

## SKILLS THAT GET YOU A JOB: THE ROLE OF HE AND YOUTH MOBILITY IN THE EU

Nada Trunk Širca  
International School for Social and Business Studies and University of Primorska, Slovenia  
[trunk.nada@gmail.com](mailto:trunk.nada@gmail.com)

Valerij Dermol  
International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia  
[valerij.dermol@mfdps.si](mailto:valerij.dermol@mfdps.si)

Aleš Trunk  
International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia  
[ales.trunk@mfdps.si](mailto:ales.trunk@mfdps.si)

Špela Majcen Marušič  
Euro Mediterranean University, Slovenia  
[spela.majcen@emuni.si](mailto:spela.majcen@emuni.si)

### Abstract:

Most recently, in 2018 the European Commission in its Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture, proposed as one of the actions towards the creation of a European Education Area an adoption of a Recommendation on the mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and study periods abroad. The Commission considers this as “the first step in removing obstacles to the mobility of higher education students and secondary school pupils across the EU”, as it suggests that:

- a higher education qualification gained in one Member State is automatically recognised, for the purpose of granting access to further studies, in the others;
- an upper secondary qualification giving access to higher education (including those in VET) in one Member State is automatically recognised, for the purpose of granting access to higher education, in the others;
- the outcomes from a learning period abroad in secondary and higher education should be recognised and allow enrolment in the next year of school or study, when appropriately documented.

But until the above suggestions are enshrined in a legal text, if you are a student, or a worker of EU citizenship, and wish to study or work in another Member State, it is still worth checking comparability of your degrees and qualifications.

*Keywords: EU integration, higher education, labour market, youth mobility, soft and hard skills*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

You might now be asking yourself, what are these skills that constitute your employability portfolio. Which are those that you should have given up learning five years ago and what is that knowledge that will help you get a raise or a better job in 2025? While there is probably no uniform answer to these

questions, and no one has a crystal ball that could tell us the exact future, the best we can do is take an informed guess. A prediction.

The European Commission did so in the document, entitled the New Skills Agenda for Europe, which is meant to improve skills level, relevance and transparency as well as predict in the best possible way, which skills will be needed in the future. The New Skills Agenda is also one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

According to the European Commission “about 70 million Europeans lack sufficient reading, writing and numeracy skills and 45% of the EU population lack a sufficient level of digital skills”. While young people find it difficult to find jobs, 40 % of employers say they cannot find people with the right skills. For this reason, the New Skills Agenda is meant to represent a framework for activities aimed at increasing skills levels, improving understanding of skills needs and help people have their skills recognised. Some tools are already in place, such as the Europass CV and some others are being developed. Building relevance of skills is to be achieved by building stronger cooperation between education and training providers and the labour market. Special attention is to be put on the development of digital skills as cornerstones of the new age.

The New Skills Agenda for Europe launched 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available to people in the EU. They are intended to improve the quality and relevance of training and other ways of acquiring skills, make skills more visible and comparable and improve information and understanding of trends and patterns in demands for skills and jobs (skills intelligence) to enable people make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their life chances. The first eight actions are already underway, with the actions 9 and 10 being in the pipeline. Actions are listed and explained in some detail in the Table 1.

**Table 1:** Overview of the 10 actions of the New Skills Agenda for Europe

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Short description</b>
1	Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults	Recommendations on this action were adopted by the Council of the EU in December 2016. The Commission and the Member States are collaborating with interested stakeholders to help low-skilled adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or acquire a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent.
2	European Qualifications Framework	The revised European Qualifications Framework was adopted by the Council of the EU in May 2017. New Recommendation are being implemented by the European Commission and the Member States with the view of supporting better understanding of qualifications and making better use of all available skills in the European labour market.
3	Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition	This action aims to support cooperation among education, employment and industry stakeholders. It was launched in December 2016 and works towards improving the digital skills of the wider population.
4	Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills	This is about improving skills intelligence and addressing skills shortages in specific economic sectors: automotive; defence; maritime technology; space/geo information; textile, leather clothing & footwear; and tourism. The first call under this action was launched in January 2017 and project started in December 2017. Six additional sectors were subsequently selected for a second round. These are: additive manufacturing, construction, maritime shipping, paper-based value chain, renewable energy & green technologies, steel industry.
5	EU Skills Profile Tool Kit for Third-Country Nationals	This tool kit is supposed to support early identification of skills of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants. It was launched in June 2017 and is now available in all EU languages (except Irish) as well as in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Sorani, Somali, Tigrinya and Turkish.
6	Vocational education and training (VET)	In the framework of this action, ongoing work is focussed on a set of measures to support the modernisation of VET.

7	Key competences	A review of the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning was undertaken to help more people acquire the core set of skills necessary to work and live in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. The review included a strong focus on entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets and skills and served as basis for the Commission's proposal for a new the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in January 2018.
8	Europass	The Europass framework is to be revised so as to offer people better and easier-to-use tools to present their skills and obtain useful real-time information on skills needs and trends which can help with career and learning choices.
9	Graduate Tracking	A proposal for a Recommendation on Graduate Tracking is under discussion with EU Member States. The goal is to improve understanding of graduates' performance after their education and training experiences.
10	Analysing and sharing of best practice on brain flows	This work is currently in progress. Policies and measures to better manage the brain flow phenomenon are being discussed and assessed.

Source: European Commission, 2018.

## 2. KNOW YOUR EXPENSES. FINANCIAL LITERACY MIGHT SAVE YOUR WALLET

There is one set of skills, that pops up regularly in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements in the labour market, and does not necessarily relate to the digital area. It is financial literacy. How many youngsters really pay their bills or pay attention on their spending limits until it is too late? Lack of these skills might represent a doomsday for them once they find themselves alone in the job market, working for a starting salary and living in an expensive city.

According to FORBES (2015), students of all ages lack knowledge in the field of financial literacy. This is the area where many will fail and subsequently end up being less capable of taking care of themselves, or "adulthood". Among the countries included in the FORBES analysis, only 17 required high school students to take a course on financial literacy, and those same countries have proven "to have a direct impact on student's ability to make wise financial decisions". These students were also more likely to successfully save money, budget wisely and make smarter investments. In this respect, Hoyt (2018) suggests five steps towards enhancing our financial literacy:

1. Learn Budgeting Basics. This should be very easy, considering the range of modern apps helping us track our expenses and revenues. You should know where your money is actually going and help you hold yourself accountable on where your revenue is from and what you are using it towards.
2. Consider the impact of interest. Understanding interest or understand the difference between various loan offers in different banks can help you save a lot of money. Understanding how interest can impact your finances can therefore importantly help you upscale your finances.
3. Do not forget to save. Saving is considered an important aspect in maintaining a healthy financial situation, but many students tend to neglect it. Learning to save early will create a habit that will stick with you for life. You can start by saving for an expensive item you wish to buy and incrementally reach that peace of mind where you will always have some money on the side.
4. Manage the credit-debt rollercoaster. This relates to being aware how easy it is to lose credit. While credit can be a useful tool, rash decisions at young age can lead to devastating consequences. Therefore, Hoyt concludes that it is important to learn and grasp concepts and tools behind responsible credit practices as soon as possible.
5. Understand the perils of identity theft and safety. Considering that most financial services nowadays are digital, understanding the concept of identity theft along with preventive measures is crucial.

### 3. RESEARCHERS (HAVE TO) DO MORE THAN (JUST) RESEARCH

While all professions are evolving and require addition and new skills, a curious example is that of researchers. Those professionals already develop a unique set of skills during their education and training as they fight their way through the labyrinths of academia and a web of relationships that will ultimately, along with their hard work, lead to acquiring a PhD. Researchers usually learn how to plan and manage their work and have a strong work ethic and personal effectiveness. This allows them to be highly successful in their careers as well as in looking for jobs.

However, researchers too must follow labour market trends and develop some skills that allow them to be more successful in applying for grants, looking for new opportunities and, finally, also for collaborating internationally. The UK Institute of Physics (2018), for example, suggests that the following skills are beneficial to researchers looking to boost their employability:

- independence in terms of being able to work without close supervision and manage your own time and projects;
- critical thinking as in being able to evaluate your work and that of others, making judgments about the value of information and drawing conclusions from data;
- problem solving, meaning working on and devising strategies to work towards a solution;
- contributing as a professional in terms of presenting work to your peers, managing discussions and defending your position, having the confidence to put forwards ideas to senior staff; and
- initiative, especially in relation to having the confidence to make decisions and act on them, not waiting for approval to do basic tasks, but reporting back responsibly at appropriate times.

Finally, the modern era is all about communications. The world wants to know about a breakthrough discovery. The financing authority wants to tell the world that they supported this breakthrough. And making a name for themselves, researchers might be more successful in acquiring further support and forge additional alliances in their fields. In this respect, the ERC strongly supports their grantees to develop communication skills and successfully communicate their research findings to the general public.

### REFERENCE LIST

1. European Commission. (2018). 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223#qualifications>
2. FORBES. (2015). 5 Money Lessons Students Should (But Usually Don't) Learn In School. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bethbraverman/2015/08/30/5-money-lessons-students-should-but-usually-dont-learn-in-school/#6e98fa762d81>
3. Hoyt, E. (2018). The 5 Key Components of Financial Literacy. Retrieved from <https://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/the-5-key-components-of-financial-literacy>
4. Institute of Physics. (2018). Key skills of researchers. Retrieved from [http://www.iop.org/careers/i-am-a-researcher/key-skills-of-researchers/page\\_58690.html](http://www.iop.org/careers/i-am-a-researcher/key-skills-of-researchers/page_58690.html)
5. NETHER. (2016). New Skills Agenda for Europe. Retrieved from <http://www.nether.eu/nl/nieuws/New-Skills-Agenda-Europe-gelanceerd>