

Key recommendations

A New Skills Agenda for Europe Establishing a Skills Guarantee

2016

EASPD is the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities. We are a European not-for-profit organisation and represent over 15,000 social service provider organisations across Europe and disability. The main objective of EASPD is to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems.

EASPD is registered at the Transparency Register under the following number: 120906010805-50

A third of EASPD's membership provides employment and training services to Persons with Disabilities. It is our understanding that the huge experience developed by our sector in terms of supporting persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in gaining relevant and useful skills for the labour market would be of particular interest to the European Commission and the authorities working on the implantation of the new skills agenda and the Skills Guarantee.

Key recommendations

1. Mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the documents, in particular the rights to education and to employment
2. Ensure people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are able to benefit from the Skills Guarantee through mandatory target groups
3. Develop individualised and accessible processes adapted to specific needs in the procedure to register, the assessment of skills and the teaching methods used
4. Implement tailor-made support for on-the-job learners, apprentices and employees
5. Ensure the collection of disaggregated data to properly identify the needs and trends and develop adequate education, training and employment strategies
6. Include the social services sector as a priority sector to tap into its job creation potential and ensure the development of accessible, affordable, available and adaptable services

The New Skills Agenda and the proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing a Skills Guarantee are both **positive documents taking important steps towards improving the education and training** in the European Union.

While being limited due to the lack of direct EU competence in the field of education and training, the proposals have a broad scope, the 10 key actions covering items from the low qualified adults, to the high-ends skills passing through the digital divide and the challenges faced by the migrants and refugees.

Nonetheless, these documents provide an **opportunity to strengthen the European social sector** and, as a consequence, **the European social cohesion**.

The first step needs to start with **collecting disaggregated data** at all levels, including the target groups of employment strategies, the graduates, the career choices and labour market opportunities.

This data then needs to be used to **provide individualised, tailor-made support to the most vulnerable groups in Europe**, such as people with disabilities, women and third country nationals, to gain the skills they need to enter the open labour market.

Social services must also be part of the focus of employment strategies to tap into their **job creation potential and ensure the development of quality, accessible services** for all employing trained staff with a career perspective.

EASPD would recommend the following amendments to the proposals:

1. Council Recommendation on Establishing a Skills Guarantee

(8) Access to lifelong learning opportunities remains uneven across socio-economic groups and some groups of the working-age population have less access, in particular third-country nationals **and people with disabilities**.

(16bis) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ensures the right to education, employment and active participation in society for people with disabilities.

3. Give low qualified adults the opportunity to undergo an assessment **adapted to the specific needs of the individual**, [...]

6. Deliver the education and training offer in appropriate learning settings, schools or training centres or at work, in which appropriately qualified teachers and trainers apply **accessible, adequate and individualised adult-specific** teaching methods and exploit the potential of digital learning.



12. Taking into account national circumstances and available resources, identify target groups for the delivery of the Skills Guarantee at national level, **including women, third-country nationals and people with disabilities.**

3. Making Vocational Education and Training a first choice

- Supporting opportunities for learners to undertake a work-based learning experience, **accompanied with an adequate individualised support**, as part of their studies
- Improving disaggregated data availability on labour market outcomes of VET **for different target groups and divided by sectors, including the health and social sector.**

4. Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

The Commission will monitor progress annually through its Europe's Digital Progress Report (EDPR), **including key indicators on vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women and third-country nationals.**

8. Analysing the issue of brain drain

The Commission will further analyse the issue of **brain drain, differentiated per sectors and countries**, and promote the sharing of best practice as regards effective ways of tackling the problem.

9. Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills

The Blueprint will be [...] piloted in 6 sectors, with preparatory work starting in 2016: automotive, maritime technology, space, defence, textile, tourism **and social care.**

10. Initiative on tertiary graduate tracking

[...] the Commission plans to propose as a first step in 2017 an initiative on tertiary graduate tracking **including key indicators for graduates and key sectors** to support Member States in improving information on how graduates progress on the labour market

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EASPD – European Association of Service providers of Persons with Disabilities

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