The Union of Skills

4th meeting of the Thematic peer Group B on Lisbon recognition convention, 24 June 2026

European Commission

The Union of Skills is our strategy to help people stay ahead in a rapidly changing world and keep Europe competitive and fair.

We, in Europe, put people first because the success of every person in learning, at work and in life is essential for competitiveness and for a stable and resilient Union.

Roxana Mînzatu,
Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness

The need for more and better skills

Skill shortages and gaps in Europe

Europe does not produce enough skilled workers in both quality and quantity.

Transformation speed gap

Education and training systems and providers struggle to keep pace with rapid technological transformations and the changing skills needed.

Fragmented governance and skills intelligence

Multitude of stakeholders with variety of perspectives and insufficient consolidation and coordination.

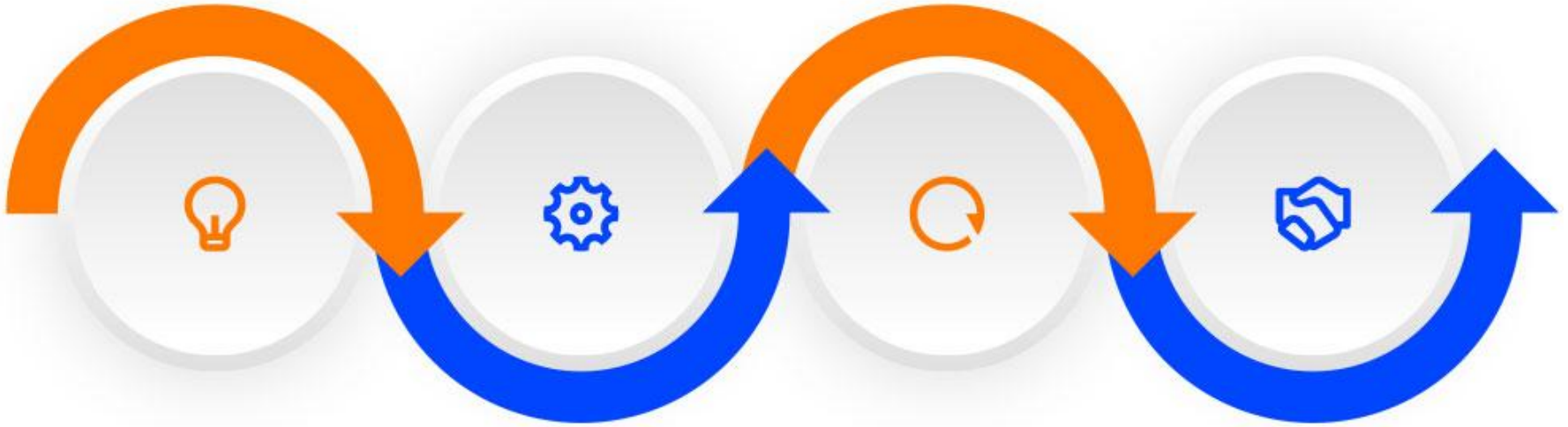
In a Union of Skills

Everyone in Europe is empowered to develop skills

Competitive companies can find people with the right skills

Skills and qualifications are transparent, trusted and recognised

Union of Skills



Build skills

for quality lives and jobs

Upskill and reskills

for the digital & green transition

Circulate skills

across the EU for competitiveness

Attract, develop and retain talent

for Europe's future

INVESTMENT

Skills are an investment – not a cost

Significant and more effective funding for skills and education

Mobilising public and private investment

Governance

Towards a dedicated EU 27 Recommendation on human capital: education and skills in the European Semester

A European Skills Intelligence Observatory: providing the necessary data for well-informed policy

It will provide strategic data and foresight regarding skills needs in concrete sectors and regions, and the performance of education and training systems.

A European Skills High Level Board: driving the change

Bringing together key stakeholders to provide comprehensive, cross-sectoral insights and guidance on skills to EU policy makers.

In the first half of 2025, the Commission will publish an evaluation report on the European Education Area, which will inform a review by the Council with a view to streamlining and contributing to the Union of Skills governance.

Union of Skills - Initiatives focusing on higher education

- European competence framework for academic staff [2026]
- Increasing accessibility of higher education [2027]
- Expand the use of micro-credentials [ongoing]
- Common European framework for automatic recognition [2027]
- Joint European study programmes with a European degree/label [2026]
- A legal status for European Universities alliances [2027]
- Initiatives with the STEM Strategic Action Plan

Union of Skills - Initiatives focusing on recognition

« validation of skills and recognition of qualifications »

- Skills portability initiative (next slide)
- Competence framework for academic staff
- Common European framework for the automatic recognition of study qualifications and learning periods abroad in school, VET and higher education
- Explore the possibility of EU accession to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the “Lisbon Recognition Convention”)

A package of three interrelated actions

To unlock the full potential of the EU Single Market

Internal dimension	*External dimension*
To remove barriers to free movement of workers related to skills and qualifications	To attract and value global talent in the EU

Action 1

a potential legislative proposal to

- **remove barriers to workers' mobility** in unregulated professions
- facilitating **digitalised portability of qualifications**

Action 2

potential measures, incl. legislative, to

- faciltate and modernise recognition processes for **regulated professions**
- and to extend automatic recognition to additional professions

Action 3

a potential legislative proposal for common rules to simplify procedures for

- the recognition of qualifications and
- validation of skills of **third-country nationals**

A broad consultation strategy and evidence gathering

Public consultation	Targeted consultations	3 dedicated studies	3 impact assessments
• A survey (open to EU citizens, third country nationals and organisations) • A Call for Evidence	• 200+ interviews • 15+ focus groups • 25+ expert workshops • SME Panel consultation via DG GROWS European Enterprise Network	• one per action to gather existing and new scientific evidence	• quantifying and showcasing the impacts of different policy options under each of the actions

Employers (SMEs, big, public...)

Workers, self-employed, job seekers

Public employ-ment services

Issuers of qualificatio ns and credentials

Recog-nition and validation authorities

Civil Society Organizati ons

Social Partners

Education and training providers

Review of the ECTS Users' Guide

Update for 4th meeting of the Thematic peer Group B on Lisbon recognition convention, 24 June 2026

EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

bologna process

European Commission

ECTS Users' Guide – revision 2027

- Last revision from **2015**, coinciding with a revision of the EHEA's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).
- 2024 Tirana Ministerial Conference tasked the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) to review the ECTS Users' Guide in order **"to strengthen its key features and adapt it to current developments, including micro credentials"**

→ BFUG's assignment to the European Commission and the "Ad Hoc Advisory Group" on ECTS for the **Revision of the ECTS Users' guide**

→ Final touches, **to be handed over to BFUG in March**

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ECTS Users' Guide – revision 2027

What has already been done:

- Initiation of a study on the current use of ECTS, on staff and students (with desk research, survey and focus groups)
- Meetings of the Ad Hoc Advisory group (3 physical and 3 online)
- Draft 1 after a first round of comments on structure and main changes
- Incorporation of elements from the study
- Draft 2 to BFUG board and Draft 3 to BFUG meeting in Copenhagen
- Integration of all comments
- Final presentation of the document in BFUG meeting in March in Nicosia

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Some key developments and issues

- Shorter, stand-alone courses leading to micro-credentials or similar
- Digitalisation of workflows for mobility and credentials
- Virtual exchange and blended mobility
- ECVET being repealed
- New forms of cooperation within European Universities alliances
- Monitoring of credit allocation not systematically everywhere
- Use of current grade conversion approach limited

Key changes

- Wording to strengthen position of ECTS as universal credit system for lifelong learning
- Wording to allow for credits to be allocated for all education provision
- Clarifying of awarding of credits, definitions and concepts (e.g: verifiable digital document)
- Clarifying of allocation of credits, definitions and concepts (e.g: for micro-credentials)
- Clear concepts of Transfer, Recognition, Automatic recognition, aligned with other working groups (such as ESG)

Thank you for your attention

Any questions?

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