



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 10 May 2017  
(OR. en)

8867/17

---

---

**Interinstitutional File:**  
**2016/0304 (COD)**

---

---

EDUC 168  
SOC 311  
EMPL 234  
MI 380  
ECOFIN 332  
DIGIT 120  
JEUN 59  
SPORT 31  
CODEC 734

#### NOTE

---

From:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)
To:	Council
No. prev. doc.:	8252/17 EDUC 146 SOC 271 EMPL 202 MI 332 ECOFIN 279 DIGIT 93 JEUN 51 SPORT 26 CODEC 605
No. Cion doc.:	12947/16 EDUC 316 SOC 601 EMPL 402 MI 619 ECOFIN 874 DIGIT 110 JEUN 71 SPORT 58 CODEC 1390 + ADD 1
Subject:	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC - <i>Progress report</i>

---

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The current European framework for the transparency of qualifications, Europass, was established by the Decision 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 December 2004.

The overall objective of Europass is to increase the mobility of people in Europe for education and employment purposes, through increasing awareness of and access to transparency instruments amongst learners, job-seekers, employees and employers, and education and training institutions among others. The existing Europass Framework is a portfolio of documents, namely the Europass CV, the Europass Language Passport, the Europass Certificate Supplement, the Europass Diploma Supplement and the Europass Mobility Document.

## 1. Commission proposal

On 4 October 2016, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of the proposal is to update and modernise the current Europass framework to make it better fit to the digital age, which is characterised by rapid technological developments and changing demands and trends in the labour market and education and training sectors.

## 2. Other institutions

The European Parliament decided to apply Rule 55 of their Rules of Procedure and to issue a joint report by the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. The two Committees have appointed Rapporteurs, Mr Thomas Mann (DE-EPP) (EMPL) and Mr Hristov Malinov (BG-EPP) (CULT). The vote in the joint committee meeting is foreseen to take place in June 2017.

The European Economic and Social Committee issued an opinion on 22 February 2017.

The European Committee of the Regions decided at its meeting on 15 November 2016 not to issue an opinion, but to respond in the form of a letter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Doc. 12947/16.

## II. STATE OF PLAY IN THE COUNCIL

The proposal was presented to the Education Committee on 9 November 2016.

Member States in general welcomed the aim to modernise and update the Europass framework, which, in its current form no longer meets today's requirements in the digitalised world. However, some delegations regretted the lack of an impact assessment. In their opinion the added value of the existing instruments and services for their specific target groups as well as the need to assess the possible implications of the integration of these instruments and services for the target groups should have been assessed.

On the other hand, some delegations expressed their support to the Commission proposal.

Several delegations raised questions, in particular regarding the scope of the proposal, which goes beyond the current scope of the Europass framework. In addition a number of delegations expressed concerns regarding the following parts of the proposal: integration of new instruments and services, references to the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations framework (ESCO), references to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and governance.

Following the presentation in November, intensive examination of the proposal has continued at several meetings of the Education Committee. Member States have welcomed the significant progress that has been made and that they see moving into the right direction, addressing the main concerns raised by Member States. The examination is ongoing in a good spirit of cooperation and there is already a certain level of agreement on many issues. However, more time is needed to further examine some parts of the text, in order to agree upon a solid basis for a mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament.

### **III. MAIN ISSUES**

Significant progress has been made during the examination. The main concerns during the examination have related, in particular, to the following issues:

#### **1. Integration of new instruments and services**

The Commission proposes to extend the scope of the Europass, through moving it from a document-based facility into a service-based platform and through integrating different tools and services into an online web portal. Some delegations have felt that the proposed scope and integration of instruments and services is too far-reaching. Delegations have in general asked for more clarity on the role and obligations of the Commission and the Member States including the division of labour between them, in particular on the provision and updating of data on the Europass portal.

#### **2. References to ESCO**

The Commission has proposed to use ESCO for the technical operation of Europass as a common reference language to support exchange of information and documents on occupations, skills and qualifications. Delegations have underlined that the ESCO project is still in a development phase and extensive testing and quality control will be needed before further steps are taken. Consequently there is a broad consensus among delegations that references to the use of ESCO in Europass would at this moment be premature.

#### **3. References to the EQF**

Delegations have stressed the need to ensure that the Europass Decision does not change the voluntary nature of the cooperation within the EQF. They have recalled the different legal nature of the two instruments, EQF taking the form of a Recommendation, whilst Europass the form of a Decision. Delegations have asked for careful drafting in this respect on any possible reference to the use of the EQF.

#### 4. Governance issues

The landscape of the existing expert groups at EU level has been discussed intensively. Several Member States were cautious about the possible intention to replace the existing expert groups by a single informal co-ordination group at the EU level for EU tools and services on skills and qualifications. The concern is that this might lead to a loss of expertise and quality as well as gaps in implementation when dealing with education and training issues at the Union level.

At national level the Commission, in its proposal, proposed to designate a single contact point as the beneficiary of Union funding. While this proposal has been welcomed by some delegations as a measure for simplified administration and greater coordination, the majority of delegations have not been in favour, as they feel this would create an unnecessary administrative burden at national level. Several delegations have given their support to maintaining current implementation structures (such as the EQF National Coordination Points, National Europass Centres and Euroguidance Centres). During the negotiations it has been stressed that any arrangements should be without prejudice to national arrangements in terms of implementation and organisation.

#### IV. OTHER ISSUES

In addition to the main issues described under points 1 to 4, the following issues could also be mentioned:

**(a) Definitions:**

During the negotiations it has been agreed to clarify certain terms and concepts used in the Commission proposal, such as: 'authentication', 'skills intelligence', 'interoperability', and 'standards' which have been added as definitions in Article 2. Some other new terms might be similarly clarified.

**(b) Transitional period**

The Commission proposal specifies that the Decision enters into force 20 days after its publication. Delegations have pointed out to the need to add provisions for the transition from the current Europass to the new Europass portal, to ensure continuity before the new portal becomes fully operational. Such transitional clauses are to be included in the Decision.

**V. NEXT STEPS**

The examination of the Europass proposal will continue during the Estonian Presidency.

---