UNION OF SKILLS

Policy brief

Weblink	https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills_en
Relevance	☐ National policy X EU policy ☐ other: _____
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Short summary of the policy

The Union of Skills is a strategic initiative by the European Commission aimed at building a resilient, competitive, and inclusive European workforce through improved education, upskilling, and talent mobility. It promotes lifelong learning, stronger cooperation between education and industry, and better recognition of skills across borders. The policy also seeks to address labor shortages, support digital and green transitions, and ensure equal access to quality learning opportunities for all. The initiative is inspired by the Draghi and Letta reports and builds on the European Education Area and the European Research Area.

The European Commission also published a factsheet on the Union of Skills, which clearly highlights the initiatives contributing to each of the objectives. Altogether, the EU is investing over 150 billion EUR to support businesses and people to develop the right skills.

Main objectives of the policy

- **Empower individuals with strong foundational skills:** Aim to ensure everyone in Europe has access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, fostering equity and enabling participation in society and the economy.

- **Support lifelong upskilling and reskilling:** Promote continuous learning to help individuals adapt to changing job requirements and transitions, enhancing employability and personal development.

- **Facilitate the mobility of skills** across borders: Enhance the recognition and portability of skills and qualifications within the EU to support free movement and address labor market needs.

- **Attract, develop, and retain talent:** Implement strategies to make Europe a global hub for talent, addressing demographic challenges and skill shortages in key sectors.

- **Strengthen governance and skills intelligence:** Establish robust governance structures and data-driven approaches to monitor skills trends and inform policymaking effectively.

- **Advance basic and STEM education:** Focus on improving literacy, numeracy, science, and digital skills from early education through adulthood to prepare for digital and green transitions. Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

- **Promote inclusive and equitable learning opportunities:** Address disparities in education access and outcomes related to socio-economic background, gender, and geography to ensure no one is left behind.

- **Enhance collaboration between education and industry:** Foster partnerships between educational institutions and businesses to align curricula with labor market needs and support innovation. Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

These objectives collectively aim to bolster Europe's competitiveness by investing in human capital and ensuring that individuals are equipped with the skills necessary for success in a rapidly evolving world.

Context and relation to the Digital Europe Programme (DEP)

DEP contributes to reaching the objectives of the Union of Skills. The need for more and better skills is targeted in the Union of Skills with several objectives, one key deliverable is the "EU Skills Academies".

Parts of the policy directly related to specific objectives (SO) in DEP

With activities funded under SO4 – Advanced Digital Skills, DEP gives a direct answer to the objectives of the Union of Skills. The sectoral skills academies funded under DEP are building successful models to deliver skills that are needed by the industry for a green and digital transition. They are requested within the Union of Skills initiative for the AI, Quantum, Virtual Worlds, and Semiconductors.

Activities in the DEP Work Programme 2025-27 contributing to the objectives of the policy

Basically, all activities funded under SO4 contribute directly to meeting the objectives of the policy. Additionally, parts of the activities funded under other SOs are linked to skills development (e.g. ApplyAI topics)

Match of specific activities mentioned in the policy with call topics from the DEP Work Programme 2025-27

Union of Skills Objective	DEP Call Topic (Call 8)	Reasoning
Upskilling and Reskilling	Sectoral Digital Skills Academies	Equip people with new skills for emerging technologies, green/digital jobs, and workforce shifts.
	Multi-Country Project in Agri-Food	Upskills the agri-food sector with advanced digital/data tools for green transition.
	Apply AI: GenAI for Public Administrations	Public sector workers reskill in generative AI, enhancing delivery of digital services
Improving Basic Skills and Digital Literacy	Safer Internet Centres	Promotes digital safety and literacy, especially among vulnerable users (e.g. children, parents, educators)
Attracting and retaining talent in key sectors	Sectoral Digital Skills Academies	Academies are designed to address talent shortages in critical digital domains
	Apply AI: GenAI for Public Administrations	By funding pilot projects that embed GenAI into public services, this call creates opportunities for AI specialists to work within the public sector. It helps draw and retain talent in government roles, enhancing digital public administration across the EU.
	European Network of Fact-Checkers	Develops media literacy, critical thinking, and information evaluation skills—key for democratic engagement
Making Skills More Transferable and Recognized Across the EU	All Sectoral Academies	Implement shared curricula, training standards, and mobility schemes across multiple countries
	Apply AI and Data Spaces Initiatives	Support common frameworks and shared governance—fostering EU-wide competencies
	European Network of Fact-Checkers	Enables cross-border collaboration among journalists and experts boosting transferable information skills.
Improving Governance and Cooperation on Skills	Sectoral Skills Academies	All require stakeholder cooperation and strengthening governance networks
	Semiconductor Alliance Secretariat	Supports policy coordination in a key industrial sector—laying foundations for future training and skills programmes.
	Data Spaces Support Centre	Acts as a pan-EU coordination hub—harmonizing efforts on data-related education and use.

Further information

Union Of Skills - EC factsheet