



THE DOWNLOAD

DIGITALEUROPE's concise policy brief on the hottest tech topics.

In this edition:

CLOSING THE DIGITAL SKILLS GAP

A priority for our economic security

What do we think?

The persistent digital skills gap threatens Europe's future as a digital powerhouse, as well as our economic and physical security.

Over **60% of EU enterprises** struggle to fill ICT specialist roles.¹ This slows the adoption of AI, big data and cloud, and will put Europe further behind in the global technology race.

Our [manifesto](#) sets ambitious targets **by 2030 to train at least 300,000 cybersecurity specialists**, as well as boosting digital literacy amongst citizens and businesses to **90% of the population**. Advanced skills policy should be focused on those critical technologies that will guarantee our economic security, like AI, advanced semiconductors, biotech and quantum.

Europe has a strong academic foundation, but achieving these goals will demand unprecedented public-private cooperation, a coherent plan at EU level supported by data, and a boldness to change the way we teach our children and students.

Labour mobility will be key. We propose a **Digital Skills Passport** to bring together all types of qualifications in a single interoperable format. Referring to Mr Letta's Single Market report,² we believe freedom to move and stay in the EU are complementary, if we can keep up with opportunities offered by digitalisation and the possibilities of remote work.

+
300,000
cybersecurity specialists by 2030



¹ Eurostat, ICT specialists - statistics on hard-to-fill vacancies in enterprises, 2023

² Enrico Letta, Much more than a market, 2024

Going deeper

Short-term Actions



ONE VOICE

- ▶ **Ensure governance coherence on EU skills policy:** The EU needs to establish a single 'Digital Skills Coordinator' as the face of all digital skills initiatives in the Commission, supported by a single Directorate General.



EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ **Implement a voluntary European Skills Passport to help cross-border job seekers:** The voluntary Passport would be a digital repository for all professional experiences, languages, skills and qualifications, including those obtained outside Europe. It should also include industry-recognised certifications, micro-credentials, digital badges and short courses - often overlooked by governments. It should also build on and complement existing national, international and industry-initiated measures, platforms and ecosystems that help to further mobility and employability
- ▶ **Tear down labour mobility barriers in the Posted Workers Directive:** A wind turbine manufacturer should easily dispatch engineers across Member States to fix parts. Similarly, a semiconductor company should be able to send workers with valid permits to other EU countries without requiring extra paperwork. We must reform the A1 Certificate and tackle inconsistent interpretations of EU case law that obstruct these temporary postings in order to strengthen our supply chains.



Going deeper

Mid-term Actions



EDUCATION

- ▶ **Make digital skills compulsory in school curricula and upgrade digital infrastructure in schools:** The Commission should enhance and augment existing initiatives like the Digital Education Action Plan. It should encourage making topics like digital literacy, computational thinking and higher level digital competences compulsory at every school level in all Member States. The Commission should also encourage the ongoing upgrade of school digital infrastructure and availability of properly managed digital learning devices while ensuring balanced, beneficial and sustainable technology use in education. **Just 35% of EU primary schools have good digital equipment, and only 11% enjoy high-speed internet.**³ Teachers should also get extra support in digital pedagogy across subjects, and the skills required to teach digital topics.
- ▶ **Ensure economic security by certifying and funding critical technology skills:** The EU, NATO and key allies have identified critical technologies pivotal to economic and military security. Europe must acquire the competences in areas like AI skills, cyber skills, digital literacy and data management to develop capabilities in these fields:
 - An EU-wide certification standard for each critical technology, coordinated with key allies like the US.

- More funds to universities and industry providers offering certifications, and an Erasmus scheme for tech students to intern at European firms developing critical technologies.
- The Council should commit to certifying **2 million ICT specialists annually for 5 years** and establish a coordinated tax deduction scheme for firms investing in certifying workers for critical technologies.

- ▶ **Accelerate investments in a Data Space for Skills & Employment:** Bringing together data multiple different sources can increase transparency on existing qualifications, market needs and job vacancies, leading to better outcomes Cross-border pilots like DS4Skills, ESSA and ARISA can provide a useful baseline to build on. EU support should focus on SMEs developing value-adding services modelled around the data space.

Long-term Actions

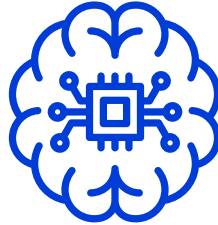
- ▶ **Deliver on the Cybersecurity Skills Academy ambitions:** The Academy should aim to establish ten public-private cyber training campuses by 2030. DIGITALEUROPE and its members are launching seven cyber skills hubs through the CyberHubs project.



³ Figures based on the latest systematic data collection across Europe in 2017-2018. Source: Hertie School Jacques Delors Centre, Digital Education in Europe and the EU's role in upgrading it, available at https://www.delorscentre.eu/fileadmin/20200204_Digital_education_Kask.pdf

Case studies

DIGITALEUROPE is involved in pioneering EU-funded projects on digital skills. These are examples of initiatives that should be adopted and expanded further by the EU.



Artificial intelligence

ARISA - aiskills.eu

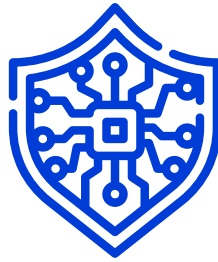
ARISA helps people understand and use AI technology in business and policy contexts. It will:

- ▶ Develop AI skills intelligence, analyse mismatches to define EU-wide AI occupational skills requirements.
- ▶ Design and pilot a modular European AI curriculum.
- ▶ Create a permanent AI stakeholder network to monitor AI labor market skills.



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Case studies



Cybersecurity

CyberHubs - cyberhubs.eu

CyberHubs is an initiative to enhance cybersecurity skills across seven national hubs (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Spain). It will:

- ▶ Conduct skills mismatch analysis and develop country-specific cybersecurity strategies.
- ▶ Organise a European Hackathon to bring innovative cybersecurity solutions.
- ▶ Structure collaboration and knowledge sharing between education, industry, and cybersecurity hubs.



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DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. We stand for a regulatory environment that enables European businesses and citizens to prosper from digital technologies.

We wish Europe to grow, attract, and sustain the world's best digital talents and technology companies. Together with our members, we shape the industry policy positions on all relevant legislative matters and contribute to the development and implementation of relevant EU policies, as well as international policies that have an impact on Europe's digital economy.

Our membership represents over 45,000 businesses who operate and invest in Europe. It includes 106 corporations which are global leaders in their field of activity, as well as 41 national trade associations from across Europe.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Vincenzo Renda

Director for Single Market & Digital Competitiveness
Vincenzo.renda@digitaleurope.org

Samia Fitouri

Senior Communications Manager
Samia.fitouri@digitaleurope.org



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