

# The new Europass

## Vision into Action

*Third meeting of the Europass Advisory Group*

*14 March 2019*



## 1 Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to set out the **mission** and **scope** of the new Europass Framework, in line with the Europass Decision. The document elaborates on the **context and role** of Europass in responding to key challenges in the communication of skills and qualifications and describes how the Europass framework is to be **implemented**.

## 2 Mission of the Europass Framework

The European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>1</sup> has as its first principle that ‘everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market’.

The question of maintaining and acquiring skills today, and in the future, is a complex one. Digitalisation, automation and demographic changes are presenting new challenges and opportunities for people, processes and policies. Our lives and careers are characterised by increasingly frequent transitions between work and learning and more than ever Europe requires a workforce of lifelong learners.

The importance of skills, as a pathway to employability and prosperity, was at the core of Skills Agenda for Europe adopted by the Commission in 2016. The Skills Agenda was driven by the issues of skills gaps and mismatch in our labour markets, and the need for tools, information and support to help people make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their live chances. The proposal to revise the Europass Decision was announced as one of the Skills Agenda for Europe actions.

Europass is a framework to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications; Europass achieves this by supporting communication.

Communication underpins all labour market and education and training processes. Learners, job-seekers and people looking for opportunities need to understand and articulate their goals and accomplishments while employers, educators and facilitators need to effectively communicate their own needs and work to exchange information in effective and efficient ways. Effective communication – between people, the labour market, and education and training in any permutation – depends on the quality and relevance of information exchanged and the tools used to communicate the information.

Europass 2004 established a set of common tools to support more effective communication of information on skills, qualifications, work and employment experiences, credits, and learning outcomes. The new Europass framework, as set out in the Europass Decision<sup>2</sup> continues with the mission of supporting transparency and understanding by supporting communication however the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>2</sup> Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC

revised Decision calls for a new Framework, of web-based tools and information that responds to the changing ways in which we learn and work.

The challenges to communication – differences in language, definitions, documents and formats – remain, especially so when people move between countries. However, the progress of technology offers new routes to modernise Europass and find smart solutions, as well as ensure wider outreach to potential Europass users to maximise its value as an inclusive, public service.

*Europass will offer open, accessible, multi-lingual web-based tools that support documentation and communication of information on skills and qualifications. Europass will also offer information to enhance the use of the web-based tools and support career management and lifelong learning choices.*<sup>3</sup>

Europass embodies the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights; the framework of tools and information serve to support better communication between actors in the education and training and labour market systems to enable lifelong learning and career opportunities for all. Successful implementation of the Europass framework will require involvement and ownership by Member States, Social Partners, public and private stakeholders, at European, national and regional level and the consultation, development and implementation of Europass should be a conduit for greater co-operation and communication to ultimately serve the needs of all Europass users.

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<sup>3</sup> This mission was included in EPASS 1-3 presented to the Europass Advisory Group on 28 September 2018.

### 3 Scope of the Europass Framework

The Europass framework comprises a core of an online platform, offering tools and information:

#### Europass Web-Based Tools

Europass **web-based tools** are structured means of documenting and describing different forms of learning (skills, qualifications, and experiences). The web-based tools will support the functions as set out Article 3 (1) of the Europass Decision to document and describe formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Web-based tools **for individuals** will be offered as part of a Europass e-Portfolio. The tools will be user-friendly, relevant and accessible and support users to understand and communicate the value of their learning. The tools will be presented in a coherent, intuitive way so that users can independently use each tool within the Europass online platform and the tools can also be used by facilitators (e.g. guidance practitioners, employment services) to support and compliment their work.

All personal data will be owned and controlled by the Europass users.

Europass web-based tools will also be offered to **recipients and facilitators** to support activities such as describing the learning outcomes of qualifications and different learning experiences.

#### Europass Information Provision

The new Europass will offer **information and links to information** to offer a more comprehensive service to users and support their use of Europass web-based tools.

Communication must be targeted and the information provided via the Europass platform should enable Europass users to receive and communicate their skills, qualifications and experiences in tailored, concise ways.

### 4 How the Europass Framework will work

The Europass framework will support transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications by enabling:

1. **Individuals to communicate their skills and qualifications**
2. **Recipients to receive and process information on skills and qualifications**
3. **Facilitators to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications in their activities**

Each of these functions of the Europass Framework is elaborated in the following sections:

## 4.1 Enable individuals to communicate their skills and qualifications

### Who?

**Individuals:** learners, job seekers, workers and volunteers

### What?

The Europass e-Portfolio will offer individuals free, multilingual **web-based tools** and **information** to communicate their skills and qualifications in line with their needs.

### How?

Europass will enable individuals to:

<b>Document and describe personal information in a variety of formats...</b>	<p>...by creating and building a personal <b>e-Portfolio</b> of skills, qualifications and experiences</p> <p>...by reflecting on and recording <b>Goals</b> in their e-Portfolio.</p> <p>...by creating and editing documents such as CVs through the <b>Editor</b></p>
<b>Assess and Self-assess skills...</b>	<p>... by viewing and editing a summary of their skills in the <b>Skills Profiler</b></p> <p>... <b>by self-assessing</b> their language skills</p>
<b>Store information on skills, qualifications and experiences...</b>	<p>... by storing digital documents and other information in their <b>Library</b></p>
<b>Share information on skills, qualifications and experiences...</b>	<p>... <b>by sharing</b> information directly with recipients</p> <p>... by logging applications in an <b>Application Tracker</b></p>
<b>Secure easier and faster authentication of their qualifications and learning achievements...</b>	<p>... by receiving verifiable credentials through the Europass technical <b>framework for digitally signed credentials</b></p>
<b>Make use of Europass web-based tools and inform their learning and career choices...</b>	<p>... by receiving relevant suggestions <b>of opportunities for further learning or work</b> via the Europass platform.</p>

### Vision

Europass will be a trusted EU source of tools and information to support the learning and career needs of individual users.

## 4.2 Enable recipients to receive and process information on skills and qualifications

### Who?

**Recipients:** education and training providers, employers, youth work providers, youth organisations

### What?

A framework of open, free tools to enable receipt and processing of information on skills and qualifications.

### How?

Europass will enable recipients to:

<b>Receive data and information from candidates/applicants...</b>	... by becoming <b>interoperable</b> with Europass to receive information directly from Europass individual end-users
<b>Match profiles to requirements for vacancies, admissions or other opportunities...</b>	... by using Europass common formats (e.g. <b>open standards</b> ) to enable easier comparison and processing of information and matching to requirements, also across languages
<b>Authenticate information on skills and qualifications</b>	... by receiving verifiable credentials through the Europass technical <b>framework for digitally signed credentials</b>
<b>Develop understanding of skills and qualifications in Europe...</b>	... by accessing <b>information</b> or links to information on skills and qualifications via the Europass platform.

### Vision

Europass will be a trusted framework to connect with and receive information in a consistent, clear way to offer new opportunities for employment, learning and mobility to people.

## 4.3 Enable facilitators to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications

### Who?

**Facilitators:** education and training providers, guidance practitioners, employers, public employment services, social partners, youth work providers, youth organisations, policy makers.

### What?

A framework of open, free tools to enable exchange of information and co-operation in the education, training and the labour market.

### How?

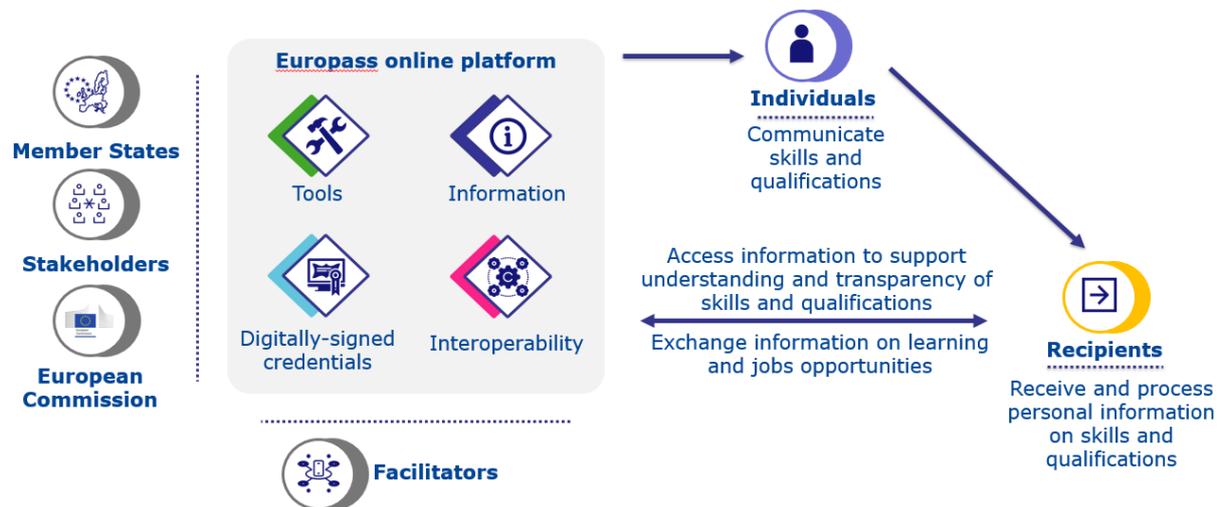
Europass will enable facilitators to:

Support end-users to document, describe personal information in a variety of formats...	... by <b>supporting end-users</b> with their use of the Europass e-Portfolio web-based tools to achieve their goals.
Document the learning outcomes of qualifications and other learning experiences	...by using Europass web-based tools to <b>issue</b> Qualification Supplements and Mobility documents to individuals.
Support easier and faster authentication of qualifications and other learning achievements...	... by issuing verifiable credentials through the Europass technical <b>framework for digitally signed credentials</b>
Develop understanding of skills and qualifications in Europe...	... by contributing to and accessing <b>information</b> or links to information via the Europass platform.
Offer opportunities to Europass individual end-users...	... by providing <b>opportunities such as learning opportunities, jobs or volunteering</b> to the Europass platform
Support exchange of information and co-operation between education and training and labour market actors...	<b>...by implementing and promoting</b> the use of Europass by different actors and supporting the ongoing development and updating of Europass.

### Vision

Europass will be a trusted framework of tools and information to support greater co-operation and communication in a consistent, clear way and offer new opportunities for employment, learning and mobility to people.

Together, the combined use of tools and information will offer **Europass individual end-users** a route to reflect on, document and share information on their skills, to find new learning opportunities to develop their skills, and to find employment, and will offer **Europass facilitators and recipients** a route to co-operate, exchange information and communicate on skills and qualifications to support Europass individual end-users.



## 5 Implementation of the Europass Framework

The future implementation of Europass will depend on ownership by and relevance to all potential users. To achieve this, the Union level online platform needs to demonstrate user-friendliness and inclusiveness, but also facilitate reuse, dissemination and outreach of Europass tools, information, standards and interoperability. This way it can fully deliver on the objective of transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications in all participating countries.

**Europass is a framework**, meaning a supporting structure for a system or systems. The systems in question are existing education, training and labour market systems and processes, at European, national and regional level. Europass provides the framework for effective communication, transparency and understanding of skills that make these systems work more effectively together.

Europass users will be able to use, implement and engage with these tools and information in line with their own needs and circumstances. The different forms of use are enabled by the interoperable, open nature of the Europass framework.

As such, Europass will operate both as a Union level online platform offering tools and information and as a repository of standards and infrastructure that underpin the tools and information, than can be vehicles for wider co-operation and communication.

The new Decision addresses the Commission, Member States of the Union, participating countries and stakeholders and sets out a basis for implementation and updating of Europass in line with principles and features.

## 5.1 Role of the Commission

Article 6 of the Europass Decision sets out explicit tasks for the Commission regarding the management of the Europass online platform (Art. 6 (1) (a-f)) and ensuring the overall effective implementation of the Decision (Art. 6 (2) (a-e)). The Commission will fulfil these tasks in line with the Decision and Guiding Principles (see *Annex 1 below*).

Implementation of the Europass Framework will be supported by the expertise of the Union agencies, in particular Cedefop (Recital 36).

## 5.2 Role of the Member States and participating countries

As each element of the new Decision is planned and implemented there is to be full consultation and consideration of any Member State tasks associated with implementation. Implementation should build on relevant, linked work done to-date by relevant national services.

Each of the Member State tasks listed in Article 7 can be linked broadly to some current established tasks of National Europass Centres, Euroguidance Centres and European Qualifications Framework – National Coordination Points (NCPs).

Member States will engage with Europass in two ways:

- (1) in support of the EU level platform
- (2) to support implementation of Europass at national level

### In support of the EU level platform

Member States and participating countries will be actively consulted and invited to test **Europass web-based tools** as they are developed and updated. The consultation and testing will be organised through the Europass Advisory Group, relevant national services and targeted outreach to relevant stakeholders.

Regarding **information provision** or links to information on the EU level platform, the Commission will undertake a targeted consultation on each information topic listed of the Article 3 (2) to develop the Europass Content Strategy. As part of each consultation there will be a full consideration of any associated Member State tasks. For each Member State information provision task, the following items will be considered:

- Nature, specification and clarity of the task
- Analysis of the task in line with subsidiarity
- Added-value of the task to ensure effective implementation of the Europass Decision, including Article 7 Member States Tasks', and the mission of Europass
- Using technical solutions and best practice to avoiding duplication and overlap with other activities and reducing administrative burden
- Building on ongoing activities and work done by relevant national services including National Europass Centres, EQF-NCPs and Euroguidance centres

Following consultation, the Commission will develop guidance and provide support on all Member State tasks associated with Europass information provision.

### Support implementation of Europass at national level

Member States are responsible for the implementation of the Decision at national level (Article 7).

Member States will determine all national arrangements regarding implementation of the Decision and organisation of national services.

National approaches will seek to ensure effective implementation of the Europass Decision and goals. Member States will select how each element of the Europass framework should be implemented in line with national priorities and circumstances.

The successful implementation of the new Decision will require co-operation, communication and input from education, training and labour market actors to support the goals of the framework and offer relevant tools and information.

## Annex 1

### Principles and Features

The Europass Framework will be underpinned by a number of principles and features as outlined in the Europass Decision (Article 4). Each principle and feature will be accommodated in the implementation of the Decision as follows:

1. **The Europass online platform and web-based tools, including their content and functionality, shall be user-friendly and secure and be made available free-of-charge to all users.**
  - ✓ A User Approach and user-testing plan has been developed to ensure consultation and testing by Europass users during development and updating of Europass.
2. **The Europass online platform and web-based tools, including their content and functionality, shall be accessible to persons with disabilities, in accordance with the accessibility requirements established in relevant Union law.**
  - ✓ The new Europass platform will be developed in full compliance with Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/2048 of 20 December 2018 on the harmonised standard for websites and mobile applications drafted in support of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
3. **Europass web-based tools shall use open standards to be made available free of charge, for reuse by Member States and other stakeholders on a voluntary basis.**
  - ✓ Use and development of open standards will be described in the approach to Europass Interoperability following consultation with Member States and stakeholders.
4. **Europass web-based tools shall refer to the EQF in information on qualifications, descriptions of national education and training systems and other relevant topics, as appropriate and in line with national circumstances.**
  - ✓ References to the EQF shall be in line with the Europass Decision and the Commission will consult with relevant stakeholders, including the EQG AG, on the development of information provision within Europass.
5. **The Europass online platform may include an option for users to store personal data such as a personal profile. Union data protection law shall apply to the processing of such personal data. A number of options shall be made available to users to enable them to restrict access to their data or to certain attributes.**
  - ✓ The Europass e-Portfolio will offer options to use tools as a 'guest' without storing any information on the Europass platform and to register, create a profile and store information. The Commission will undertake a full Data Protection Impact Assessment of the new platform to ensure compliance with all Union data protection law.

6. Europass shall support authentication services for any digital documents or representations of information on skills and qualifications.
  - ✓ Europass will offer a framework for digitally signed credentials to support authentication services. The framework will support issuance of verifiable digital credentials.
  
7. Europass web-based tools shall be delivered in the official languages of the institutions of the Union.
  - ✓ Europass web-based tools will be delivered in the official languages of the institutions of the Union. Coverage of other Europass-participating countries will be covered to the extent possible.
  
8. Europass web-based tools shall support and ensure technical interoperability and synergies with other relevant instruments and services offered at Union and, where appropriate, national levels.
  - ✓ An approach to Europass Interoperability will be developed following consultation with Member States and stakeholders.