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The new Digital Education Action Plan should boost digital's role as enabler of innovative and flexible learning

DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the Commission's update of the Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) and the opportunity to provide feedback via a public consultation. In our response, we have identified four key areas that will be crucial to boosting the digital transformation of our education systems and enabling high-quality, innovative learning paths for all.

The COVID-19 lockdowns and subsequent closures of schools and universities have highlighted the urgent need of education and training systems fit for the digital age. Digital transformation will make education more flexible, innovative and engaging, where learning models can be tailored to each learner's pace.

The new DEAP should therefore boost digital's role as learning enabler, promote flexible courses besides traditional learning paths, and forge partnerships among authorities, educators and digital solution providers. It should also prioritise connectivity to make our educational systems more inclusive and flexible.

In our response to the Commission's consultation, we highlighted the following key areas of focus the new DEAP should take into account.

Key Recommendations

- ▶ **Adequate network infrastructure** is crucial to speed up ubiquitous, secure, and high-quality connectivity. This is vital for the digital transformation of the education sector. Learners need good internet connection and suitable equipment to make the most of innovative hybrid learning models, mixing in-person and remote learning.
- ▶ **Funding support** from public authorities and closer cooperation with the private sector is a must. Funding should cover both online and blended teaching and promote 21st century skills, such as ICT, computer science, computational thinking, coding and emerging digital technologies like artificial intelligence. It should also target both students and teachers of all education levels, from school to university.

- ▶▶ **Partnerships** are key. During the COVID-19 crisis, DIGITALEUROPE members – many of which provide digital technologies and learning solutions – established good examples of partnerships and cooperation models. For example, our members have collaborated with Ministries of Education, training and education providers, as well as NGOs to develop ad-hoc distance learning modules and toolkits for teachers. They have also donated technical equipment and devices to those in need.
- ▶▶ **Curricula modernisation and digital upskilling** are fundamental. We need digital curricula that include the basics of programming as well as teacher training and guidance. New methods of assessment and feedback are also necessary. Authorities must ensure that evaluation and certification of digital skills and competences guarantee that the training content meets its educational goals and the needs of the labour market.

The Action Plan must also improve digital upskilling in the current workforce. Sectors like health and manufacturing face dire digital skills shortages. Building digital acumen in Europe's workforce will accelerate technology uptake and contribute to a trustworthy digital ecosystem.

For more information on the role of digital technology as enabler of learning and for further examples of best digital learning practices, we invite all interested stakeholders to consult our publication on "[Accelerating Education Transformation through Technology](#)".

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About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies. DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies.

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