ICT Solutions for Brilliant Minds

CSC

Position Paper 15.9.2023
Interim evaluation of the European Education Area
CSC – IT Center for Science Ltd.

CSC considers **skills and competences the core of Europe's welfare, competitiveness and strategic autonomy**. Therefore, the EU and its Member States must take decisive action to promote competence development across the Union. For this purpose, the work on the European Education Area (EEA) must continue with the aim of ensuring that all Europeans have access to learning that helps them use their full potential to lead meaningful lives and contribute to innovation, growth and well-being in Europe.

Digitalisation is transforming all sectors of the society, and learning is no exception. It is crucial for the education sector to not only adapt to the transformation but actively shape it and make full use of the opportunities it presents. Digitalisation can do a lot to make learning more accessible and effective and to support learning mobility and life-long learning. Therefore, **digital aspects must remain among the key priorities of EEA**.

--

EEA must continue to support digital means to make learning more accessible. This entails supporting the development of **remote learning** opportunities where onsite learning is not a feasible option, e.g. due to remote location. Digitalisation can also make learning mobility more accessible by providing **virtual mobility** opportunities for those who cannot or do not want to participate in physical mobility, e.g. due to lack of financial means or disability.

Learning mobility must remain a priority for EEA as the need for competent workforce and demographic changes increase the need to facilitate international mobility, including for those coming from outside the EU. **Digital solutions can support mobility** in many ways, such as ensuring smooth cross-border mobility of learner data, study records etc. The most urgent issue related to such solutions at the moment is **fragmentation**. Various solutions have been or are being developed, such as EMREX[1], Europass[2] and the European eID[3], but interoperability between them is lacking. This must be addressed promptly along with exploring solutions for facilitating mobility from outside the EU.

Interoperability is a key issue also for **life-long learning** which is becoming increasingly important for keeping the European competence base up to date in the face of the rapid technological development. In this regard, it is crucial to build on and mainstream the work done in the context

[1] https://emrex.eu/

[2] https://europa.eu/europass/en

[3] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-digital-identity_en

of the **European Universities Alliances**[4] on joint course display, enrolment, learning platforms and micro-credentials, as suggested in a recent study[5]. **The European Data Space for Skills**[6] must also be developed further to support life-long learning by allowing learners to use AI-based guidance services to find educational offering that suits their individual reskilling and upskilling needs, similarly to the services being developed in the framework of Finland's **Digivisio 2030** project[7].

--

One way for digitalisation to make learning more effective is **learning data analysis** that allows for assessing learning results and suggesting the most suitable learning methods and paths for each learner and also improvements at institutional and system level. Building on the ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in teaching and learning for educators[8], EEA must continue to support the use of learning data by providing guidance for using and combining different data sources safely within data protection regulations. The starting point must always be that learners have the right to determine how their data is used, according to the **MyData principles**[9].

It is also crucial that the **AI tools used in teaching and learning are trustworthy**. It is important that they are owned and that their goal and logic are determined by a reliable actor. The work on training them with reliable data must also be continued. The EU must strive towards inclusive AI models to tackle discrimination and to improve inclusion and accessibility of instructional settings. We need research on AI implementations, such as reliable large language models, as well as tools that are transparent and open.

--

In addition to supporting the digitalisation of education and life-long learning, EEA must continue to support learning of **digital skills and competences** across all educational fields. This is important for advancing the digital transformation across societies, and for strengthening European strategic autonomy through developing competences. This entails support for both basic and advanced digital skills as well as digital competences of teachers, including **digital pedagogy**. Considering the rapid technological development, it is key to re-evaluate the skills requirements regularly in good cooperation between the education and research systems and the private sector.

Kimmo Koski
Managing Director
kimmo.koski@csc.fi

Irina Kupiainen
Public Affairs Director
irina.kupiainen@csc.fi

[4] https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative/introduction

[5] https://hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/sites/default/files/dateien/HFD_report_no.72_Making_interoperability_work.pdf

[6] https://www.skillsdataspace.eu/

[7] https://digivisio2030.fi/en/new-services-developed-in-digivisio-2030/

[8] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d81a0d54-5348-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

[9] https://www.mydata.org/participate/declaration/