

Building a European Education Area by 2025

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EU Transparency Register
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A highly skilled mobile workforce is the basis for an internationally competitive industry that provides quality jobs. Ceemet and its members will support the European Commission’s ambition to work towards a European Education Area (EEA). Investing in people and their education and removing the obstacles that hinder (learning) mobility across Europe should be a shared goal of all stakeholders.

Ceemet’s key messages

Europe’s tech & industry employers want to actively contribute and support the creation of a real EEA by 2025 emphasizing the following:

1. Drive excellence of education & training systems
2. Invest in the broad range of skills; i.e. basic, digital, soft, STEM & language ones
3. Boost Vocational Education & Training (VET)
4. Reinforce interaction between education & training systems and labour markets
5. Promote a culture of Lifelong learning (LLL) and foster Continuous Vocational Education & Training (CVET)
6. Encourage (learning) mobility

Introduction

The existing skills gap is a cause of reduced competitiveness of industry & tech companies. With faster and deeper changes in the field of skills, due to digitalisation, the challenge of skills shortages is becoming even more relevant. This skills gap needs first to be addressed at national level. At European level more funds need to be set aside in order to support education and training systems in Europe to adapt to the technological change and deliver the right set of skills.

National education & training systems differ substantially across Europe and education & training policies remain, largely, a national competence. Ceemet supports this variety and the respect of the principle of subsidiarity. However, as an industry we share common challenges regarding education & training: the mismatch between the skills provided and the skills needed and the shortage of skilled labour across Europe.

1. **Drive excellent education & training systems – a key element of a real EEA**

A high-quality, performance-oriented and inclusive EEA should enable European citizens to acquire a set of skills & competences that enables them to shape their own lives independently and to contribute to society as a whole.

ABOUT Ceemet

Ceemet represents the metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers in Europe.

Member organisations represent 200,000 companies in Europe, providing over 17 million direct and 35 million indirect jobs.

Ceemet is a recognised European social partner at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.

“As employers representing the biggest manufacturing industry, Ceemet is convinced that a good education policy that delivers the skills & competences that meets the labour market needs is key to a competitive industry that offers quality employment. Education is thus the basis for an effective and sustainable social policy.”

Excellent education & training systems are key to building a true EEA and should provide people with the right skills that companies, and labour markets need. Consequently, learners would increase their employability and would be prepared for an active citizenship and participation in society.

Policy makers should invest more in education & training systems so they can adapt more easily and rapidly to technology development. Education & training systems should become more flexible in order to adapt more quickly to current challenges like the fast speed digitalisation.

Consistent excellence and performance for each learning pathway should be our highest priority. Moreover, learning pathways in the EU should become permeable both structurally and socially. Systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning need to be set up. Promoting enthusiasm for learning at every stage of the education system should also be a shared goal of all stakeholders.

Education & training thrives on well-qualified teachers. New and ever changing societal and technical challenges demand new competences, skills and qualifications that should be provided to all teachers in the EU through excellent initial and particularly continuing training.

2. Invest in basic, digital, soft, STEM and language skills

The digital transformation demands a skillset that needs to be urgently developed across all levels of education. Policy makers should focus on investments in basic skills (numeracy, literacy & basic digital skills), as well as on strengthening the importance of employability, STEM-skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), entrepreneurial skills, soft skills and digital skills¹. (See Ceemet's [Digitalisation and the World of Skills & Education](#) report)

The promotion of language learning should start at an early age and continue throughout a person's life. The lack of language competences is a barrier to mobility within the EU and an obstacle to access the European labour market. Language competence will thus play a key role in the creation of a real EEA.

3. Boost VET – a key pathway for industry

Responsive well-functioning and excellent national VET Systems are key to address and overcome the current skills shortages and to help companies to cope with the major technological changes in the manufacturing industries.

This is why Ceemet [has long been advocating for making VET a first-class training choice.](#)

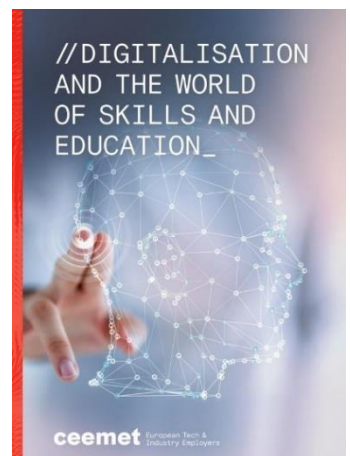
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“The EU should allocate more funds to adapt education and training systems to the current technological change so that they deliver the skills companies and labor markets need. We need targeted EU funds to develop right-skilling initiatives and training schemes in particular for SMEs.”



¹ According to 2018 Commission data, 44% of the EU population have low or no (19%) digital competences

4. Reinforce interaction between education & training systems and labour markets

There is a need to rebuild and strengthen the links between education & training systems to labour markets. In order to better anticipate the future skills needs of labour markets, cooperation between education & training providers, social partners and companies has to be reinforced at all levels.

Social partners play a key role in this equation since they are best placed to make recommendations on the development of education policy.

5. Promote a culture of LLL and foster CVET

Less than 11% of Europeans² aged between 25 and 64 are engaged in LLL. However, the reduction of the “half-life” of knowledge driven by the rapid technological change requires more than ever a change in mentalities as well as an active campaign that promotes the benefits of a “life-long-learning culture”. LLL should, therefore, become the norm since it is a key instrument for maintaining one’s individual employability and thereby securing a skilled workforce and companies’ competitiveness.

Groups of employees who usually participate less in CVET should be encouraged to do so by expanding the variety of training offers and their means of delivery (for example through digital support).

6. Encourage (learning) mobility

Mobile students are more likely to become mobile workers. Ceemet is therefore convinced of the value of learning mobility. In addition, mobility of learners contributes to the development of important soft skills (language, culture, adaptability) which are essential in a globalised, technologically fast-paced industry and are crucial to strengthen future employability and personal development of young people.

² European Political Strategy Centre (2017) – “10 trends transforming education as we know”