


# Investing in one's skills: Opportunities for EU citizens

18/03/2016  [People and Skills](#), [Future Jobs](#), [Labour Market Context](#), [EU](#), [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Czechia](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Greece](#), [Hungary](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Netherlands](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#), [United Kingdom](#)

A range of persistent trends affect job creation and growth, such as societal and demographic changes of the workforce, globalisation, productivity, technological developments<sup>i</sup> To keep up with these developments, meet the needs of new jobs and reduce skills mismatch, it is necessary to **invest in the skills of the workforce**.

The 2008 economic crisis led to high levels of (youth) unemployment and highlighted the shortcomings of the EU in keeping up with the development of skills that foster employability and innovation<sup>ii</sup>. The European Commission recognises the need to take action and places the development of skills and the improvement of education and training systems at the centre of its priorities and new [Investment Plan](#).

Some relevant, key EU initiatives are presented below.

---

## Developing and recognising skills of (young) EU citizens: EU initiatives and tools

The Youth Employment Package (2012)<sup>iii</sup> supports the development of skills of young Europeans to reduce youth unemployment. It established a Youth Guarantee and a European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

- The [Youth Guarantee](#) supports young people under 25 years old, focusing on those not in employment, education and training (NEET). All youth should be offered a good-quality concrete job offer within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. With the support of the European Commission, EU Member States have developed and implemented national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans.
- The [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#) (EaFA) is an initiative to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across Europe via EU funding and provision of technical expertise. It brings together governments, businesses, social partners, chambers, vocational education and training providers, regions, youth representatives or think tanks for sharing experiences and learning from best practices.<sup>iv</sup> A large number of countries have committed to increase quantity, quality and supply of apprenticeships.<sup>v</sup> Furthermore, a Quality Framework for Traineeships was agreed upon in 2014, to provide safe and fair conditions for all young people in traineeships.

The recognition and validation of all skills regardless of the learning pathway chosen is a milestone in tackling unemployment and promoting talent mobility. Acknowledging the contribution of non-formal and informal learning to a skilled Europe [vi](#), the European Council has fostered the **validation** of skills since 2012 [vii](#), asking Member States to offer their citizens access to “[a system which identifies, documents, assesses and certifies \(=validates\) all forms of learning](#)”. Cedefop supports Member States in their efforts by providing [guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning](#) [viii](#).

## Improving employability through transnational mobility

- [EURES](#) is the European Job Mobility Portal which offers information and advice about education, training and working opportunities as well as job-matching services throughout Europe. It also provides practical information about living and working in the EU Member States.
- [Your first EURES job](#) is a European initiative in the context of [Youth on the Move](#), which supports education and employment for young people in Europe. It addresses young jobseekers up to 35 and aims to help them find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in another Member State; and supports employers in finding the skilled workers they need.
- [Erasmus+](#), the programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020, aims at boosting skills and employability and modernising education, training, and youth work. With Erasmus+ a budget of 14.7 billion Euros offers to about 4 million people the possibility to train, study, work or volunteer abroad, and to 125,000 institutions the opportunity to exchange best practices or to cooperate in transnational partnerships.

## Investing in entrepreneurial skills to create more jobs

Entrepreneurship is a way to support both employability and the growth of enterprises and new markets. Entrepreneurship is ‘an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action’ and includes ‘creativity, innovation, risk taking, ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives’ [ix](#)

The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan [x](#) supports entrepreneurial education and training, removes administrative barriers and fosters the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe.

[\[i\]](#) European Commission, (2014), Annual Growth Survey 2015

[\[ii\]](#) [A New Start for Europe](#): My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change Political Guidelines for the next European Commission, (2014).

[iii] European Commission (2012), [Moving Youth into Employment](#)

[iv] European Commission, (2015), [Addressing youth unemployment in the EU](#)

[v] European Commission, (2015), [National commitments](#)

[vi] Cedefop, (2015), [Validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)

[vii] [Council Recommendation](#)

[viii] For an overview of the validation practices across Europe, please see the European Inventory on Validation run by Cedefop [here](#).

[ix] European Commission (2015), [Promoting entrepreneurship](#)

[x] European Commission (2015), [The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan](#)

---

© CEDEFOP 2019

POWERED BY:

