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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.12.2024)

1. Ensuring that people have the skills needed for the green and digital transition is a priority for the Commission, as reflected by the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Skills Agenda, the European Year of Skills, the Digital Education Action Plan, the Council recommendation on vocational education and training¹ and the European strategy for universities². The Digital Decade policy programme set a target of 80% of people with at least basic digital skills and 20 million Information and Communications Technology (ICT) specialists by 2030. By mobilising stakeholders through the Pact for Skills and promoting individual learning accounts³ and micro-credentials⁴, the Commission is boosting up- and reskilling, especially in areas linked to the digital and green transition. The President of the Commission has announced in her political guidelines a Union of Skills, focusing on investment, adult and lifelong learning, skill retention and recognition. The Commission works with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) to provide evidence about the skills implications of the transition.

2. The Commission is supporting Member States in the implementation of Council recommendations in this area⁵, also to adapt education and training systems, through exchanges on good practices in the European Education Area working groups⁶.

3. The EU is mobilising several funding programmes, such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Digital Europe Programme⁷, Erasmus+⁸, the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The ESF+ funding to education, skills and training amounts to EUR 42 billion. Funded initiatives aim to develop skills for the transition in schools, training centres and universities, and among the workforce.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29>

² <https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities-graphic-version.pdf>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H0627%2803%29>

⁴ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9237-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

⁵ The 2023 Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training invites Member States to take measures to promote a quality, coordinated and coherent approach to the development of digital skills at all levels of education and training (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0206>). The 2022 Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality⁵ includes specific policy guidance on education, training and lifelong learning ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627\(04\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(04))). The Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development aims at supporting Member States to equip learners across all education and training sectors with the understanding and skills towards creating a socially just and sustainable future (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2801%29>).

⁶ More information about the European Education Area strategic framework working groups: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea/working-groups>

⁷ The Specific objective 4 of the Digital Europe Programme (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>) is dedicated to support the increase of the number of ICT graduates and ICT specialists in Europe by funding different education and training programmes to equip the current and future workforce with the adequate advanced digital skills, including green digital skills.

⁸ Erasmus+ supports the development of green and digital skills across all sectors of education and training (<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>), including through Centres of Vocational Excellence.

