

EDUCATION, TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



1. Unemployment and skills mismatches - key issues for the Union

The European Commission has identified three pressing challenges of today's economies:

- the **lack of relevant skills** to match labour market needs,
- the **insufficient transparency of skills and qualifications**,
- the difficulty **to anticipate and forecast skills**.

After the great recession of the 2000s and early 2010s, the general picture of the European labour market remains characterised by persistent high

levels of unemployment in many areas, and especially among young people. Conversely, there are blocks in vacancies in some of the higher-growing regions and sectors such as within fitness sector. The structural mismatches between labour supply and demand are a cause for concern, and require a sharpening of policy and implementation programmes that could better support the EU's stability and growth.



2. How to tackle the skills-gap and skills miss-matches in the EU

Education and training are crucial for both economic and social progress, and aligning skills with labour market needs plays a key role in this. Job and career guidance services will need to be more creative in their solutions to make the most of available employment opportunities and to be able to signpost skills development to support new occupations.

Key policies in the field of Education, Training & Skills:

- **Education and training 2020** (ET 2020) (1) (May 2009), a framework for cooperation in education and training. ET 2020 Strategy promotes actions for employment policies that can help to generate favourable conditions for job creation and to increase the labour supply.
- **The New Skills Agenda for Europe** (June 2016). (2) Aims of the New Skills Agenda for Europe are to boost human capital, employability and

competitiveness. The Commission has proposed actions, which will be taken forward over the next two years focusing on (1) improving the quality and relevance of skills formation; (2) making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable; (3) improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices.

To gather relevant labour market intelligence, to understand employer needs to support growth, develop more sustainable jobs and promote entrepreneurship, a coordinated approach is required. This will also need to have empathy with the capacity to deliver relevant training programmes through VET, in formal, informal and non-formal settings, and also through partnerships across higher education.

(1) Education and training 2020 - [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN)

(2) The New Skills Agenda for Europe - <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-381-EN-F1-1.PDF>



3. Education, Skills and training for the European fitness sector

Despite its significant potential in developing transversal skills for young people, the health and fitness industry is a considerable employment sector with approximately 650,000 employees and an annual revenue of 27 billion Euro. Whilst increasing the match of acquired skills and skills in need (quality), there is as well a demand for a quantitative increase of fitness professionals especially in view of the fact that the promotion of health enhancing physical activity is among the top priorities on national and European health agendas.

In a recent survey of fitness employers the findings confirmed the need for some re-drafting of current standards and a change in emphasis to meet new skills needs.

- **Only 16% of employers find it easy to recruit the trainers** they want for their business
- 88% think that personal trainers should have additional education.
- The findings also showed that qualifications need to have a bigger focus on **personal and communication skills** to help motivate people, and skills for the use of **applied digital technologies** to support an increasingly diverse range of customers and clients.
- Hence, this survey confirms a consistent messages concerning the quality and reliability of qualifications, with 35% of employers saying that current VET training does not provide the trainers with the skills they need for their businesses.



4. EuropeActive recommendations on education, training and skills

Over the past decade, EuropeActive has been actively contributing to the development of skills, education and training to contribute to the development of the European workforce and realise the full potential of the human capital in the European Health and Fitness sector. In a dynamic and fast changing industry, the need for a work force, equipped with the relevant skills is fundamental to close skills gaps and tackle mismatches in the European labour market and above all, making more people more active more often. Consequently, EuropeActive:

- 1. Calls on the development of motivational and behavioural skills for fitness professionals** to encourage people to be and remain active to the benefit of their health;
- 2. Encourages to facilitate skills recognition and referencing to the EQF to foster mobility** of sport and fitness professionals across member states for learning and employment opportunities;

3. Supports quality and efficiency of education with special focus on Vocational Education and Training promoting work-based learning;

4. Recognises that non-formal and informal learning represents a rich source of human capital. To realise a coherent lifelong learning framework, the formal recognition of these skills has to be encouraged in the European fitness sector.

5. Fosters the improvement of skills intelligence to address skills shortages. Understanding the labour market dynamics and its implication for future skills needs will be crucial to respond to changing demographics, digital progress, and increased number of cases of cardio-vascular disease.