European Commission

Union of Skills

One year of delivery
Keep learning. Keep growing.

March 2026

The Union of Skills puts education, training and skills at the heart of the EU's political agenda. Announced one year ago, it delivers concrete benefits for learners, workers, teachers and trainers, researchers, institutions and businesses. And it reinforces Europe's competitiveness, innovation, social cohesion, and democratic resilience.

1. Stronger governance and investment to support delivery

To ensure impact, the Union of Skills is underpinned by stronger coordination, foresight and investment.

European Skills High-Level Board

Former Commissioner Ylva Johansson appointed to chair the Board, bringing together businesses, education and training providers, and social partners to advise on skills development in Europe.

European Skills Intelligence Observatory

Providing data and foresight on skills trends and shortages.

Annual Human Capital Recommendation as part of the European Semester

Putting education and skills top of the political and economic agenda.

EU investment in education and skills

€150 billion for education and skills in 2021-2027 through the European Social Fund Plus, Recovery and Resilience facility, Erasmus+, European Regional Development Fund and the Just Transition Fund. This EU funding will benefit pupils, Vocational education and training learners, students, teachers, workers, and volunteers to develop future-ready competences and skills.

2. Strong foundations for every learner

Europe's competitiveness starts in the classroom.

Action Plan on Basic Skills is strengthening literacy, maths, science, digital and citizenship skills.

Digital education guidelines helping teachers promote ethical AI use, teach digital literacy and informatics, tackle disinformation, and develop content.

Peer counselling supporting 10 EU countries to reform and modernise their school system and fortify basic skills.

3. STEM: Powering Europe's strategic sectors and future skills

Innovation and strategic autonomy depend on strong STEM skills.

STEM Education strategic plan: in one year, **over 280,000 women and girls** supported to study STEM fields with Erasmus+ and EIT funding, on track to reach 1 million by 2028.

STEAM Executive Panel, bringing together businesses, education providers and social partners to advise on education-business cooperation and modernisation in STEM fields.

Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, EIT and Digital Europe supporting modernisation in STEM teaching and mentoring students and innovators in strategic sectors. **EIT Higher Education Initiative** (€70 million in 2026-2028) set to train 200,000 people in innovation, entrepreneurship, and intellectual property management.

4. Higher education aligned with Europe's needs

- **65 European Universities alliances** connect 570 higher education institutions, deepening cross-border cooperation for future-ready students and lifelong learners. 300+ joint study programmes and 800+ micro-credentials courses.
- **Erasmus+ Alliances for Education and Enterprises** (€25 million) set to strengthen university–business partnerships, foster innovation and address skills mismatches.

5. Skills for workers and businesses

As Europe's economy transforms, the Union of Skills helps address labour and talent shortages.

Skills Guarantee Pilot: more investment in reskilling and upskilling. €14.5 million pilot testing job-to-job transition schemes in the car industry.

Pact for Skills and **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**: more than 6.1 million people trained under the Pact. 4000 members, 20 Large-Scale Skills Partnerships and 22 regional skills partnerships in all EU strategic sectors. 2 million apprenticeships supported by the Alliance so far.

6. Attracting and retaining top talent

- The **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** strengthen Europe's global research excellence and talent base and support **Choose Europe for Science 2025**, with 100 excellent post-doctoral researchers to benefit from attractive career opportunities in Europe.
- New **VISA Strategy** to better attract and integrate skilled non-EU nationals.

7. What's coming next in 2026

Q2 2026

Vocational Education and Training (VET) Strategy:

Making VET more attractive, future-ready, inclusive and aligned with labour market needs.

Q3 2026

Skills Portability Initiative:

Removing skills-related barriers for workers moving to another country, modernising and simplifying recognition of professional qualifications, and extending automatic recognition making the Single Market a more attractive destination for global talent.

Q4 2026

Education package:

Dedicated support scheme to strengthen basic skills. Encouraging cross-border school cooperation across Member States. Supporting teachers. 2030 Roadmap for digital education and skills.

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