

# Public consultation questionnaire informing the Skills Portability Initiative

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Introduction

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The European Union is working on an initiative to improve the understanding, digitalisation and recognition of qualifications and skills across Europe, regardless of how or where they were acquired (at work, in a training centre, at university, in another country, etc.).

Take part in this survey, share your experiences and opinion, and help the EU shape this initiative.

## Target audience

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This consultation seeks input from across the EU on how skills and qualifications are recognised and understood across borders, including in border regions where people may live in one EU country but work in a neighbouring one. It is open to individuals aged 16 and above. We are particularly interested in hearing from **working-age people** and from **employers or recruiters** who assess and evaluate candidates' skills and qualifications, whether they were obtained within the EU or in non-EU countries. We also welcome contributions from other organisations involved in or affected by mobility and skills recognition, such as public authorities, competent authorities responsible for recognition, research institutions and civil society organisations, to ensure a broad and inclusive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for skills portability in the EU. We invite these organisations to complete this questionnaire from the perspective of their area of expertise and representation, as well as their experience as employers.

## Why are we consulting?

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The Skills Portability Initiative aims to make it easier for individuals and employers to identify, showcase, understand, trust and use skills and qualifications across the EU – whether obtained within the EU or in non-EU countries. This is key to improving the EU's competitiveness, both within its internal market and in the global race for talent. This public consultation seeks to collect evidence, experiences, and views from individuals and organisations on the challenges they face in having qualifications or skills recognised or assessed across borders, the impact of these challenges, and the possible solutions and improvements that could make recognition and skills portability simpler, faster and more reliable, including through the use of verifiable digital credentials and EU-wide tools. The results will support the European Commission's work in

identifying potential policy actions and legislative options to improve the portability of skills and qualifications in the EU, while ensuring added value at European, national and local levels. This initiative has a strong focus on simplification and does not impose any new obligations on employers or workers.

For this survey, the following definitions of qualifications and skills apply:

**Qualifications:** Official certificates (like a university diploma or vocational certificate) provided by a competent body that prove someone has achieved learning corresponding to a given standard. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade.

**Skills:** What a person can do because of their knowledge or experience (such as use software, repair machines, care for patients, etc.). Skills can be gained e.g. while working, through volunteering or while studying and training, with or without receiving a formal certificate.

**Recognition of qualifications:** The process by which a relevant authority (such as a public body or a higher education or training institution) formally accepts a qualification obtained in another country as equivalent /comparable to its own, for the purpose of work, study or access to a regulated profession[1].

**Validation of skills:** The process by which relevant authorities, such as public bodies or education institutions, identify, document, assess and certify skills that a person has, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning (for example, while working or in a short training course)[2].

[1] [https://commission.europa.eu/education/skills-and-qualifications/recognition-your-qualifications\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/education/skills-and-qualifications/recognition-your-qualifications_en)

[2] <https://europass.europa.eu/en/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

Additional definitions are available for reference. Feel free to consult them or skip directly to the consultation below.

Please click here to display the additional definitions

## About you

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### \* Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Estonian

- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Irish
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

\* I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

\* First name

Linda

**\* Surname**

Valkó

**\* Email (this won't be published)**

valko@neth-er.eu

**\* Organisation name**

*255 character(s) maximum*

Neth-ER (Netherlands house for Education and Research)

**\* Organisation size**

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

**Transparency register number**

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

01678796979-90

**\* Country of origin**

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

*This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.*

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Libya
- Saint Martin
- Åland Islands
- Dominica
- Liechtenstein
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Albania
- Dominican Republic
- Lithuania
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States

- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association', 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

### \* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

**Anonymous**

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

**Public**

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

\*Which of these sectors are you related to?

- Aerospace and defence
- Agri-food
- Construction
- Cultural and creative industries
- Digital
- Electronics
- Energy-intensive industries
- Energy - renewables
- Health
- Mobility – transport – automotive
- Proximity and social economy
- Retail
- Textile
- Tourism
- Public sector

- I am not related to any specific sector
- Other (please specify)

\* To what extent are you involved in recruitment or hiring processes in your organisation?

- Directly involved (e.g. HR, management)
- Indirectly involved (e.g. providing input on candidate profiles or selection)
- Not involved
- Don't know / Not applicable

## Problems/Challenges

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To what extent do you consider the following challenges related to skills portability in the EU to be a problem?

	Not a problem at all	A small problem	A moderate problem	A big problem	A very big problem
* Employers find it more difficult to understand and trust qualifications obtained in a country other than their own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Employers in other countries find it difficult to understand what skills a person has acquired through work experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* The certificates (e.g. micro-credentials) that a person receives after following a short training course have less value for employers who are unfamiliar with the course provider and the training conditions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Qualifications are rarely issued as verifiable digital credentials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Qualifications issued as verifiable digital credentials in one country cannot be easily shared with employers or authorities in other EU countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Recognition processes for accessing a regulated profession in another country are often lengthy, complex and costly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* People who have studied and acquired skills outside the EU do not have a uniform and simple way to get their qualifications recognised and their skills validated to access the EU labour market.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Employers in the European Union who want to recruit people from outside of the EU struggle to understand what people can do and/or need to wait for their qualifications to be recognised.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* Do you think there are other issues that make it harder for people to have their skills and qualifications understood, recognised and valued in another country?

- Yes  
 No

Please elaborate:

\* Have you had any personal experiences with any of these challenges, for example, when applying for jobs in a different country, recruiting people from another country or dealing with the recognition of qualifications or validation of skills?

- Yes  
 No

Please tell us about your experience:

## EU tools

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\* With which of the following EU tools supporting transparency, comparability and recognition of skills and qualifications are you familiar? **(Please select all that apply)**

- European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- Europass Framework
- European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)
- The Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC)
- European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)
- National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union (NARIC)
- European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC)
- Single Digital Gateway and Once-Only technical System (OOTS)
- European Learning Model (ELM)
- [EU Digital Identity Wallet](#)
- Databases of qualifications from the National Qualifications Frameworks
- Diploma Supplement and Certificate Supplement

Would you suggest changes to any of the above tools to enhance the portability of skills and qualifications in the single market? If so, please elaborate.

Many EU tools already support transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, such as the diploma supplement, Bologna Process and EHEA, and EQF. Priority should be given to better alignment and coherence between existing instruments, rather than creating new ones. In particular, digital credentials should rely on interoperable standards and trust frameworks, allowing qualifications issued in one country to be securely shared and understood across borders. At the same time, it is essential that the approach allows regions to grow according to their unique contexts, which require flexibility and interoperable systems. Tools should also allow room for education-level and sector-specific profiles developed together with relevant labour market actors. Internationally comparable translations of such profiles can improve cross-border understanding while respecting national systems and institutional autonomy. Finally, removing legal and administrative barriers and strengthening implementation support across Member States would significantly enhance the effectiveness of existing tools.

## EU action

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To what extent do you think EU-level action is necessary for the following objectives?

	Very necessary	Somewhat necessary	Not very necessary	Not at all necessary	I don't know/ Not sure
* To guarantee that qualifications are transparent and evenly understood across the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To facilitate a common system of certification, so that knowledge and skills acquired through short training courses (e.g. micro-credentials) are understood throughout the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To guarantee that people can get a certificate that demonstrates what they can do, and that this validation of skills certificate is issued in a common format throughout the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To enhance the digitalisation and transnational sharing of qualifications in the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To enhance the digitalisation and transnational sharing of skills credentials in the EU (for example, the certificate you get after an official authority has validated your skills, or a diploma).	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To simplify, modernise and speed up administrative procedures for the recognition of qualifications across the EU.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* To simplify the way in which people who have acquired qualifications or skills outside the EU can get them recognised in the EU so that they can access the EU labour market.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate

EU-level action is essential where fragmentation between Member States limits transparency, trust and interoperability, particularly for the recognition of qualifications, digital sharing of credentials and access to regulated professions. EU action should focus on consistent implementation of common frameworks that ensure that digital credentials – including for micro-credentials and skills validation – are transparent, trustworthy and interoperable across the EU, enabling employers and authorities to understand and verify skills and qualifications across borders. This can be facilitated by European Universities Alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence developing structures and digital solutions. Simplifying and modernising recognition procedures would significantly improve labour mobility and skills matching, as well as reduce administrative burden for individuals, education providers and employers. This also supports the EU’s objective in the Union of Skills to attract and effectively integrate (international) talent.

Nevertheless, EU action should also take into account sectoral and regional approaches for effective alignment with labour market needs, and avoid one-size-fits-all solutions. In particular, recognition frameworks and tools should be tailored to educational profiles, aligned with sector-specific labour markets, and internationally translated to ensure comparability across Member States, enabling employers and authorities to understand qualifications consistently and supporting labour mobility.

\* In your view, how important is it for your sector or your country to attract skilled non-EU nationals to address current and future labour market needs?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- Not sure/ No opinion

\* In your view, how important is it in your sector or country to equip workers and employers with reliable tools to identify and demonstrate a person’s skills, regardless of how they acquired them (through work or study, etc.)?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- Not sure / No opinion

Please provide further details

Attracting skilled non-EU nationals is increasingly important not only to address labour shortages across multiple sectors, but also to secure the long-term availability of talent essential for Europe's future competitiveness and resilience. The effective integration into the EU labour market of such talent depends on the availability of reliable and transparent tools to identify, validate and demonstrate skills and qualifications, regardless of where or how they were acquired. Employers often face uncertainty about the level, content and trustworthiness of qualifications obtained outside the EU, while individuals encounter lengthy and complex recognition procedures. It is therefore essential to improve transparency and accessibility, strengthen validation and recognition mechanisms and avoid excessive bureaucracy and costs, to better match skills with labour market needs and fully utilise available talent. Importantly, recognition and validation systems should be accessible and usable for everyone regardless of language level, educational or socio-economic background, to ensure a genuinely level playing field for cross-border work and mobility.

Should new tools/policies/rules be introduced at EU level? Please provide as much detail as possible, including the needs these initiatives would address.

EU-level action can add value by improving coherence, trust and interoperability across existing recognition and transparency instruments. Rather than introducing entirely new tools, priority should be given to common frameworks that define minimum information requirements, trust and verification mechanisms, and interoperability standards for digital credentials. This would support faster and more predictable recognition, while avoiding additional administrative burden. EU action could build on existing good practices, such as the MOVE Certificate, ECTS User's Guide, and the Multilateral Treaty on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications of Benelux and Baltic States, and incorporate microcredentials as stepping stones for recognising smaller learning outcomes. This is particularly relevant for vocational education, but also includes higher education – where advanced learning outcomes are increasingly achieved through modular and flexible pathways. In vocational education, use of microcredentials is still emerging, moving from national microcredentials to cross-border experimentation based on learning outcomes can help gradually build mutual trust toward broader recognition of degree programmes. This ensures transparency and accessibility for all learners, and helps bridge gaps between formal qualifications and labour market needs. EU action should also help remove legal and administrative barriers, promote the exchange of best practices, and support targeted approaches that reflect sectoral and regional labour market needs. EU action could also focus on the more systematic and proactive use of existing instruments under Directive 2005/36/EC, such as Common Training Frameworks (Article 49a), to enable automatic recognition in professions facing structural labour shortages, thereby turning an underused internal market tool into a strategic labour market instrument.

## Possible EU-level solutions

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- \* Imagine a system where qualifications and training or skills certificates across the EU are issued as verifiable and transparent digital credentials that can be shared, understood and processed across borders. Individuals could share their qualifications with employers or authorities in another country, and these organisations could check their authenticity quickly and securely.

Do you think such a system would lead to cost savings or reductions in administrative burden for any of the groups below? (select all that apply)

- Individuals / Job seekers
- Employers
- Education or training providers
- Recognition bodies
- Public administrations
- Other (please specify below)

\*What concerns, if any, would you have about EU-level digital credentials for qualifications? (Select all that apply)

- Data privacy or security issues
- Not being legally valid in all countries
- Technical complexity or lack of compatibility between systems
- Risk of excluding people with low digital skills or poor internet access
- Costs of adopting or using the system
- Doubts about who issues or verifies the credentials
- Dependence on specific platforms or providers
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

\* If EU-wide digital credentials for qualifications and skills were available, how likely would you be to use them and/or accept them if someone were to share them with you?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Don't know

\* If the EU could improve or create new online/digital ways for people to show and share their qualifications, which changes do you think would help the most? (Choose up to three)

*between 1 and 3 choices*

- Providing a database of qualification standards that can be consulted by all.
- Ensuring that digital credentials work everywhere in the EU.
- Linking digital credentials to a single secure app or 'digital wallet' for all documents.
- Uploading verifiable digital credentials in an EU Digital Identity Wallet.
- Ensuring easy access to verifiable digital credentials.
- Making it easy for schools and training providers to issue verifiable digital credentials.
- Providing a simple service for employers to check verifiable digital credentials
- Offering clear guidance and help for people using verifiable digital credentials.
- Other (please specify below)

\* What type of digital tools could be most useful to improve administrative procedures for recognition applications? (Please select up to three)

*between 1 and 3 choices*

- Simple online portals where applicants can submit, track, and manage their applications in one place.
- Automated document-verification tools (e.g. authenticity checks, completeness checks, fraud detection).
- Automated translation of documents in other languages
- Digital pre-screening tools to assess whether recognition is needed and what documents are required.
- AI-assisted assessment tools to support the analysis of qualifications and identify training gaps.
- Automated notification and deadline-alert systems to prevent delays and improve communication.
- Other (please specify)

Additional comments

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If you wish to add further information- within the scope of this consultation- please do so here

Neth-ER welcomes the Commission's initiative to enhance skills portability across the EU. Our members emphasise that digital credentials, interoperable frameworks, and improved recognition procedures can significantly support labour mobility. We underline the importance of flexible solutions that respect sectoral and regional differences, and of targeted support for non-EU nationals. Implementation should prioritise transparency, trust, and useability, while safeguarding data privacy and inclusivity. Existing good practices, such as EduBadges, Eduwallet, CoVEs, the MOVE Certificate, the ECTS User's Guide, the European Area of Recognition manuals, the treaty on automatic mutual recognition of higher education diplomas between the Benelux and the Baltic States, and the European Qualifications Framework, provide valuable foundations that can be scaled up via EU coordination and support. EU-level coordination should focus on alignment and interoperability rather than imposing uniform models.

## Participation in focus group

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\* Several focus groups will be organised as part of this initiative's consultation process, and we would welcome your participation. Would you like to be invited to one of these focus groups?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, please send me additional information

## Contact

[Contact Form](#)