

## Digital Education Action Plan Update Stakeholder Questionnaire

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

### Digital Education Action Plan Update Stakeholder questionnaire

Digital transformation is among the key priorities of the von der Leyen European Commission with the flagship strategy '[A Europe fit for the digital age](#)'. Education and training are key enablers in this ambition and this has been reflected in the mandate of the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel who has been asked to '*get Europe up to speed on digital skills for both young people and adults by updating the [Digital Education Action Plan](#)*'.

In the second quarter of 2020, the European Commission will update the 2018 Action Plan and will work further towards ensuring that education and training systems are fit for the digital age and that everyone has the digital skills to live and work in 21 century.

To ensure that the Update reflects the needs of stakeholders, we would like to hear your views. Please fill in the questionnaire below on behalf of the organisation you represent. If your organisation would like to submit a longer contribution (e.g. position paper) there is an option to do so below.

The consultation consists of four parts:

**Part A:** eight questions about your organisation

**Part B:** nine questions about the Digital Education Action Plan and its update

**Part C:** option to upload a position paper

**Part D:** three questions on a forthcoming stakeholder meeting on the Action Plan.

**Deadline for responses: 2 March 2020.**

If you have any comments or questions, please contact [EAC-DIGITALEDCATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-DIGITALEDCATION@ec.europa.eu).

#### A. About you:

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**\* 1) Which organisation do you represent?**

- Civil Society Sector/NGO/Voluntary organisations
- Education and training institutions
- Employers' association
- Private business
- Public authority or government

- Trade unions
- Youth and youth work organisations
- Career guidance/development service
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)

If other (please specify):

*50 character(s) maximum*

**\* 2) If you represent an education and training institution(s), specify which education level:**

- Early childhood education and care
- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Vocational Education and Training
- Adult Education
- Non-formal education
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify):

*50 character(s) maximum*

**\* 3) Is your organisation included in the European Commission's Transparency Register?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate your Register ID number:

*50 character(s) maximum*

*If your organisation is not in the Transparency Register you can sign up [here](#). Please note, however, that you can reply to this consultation without being in the register.*

**4) Respondent details:**

\* First name

\* Last name

Jürgens

\* Email address

georg.juergens@ecswe.eu

\* Organisation name:

European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education aisbl

## 5) Your contribution

\* Note that, whatever option chosen, your answer may be subject to a request for access to documents under Regulation (EC) Nr. 1049 /2001.

- Can be published with your personal information (I consent to the publication of all the information in my contribution in whole or in part including my name or my organisation's name and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication)
- Can be published provided that you remain anonymous (I consent to the publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part, which may include quotes or opinions I express, provided that it is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication).

\* 6) I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#).

- Yes

\* 7) Are you familiar with the current Digital Education Action Plan?

- Yes
- No

\* 8) Has your organisation participated in any actions of the Digital Education Action Plan - such as workshops, events, calls for proposals?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

**If yes, can you provide us with feedback based on the experience?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

The EC keeps ignoring our call for an age-appropriate and development-oriented media education. Instead of mainstreaming digital media use in schools from an early age, the precautionary principle should be applied: In 2018, the EP called for “unbiased and interdisciplinary research into the various impacts of digital technologies on education (...) to get as deep an understanding as possible of how the minds of children and adults are responding to the digital environment.” Please listen!

## B. Scope and focus of the Digital Education Action Plan and its update:

1) The current Digital Education Action Plan has three priority areas. How relevant are each of these areas in your opinion?

	Very relevant	Quite relevant	Neutral	Somewhat relevant	Not relevant at all
* 1. Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* 2. Developing the relevant digital skills and competences of all citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* 3. Improving education systems through better data analysis and foresight	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* Any comments regarding the three priority areas?

*1200 character(s) maximum*

On 1) Making good use of digital technology implies that the benefits of choosing digital over analogue media for a concrete lesson, age-group or learning context outweigh the risks and negative side effects for each learner. This may frequently apply to ISCED 3 and to some degree to ISCED 2, but only rarely to ISCED 1 and virtually never to ECEC. The debate on access and the digital divide regularly ignores the third level digital-divide that needs to be addressed by developing social competence ahead of digital competence.

On 2) The terms digital education and digital competence narrow the scope to digital media exclusively while a holistic approach to media education and a broad media concept encompassing media content (message), media form (text, image, sound) and media carriers (analogue and digital) is needed more than ever. Such an approach combines indirect media education (growing up healthy in a real world environment) and direct media education (acquiring literacy, numeracy and language skills and subsequently learning to use and create analogue and digital media and content).

On 3) The plan focuses on the wrong type of data. See questions B8 and B9.

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2) The current Digital Education Action Plan is based on 11 actions across the three priorities mentioned above. Its focus is on primary, secondary and tertiary levels of formal education. Do you think that the current scope should be widened to cover other levels/sectors of education?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

If yes, please provide more details? How in your view should the scope be widened?

500 character(s) maximum

Widening the scope of the Action Plan to ECEC would put the healthy development of young children at risk. We insist on applying the precautionary principle ahead of mainstreaming digital technology in ECEC and primary education. Only longitudinal studies comparing health, wellbeing and performance of students in both high-tech and screen-free education settings (with an equally well-trained staff and comparable funding) can provide the necessary evidence base for responsible decision-making.

\* 3) Do you think that the Digital Education Action Plan addresses the needs of the organization or stakeholders you represent?

- Yes
- To a certain extent
- No
- No opinion

If no, please give details:

500 character(s) maximum

With its exclusive focus on mainstreaming DIGITAL education, the plan fails to promote a holistic, development-oriented approach to media education. Without asking fundamental questions such as: WHY are schools consciously delaying their use? WHEN is the right moment (age) to introduce specific analogue or digital media and WHAT are the benefits of starting late? For all the buzz around digital media, it is surprising that so little research on these questions has been done and funded by the EU.

\* 4) Do you think that the Digital Education Action Plan offers enough funding opportunities?

- Yes
- To a certain extent
- No
- No opinion

If no, what funding opportunities would you like to see in an updated Digital Education Action Plan?

500 character(s) maximum

The plan only funds initiatives on mainstreaming the broad use of digital media, while all schools with comprehensive media-curricula should get funding for analogue or digital teaching aids, materials, infrastructure and the necessary training & CPD to implement it. Example: funding for musical boxes with punch-cards and related training, would enable schools to teach programming skills unplugged. More funding opportunities for age-sensitive research on the effects of media is needed as well.

**\* 5) Do you think that the communication and outreach activities on the Digital Education Action Plan and its actions are sufficient?**

- Yes
- To a certain extent
- No
- No opinion

**How would you like to receive news and updates on the Digital Education Action Plan?**

- Newsletter
- Social media
- Website
- Events
- Other (please specify)

Other (specify below)

*50 character(s) maximum*

Direct consultation of alternative schools

**\* 6) Which aspects of using digital technology to enhance teaching and learning would you like to see in the update of the Digital Education Action Plan?**

*at most 5 choice(s)*

- Infrastructure and connectivity
- Recognition of online and blended learning
- High-quality online education content (including open education resources)
- Artificial Intelligence (including applications such as learning analytics)
- Data and foresight
- Emerging technologies in education (eg Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality)
- Open access
- Institutional leadership and culture
- Pedagogies for teaching and learning with technologies
- Teacher competences in the pedagogical use of technologies
- Assessment (measuring and demonstrating learning using technology)
- Digitalisation of services for education
- Inclusion, including learners with special needs
- Digital Youth Work (see definition at [Developing digital youth work](#) by Expert group 2016-2018).
- Other (specify below)

Other (please specify)

*50 character(s) maximum*

Broaden scope to screen-free and unplugged options

**\* 7) Regarding digital skills, what do you think should be the priorities of the updated Digital Education Action Plan?**

*at most 5 choice(s)*

- Digital literacy, including fighting disinformation, hate speech and online threats
- Ethics and privacy (cybersecurity e.g)
- Creative use of digital technologies (makerspaces e.g)
- Digital citizenship (see definition at [Digital Citizenship Education Handbook](#) by the Council of Europe).
- Recognition and certification of digital skills
- Computing education (informatics) computational thinking, coding, sound understanding of digital systems
- Artificial Intelligence – knowledge and understanding
- Informed and responsible use of emerging technologies (Virtual Reality, etc).
- Advanced digital skills (Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, High Performing Computers, etc.)
- Digital skills gender gap
- Including groups with special needs
- Non-formal and informal learning
- Other (please specify below)

Other (specify below)

*50 character(s) maximum*

Selective, conscious use (digital&analogue media)

**\* 8) Digital technologies provide the opportunity to gather large amounts of data that can inform and improve education. What data on education would you find useful?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

This appears to be the wrong question. What we are interested in is reliable long-term data on the effects of using or not using digital technology in schools. A fair comparison is needed of how pupils of well funded and staffed high-tech education settings and equally well funded and staffed schools with delayed use of ICT in classrooms perform in terms of basic skills, health and well-being, social skills, media literacy and digital competence at different ages and when leaving school.

**\* 9) Are there any specific actions, measures or policy initiatives you would like to see in the updated Digital Education Action Plan? Please give details below.**

*1500 character(s) maximum*

While the Digital Education Action plan addresses the need to prepare children for the many risks encountered online, the direct health risks resulting from an early use of digital media are widely ignored. The plan gives no indication as to when and how digital media can be introduced in an age-appropriate and development-oriented way.

All authorities should apply the precautionary principle to avoid negative long-term effects of screen-media on children's brain development. More than ever, we need research on when and how to use digital technology in classrooms safely and without negatively affecting children's health and well-being.

There is growing evidence suggesting that the regular use of digital screen media has an adverse effect on the ability to focus, results in lowering attention spans and negatively affects children's ability of deep reading. And while meaning well, using digital technology to make lessons more engaging and entertaining might make things worse in the long run.

Multidisciplinary research into the effects of digital media on children of different ages and education at large, including Public Health, Neuroscience, Psychology (e.g. attachment research, media impact), Critical Data Studies, Ecology, is much needed.

Until such research has yielded long-term results, the action plan, should stress the freedom of schools to experiment with different approaches, including screen-free options in ECEC and primary education, and fund them equally well.

## C. Other responses

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The update takes into account that organisations may have many different viewpoints on digital education based on their area of work and interest.

We therefore welcome positions papers (2 pages A4 max) that provide more details. Please support your position by providing references to research evidence.

Please upload your file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

## Stakeholder workshop, 18 March 2020, Brussels.

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The European Commission will organise a one-day stakeholder workshop on 18 March 2020 to discuss further the update of the Digital Education Action Plan and the stakeholders' ideas. Please note that to attend your organization needs to have submitted its replies to this questionnaire. We will allocate places on a first come first serve basis. Please wait for us to confirm your attendance before making any travel arrangements.

**\* I would like to attend the stakeholder workshop on 18 March.**

- Yes  
 No

**\* Name and contact details of the person interested in attending the meeting if different to the person replying to this questionnaire.**

Dora Simunovic

**\* We can fund a limited number of places at the workshop (travel to Brussels and accommodation). Please indicate if you would need travel and accommodation to be funded.**

- Yes  
 No

**Thank you for you for taking part in this consultation!**

**Contact**



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