions ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’ and ‘Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities’, which can help develop practical solutions in support of the green transition at regional and local levels; make better use of existing indicators and monitoring frameworks and promote at Union level, where necessary, the development of indicators for skills, tasks and jobs contributing to the green transition;

(e) present the outcomes of evaluations, foresight and monitoring exercises to the public at regular intervals, and organise exchanges with social partners, civil society and other stakeholders on the main outcomes and possible adjustments.

OPTIMAL USE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING

(10) To provide cost-effective investment and financial support, including to small and medium-sized enterprises, in line with the state aid framework to address the social and labour markets aspects of a fair green transition, while exploiting synergies across available programmes and instruments, and focusing on regions and industrial ecosystems most affected, Member States are invited to:

(a) implement fully the relevant reforms and investments under the Recovery and Resilience Plans, ensuring complementarity with other funds;

(61) See Council conclusions of 26 November 2021 on the future governance of the European Research Area (ERA), which outline the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-24, including action 4 for attractive and sustainable research careers, action 7 for better knowledge valorisation, action 12 for accelerating the green/digital transition, as well as action 20 for R&I investments and reforms.
(b) mobilise, and ensure a coherent and optimal use of all relevant instruments and funding options, including technical assistance, at Member States and Union level, to support relevant actions and investments; Union funding instruments comprise, in particular, the Cohesion Policy funds, the Just Transition Mechanism, InvestEU, the Horizon Europe programme, the Technical Support Instrument, ERASMUS+, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF), the LIFE programme, the Innovation Fund and the Modernisation Fund;

(c) commit and deploy adequate national resources to contribute to the implementation of comprehensive sets of measures delivering a fair green transition; those measures should be adequately financed, including by improving the quality of public expenditure, mobilising further private financing, and/or using additional public revenues; in particular the revenues from the EU ETS could also be used to finance measures that mitigate negative social impacts of green transition; take into account employment, social and distributional aspects in the development of green budgeting practices;

(d) share best practices with other Member States, for example, on the development of programming documents for individual Union funds or the development of relevant national strategies and projects.

FUTURE ACTIONS FOR A FAIR GREEN TRANSITION

(11) To pursue useful follow-up actions to this Recommendation, the Council welcomes the Commission's intention to:

(a) further enhance the exchanges with key stakeholders, people and communities concerned as well as exchanges of best practices, including in the context of industrial ecosystems' transition pathways (*), notably in a cross-border context and with a focus on the regions and sectors most affected;

(b) support the enhancement of the adequacy, consistency and effectiveness of Member States' fair transition policies, including for the employment, social and distributional aspects to be considered in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the national plans and long-term strategies, possibly also in the context of the future review of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 as appropriate;

(c) consider, in the revision of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 (**) that will take place in view of its expiry at the end of 2023, whether the available evidence justifies easing the rules in relation to aid for social enterprises' access to finance and as regards aid for hiring disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged workers; (**)

(d) strengthen the database, notably by accessing administrative data sources and, where relevant, data from social partners, industries, civil society (**), and public opinion surveys, and update methodological guidance for assessing employment, social and distributional impacts of fair transition and climate and energy policies, including with a gender perspective and in the context of the European Semester, as appropriate; strengthen also knowledge and measurability of key concepts of the green economy, notably of 'green jobs' and 'sustainable jobs' as relevant, in close cooperation with Member States and taking into account approaches and processes at all levels, also in order to anticipate change in the labour market and address in an overall way restructuring processes that will require targeted and effective upskilling and reskilling policies;

(*) As announced in the updated industrial strategy, such as construction, energy intensive industries, or mobility.
(**) In line with the communication from the Commission of 9 December 2021 entitled ‘Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy’.
(e) enhance, where relevant, its regular monitoring and foresight analysis on energy poverty developments and risks in the Union, including social and distributional aspects, also to inform the work of the Energy Poverty and Vulnerable Consumers Coordination Group and other relevant expert groups;

(f) develop further research and strengthen evidence concerning the definition, monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the provision of adequate access to essential services, in close cooperation with Member States and taking into account national approaches, also by developing the concept of ‘transport poverty’ if appropriate, in particular within the context of the green transition towards a sustainable well-being economy;

(g) review progress made in the implementation of this Recommendation as appropriate in the context of multilateral surveillance in the European Semester, including within the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee in cooperation with other relevant committees in their respective fields of competences, notably the Economic Policy Committee, building on existing scoreboards and monitoring frameworks, extended by additional indicators where necessary in close cooperation with Member States; consider guidance provided in this Recommendation regarding Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, in particular as part of its assessments during the forthcoming update of NECPs in 2023-2024.

Done at Luxembourg, 16 June 2022.

For the Council

The President

O. DUSSOPT
II

(Information)

INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration
(Case M.10251 – INVIVO GROUP / ETABLISSEMENTS J SOUFFLET)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2022/C 243/05)

On 19 November 2021, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (¹). The full text of the decision is available only in French and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

— in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,

— in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en) under document number 32021M10251. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

IV
(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates (1)
24 June 2022
(2022/C 243/06)

1 euro =

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(1) Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.
Summary of European Union decisions on marketing authorisations in respect of medicinal products from 24 June 2022 to 24 June 2022

(Published pursuant to Article 13 or Article 38 of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council (1) or Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council (2))

(2022/C 243/07)

— **Issuing of a marketing authorisation** (Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council): **Accepted**

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(2) OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43.
V

(Announcements)

PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration
(Case M.10764 – SAGARD / BPIFRANCE / ADIT JV)
Candidate case for simplified procedure
(Text with EEA relevance)
(2022/C 243/08)

1. On 16 June 2022, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (1).

This notification concerns the following undertakings:
— Sagard SAS ('Sagard', France),
— Bpifrance Investissement ('Bpifrance', France),
— ADIT Group (France).

Sagard and Bpifrance acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) and 3(4) of the Merger Regulation joint control of the whole of ADIT Group.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:
— for Sagard: investment fund management company, active mainly in France. It is controlled by the Power Corporation Group of Canada, an international management and holding company that focuses on financial services in North America, Europe and Asia,
— for Bpifrance: investment fund management company, active in France. Bpifrance is ultimately jointly controlled by the French State and the Caisse des Dépôts et des Consignations, a public institution active in the management of private funds,
— ADIT Group is active in strategic consultancy and business security, mainly in the European Union.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (2) it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in the Notice.

(1) OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').
4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission no later than ten days following the date on which this notification is published. The following reference should always be specified:

M.10764 – SAGARD / BPIFRANCE / ADIT JV

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Fax +32 22964301

Postal address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIE
Prior notification of a concentration  
(Case M.10785 – ICG / KONECTA / COMDATA)  
Candidate case for simplified procedure

(Text with EEA relevance)  
(2022/C 243/09)

1. On 17 June 2022, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (1).

This notification concerns the following undertakings:
— Intermediate Capital Group, plc ('ICG', United Kingdom),
— Grupo Konectanet, S.L.U ('Konecta', Spain),

ICG will acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation sole control of Konecta and Comdata.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are the following:
— ICG is an investment firm and asset manager, with presence in Europe, Asia Pacific and the USA,
— Konecta is a business process outsourcing services provider in Europe and Latin America. Konecta is currently jointly controlled by ICG,
— Comdata is a business process outsourcing services provider with activities in Africa, Europe and Latin America.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (2) it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in the Notice.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. The following reference should always be specified:

M.10785 – ICG / KONECTA / COMDATA

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Fax +32 22964301

Postal address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Prior notification of a concentration
(Case M.10749 – PAI PARTNERS / THE CARLYLE GROUP / THERAMEX)

(Text with EEA relevance)
(2022/C 243/10)

1. On 20 June 2022, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (1).

This notification concerns the following undertakings:
— PAI Partners SAS (PAI Partners', France),
— The Carlyle Group, Inc. (‘Carlyle’, US),

PAI Partners and Carlyle will acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation joint control of the whole of Theramex.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are the following:
— PAI Partners is a private equity firm that manages a number of funds investing in the business services, food & consumer, general industrials, and healthcare sectors,
— Carlyle is a global alternative asset manager, which manages funds that invest globally across three investment disciplines: (i) Global Private Equity (including corporate private equity, real estate and natural resources funds); (ii) Global Credit (including liquid credit, illiquid credit and real assets credit); and (iii) Investment Solutions (private equity fund of funds program, which include primary fund, secondary and related co-investment activities),
— Theramex is a global specialty pharmaceutical company active in women’s health, which focuses on contraception, fertility, menopause and osteoporosis. The company markets a broad range of branded and branded generic products across numerous countries in the EEA and globally.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. The following reference should always be specified:

M.10749 – PAI PARTNERS / THE CARLYLE GROUP / THERAMEX

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Fax +32 22964301

(1) OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').
Postal address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIÉ
Prior notification of a concentration
(Case M.10758 – EIM / BROOKFIELD / NIELSEN)
Candidate case for simplified procedure
(Text with EEA relevance)
(2022/C 243/11)

1. On 20 June 2022 the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (1).

This notification concerns the following undertakings:
— Elliott Investment Management L.P. (‘EIM’, USA),
— Brookfield Private Equity Holdings LLC (‘BPEH’), controlled by Brookfield Asset Management Inc. (‘Brookfield’, both Canada),
— Nielsen Holdings Plc (‘Nielsen’, USA).

EIM and BPEH will acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation joint control of the whole of Nielsen.

The concentration is accomplished by way of acquisition of shares or other means.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are the following:
— BPEH: subsidiary of Brookfield, which provides asset management services, focused on real estate, infrastructure, renewable power, and private equity,
— EIM: investment firm focused on investment and risk management activities,
— Nielsen: global audience insights, data, and analytics company, which provides audience measurement, media planning, marketing optimization, and content metadata solutions.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 (2) it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in the Notice.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. The following reference should always be specified:
M.10758 – EIM / BROOKFIELD / NIELSEN

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:
Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu
Fax +32 22964301

Postal address:
European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË
ISSN 1977-091X (electronic edition)
ISSN 1725-2423 (paper edition)