

Europass Project Update

*Fourth Meeting of the Europass Advisory Group
12 and 13 June 2019*



1 Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of progress with Phase 1 (until launch in early 2020) implementation of the Europass Decision.

The document provides an overview of the project building blocks, feedback on events and consultations, and other ongoing work.

This Project Update Note includes:

- Project Overview with Updates
- Events and activities since March 2019

The document includes reminders of [Key Messages to-date](#) from previous meetings or notes; [Updates](#) and [Next Steps](#).

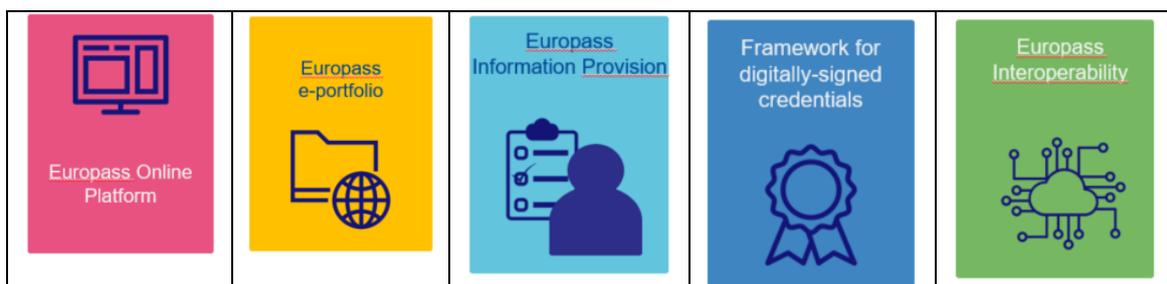
2 Project Overview

The new Europass Decision¹ addresses the Commission, Member States, participating countries and stakeholders and sets out a basis for modernisation and updating of Europass in line with user needs.

The Commission established the ‘Europass Advisory Group’ in July 2018. All meeting documents are available via the Commission Register of Expert Groups².

The Commission has launched [a project website](#) with updates and information on progress on development for interested stakeholders³.

Implementation of the new Decision will be phased and incremental. Phase 1 implementation will include development of concepts and approaches to first key building blocks of the new Decision with an aim for first launch of the new online Europass platform by early 2020. The key building blocks include:



See [a summary](#) and [updates](#) on each building block below:

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D0646>

² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass>



Online platform, developed and managed by the Commission to provide Europass web-based tools and information. See Article 3 (1).

Phase 1 development will include development of the new platform, as the central source of information on all new features and continuity of established Europass documents for Europass users.

Updates since March 2019:

- The Commission circulated the document '*Europass Information Provision - Consultation on Structure and Content for Europass online platform*' to Europass stakeholders on 21 May 2019.
- The consultation document included a [proposed structure of the new Europass platform](#).
- Feedback from this consultation will be presented during the Europass Advisory Group Meeting on 12 and 13 June, 2019.



The Europass e-Portfolio will provide a set of free web-based tools for Europass individual end-users to manage their career and lifelong learning. See Article 3 (1).

Phase 1 development will include development of the new e-Portfolio for users to:

- Record their skills and qualifications in an e-Profile;
- Create custom CVs for different purposes;
- Collect relevant documents such as diploma, reference letters, motivation letters, CVs and digital credentials in a Library;
- Identify their career goals and preferences;
- Explore and configure how Europass analyses their skills.

Updates since March 2019: See EPASS 4 - 5



The Europass online platform shall provide available information or links to available information on a range of topics. See Article 3 (2).

Phase 1 development will include development of a Content Strategy for all information on the Europass platform including information on learning opportunities, validation, recognition, guidance, and integration of third country nationals. The strategy will establish the types of information that will be available for each user type by Phase 1, stakeholders to be consulted and consider any associated Member State tasks. Information on qualifications will continue as per established EQF and ESCO processes but will be made available in the new platform (the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe portal will be closed). Information on skills intelligence will be planned in Phase 2.

Updates since March 2019:

- The Commission circulated the document ‘*Europass Information Provision - Consultation on Structure and Content for Europass online platform*’ to Europass stakeholders on 21 May 2019.
- The consultation document included [proposed targeted content, including country-specific information, for Europass users](#) and a [proposed approach to managing content on the new Europass platform](#)
- Feedback from this consultation will be presented during the Europass Advisory Group Meeting on 12 and 13 June, 2019.



A technical framework to support authentication services for any digital documents or representations of information on skills and qualifications. See Article 4 (6).

Phase 1 development will include development of principles, functions, standards and infrastructure for issuing, storing, sharing and verifying digitally signed credentials.

Updates since March 2019:

Following the invitation sent by the Commission in March 2019, 12 countries (Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain) have expressed interest in pilot testing the technical framework for Europass digital credentials.

The Commission will work with the 12 pilot countries to support the testing in line with national practices for different types of qualifications. A series of bilateral introductory meetings were organised during May 2019 with representatives from each country to present and discuss the initiative and establish national contexts and interests.

Introductory Meetings

- [Luxembourg](#), Ministry of Education; 07 May 2019
- [Estonia](#), Estonian Qualifications Authority; 10 May 2019
- [Slovenia](#), National Europass Centre/ Center RS za poklicno izobrazevanje (Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI); 20 May 2019
- [Greece](#), National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP); 21/05/2019
- [Portugal](#), Directorate General of Education and Science Statistics; 21 May 2019
- [Czechia](#), National Europass Centre; 22 May 2019
- [Croatia](#), University of Split/ Ministry of Education and Science; 22 May 2019
- [Netherlands](#), SURFNet; 23 May 2019
- [Germany](#), Federal Ministry of Education and Research; 23 May 2019

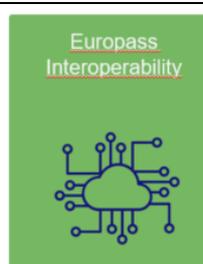
At the time of writing meetings with Slovakia and Italy are scheduled for early June.

Summaries of each meeting will be published and updates on progress with development and testing will be published on the Europass project website.

Next steps:

- Interested countries will work with the Commission to define parameters of their pilot including which stakeholders to be involved and overall co-ordination.

- The data model for Europass credentials will be published (expected end June 2019) with piloting countries and interested stakeholders (Europass AG, digital credential experts etc) invited to give feedback.
- Piloting countries will be asked to submit examples of qualifications to be issued as digitally-signed credentials which will be assessed in line with the draft specifications for the Europass DSC framework. The approach of the Commission will be to adapt to the needs of the piloting countries rather than the countries being required to make any changes to their qualifications. Following this process, full technical specifications will also be published for wider consultation.
- The Commission has launched a closed community section of the Europass project website for sharing information and to facilitate discussion between the countries.
- Piloting countries will receive ongoing technical support from the Commission throughout this process. The Commission hopes that first testing of the DSC framework can commence in Autumn 2019.



Europass will support and ensure technical interoperability and synergies with other relevant instruments and services offered at Union and, where appropriate, national levels. See Article 4 (8).

Phase 1 development will include development of the interoperability concept, technical documentation for implementers and publication of open standards for the following main interoperability scenarios:

- Information provision by Member States
- Information on opportunities, in particular learning opportunities
- Import and export of user profiles
- Submission of online applications

Updates since March 2019:

Work on the concept for interoperability in the new Europass is ongoing with the aim to ensure continuity of existing interoperability agreements between Europass and other partners (see <https://interop.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/> for more information on existing Europass interoperability).

The approach to interoperability with education and training systems will be linked to the outcomes of the work of the subgroup on Learning Opportunities (see EPASS 4-6).

The approach to interoperability with labour market actors will be linked to ongoing work on synergies between Europass and EURES (*for further discussion at Europass AG on 12 and 13 June*).

3 Events and activities

Europass AG Stakeholder Organisation Consultation

The Commission met with a number of the Europass AG stakeholder organisations during April and May 2019 as follows:

- Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Eurochambres); 8 April 2019
- Association of European Trade Union Federation (ETUC); 11 April 2019
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE); 29 April 2019

- European Disability Forum (EDF); 29 April 2019
- European Students' Union (ESU); 30 April 2019
- European University Association (EUA); 30 April 2019
- VET providers; 30 April 2019
- European Volunteer Centre (CEV); 2 May 2019
- European Youth Forum (EYF); 3 May 2019
- European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE); 7 May 2019
- Association of crafts and SMEs in Europe (SME United); 7 May 2019
- Lifelong Learning Platform (LLP); 13 May 2019

The aim of these meetings was to gather input on the new Europass platform from various perspectives and to discuss how the different stakeholder organisations can be best involved in the development of the new platform. The stakeholders represented a broad range of Europass user groups, such as workers and employees, SMEs, educators, volunteers, students, higher education institutions, VET providers, adult learners, refugees and migrants, low-skilled adults and persons with a disability.

Overall, the representatives reacted positively to the vision and ongoing development of the new Europass.

A majority of the stakeholders expressed interest in supporting the user testing by connecting the Commission to their respective stakeholder groups.

Summaries of each meetings can be found on the Europass project website: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/europass/news>

Points that were raised on several occasions were:

(1) Data management and data protection

Several representatives stressed the importance of adequate safeguards for managing and storing data particularly in cases of sharing data between Europass and other tools and services. The Commission clarified that Europass will operate under the principle of full sovereignty of data meaning that the individual owns his/her data and has full control over how they share it. In addition, the Commission is undertaking a full data protection impact assessment.

(2) Cooperation and interoperability of Europass with other existing national and European initiatives and tools

Cooperation and interoperability of Europass with other existing national and European initiatives and tools (e.g. Youthpass, Erasmus without paper, Discover EU, European Solidarity Corps, Eures, ESCO) was strongly supported.

(3) Communication campaign to a broad target audience at European, national and local level

Some organisations pointed to the need for their national members to be better informed about the new Europass and the added value it can bring to their work. They suggested to include their stakeholders (particularly SMEs, volunteer organisations, youth organisations, Higher Education institutions, quality assurance agencies...) as a target audience in the Europass communication

campaign and to organise targeted information sessions at national level. Clear and targeted communication is crucial to manage expectations of current and potential users.

(4) Soft and transversal skills and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

To best support lifelong learning stakeholders highlighted that it is crucial for Europass to support soft- and transversal skills and validation of non-formal and informal learning. This means that the platform needs to offer the possibility to include soft and transversal skills in the e-portfolio but also to document experiences and education outside the formal education sector.

(5) Comprehensive guidance function as key added value of Europass

In this regard a built-in guidance function is important to support the user when completing these sections. Such a guidance function should be as comprehensive as possible, ranging from tool tips when creating an e-portfolio to tips on how to write an application letter, import open badges into the e-portfolio and find learning and work opportunities. The Commission was advised to explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning to provide initial guidance before users are re-directed to 'human' counsellors for further guidance.

(6) ICT accessibility of the new platform

Stakeholder organisations also pointed to the importance of offering a Europass platform that is accessible to persons with visual, motoric or intellectual impairment. Web accessibility will be one of the key elements in the future user testing to ensure that the new platform caters to the needs of this user group and meets the international standards (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>).

(7) Digitally signed credentials and the challenge of a modularisation of qualifications

Some representatives also voiced concerns about introducing the concept of 'credentials' in the new Europass. This may encourage a modularisation of qualifications, which has the potential to impact wage negotiations between employers and employees to the detriment of the latter. The Commission clarified that the aim of supporting digitally-signed credentials is rather to develop a framework for issuing and receiving any kind of recognition of learning in a digital format.

Communicating the potential of the framework for digitally-signed credentials to universities, the ENIC-NARIC network and quality assurance organisations was stressed in this context as these stakeholders are able to support the process of issuing digital credentials and act as multipliers.

Other events and activities:

- **Careers Live;** Leeds, UK, 19 March; presentation of the new Europass at event hosted by Euroguidance UK (Aspire- igen) with school leaders, career guidance practitioners, local authority staff, and PES in attendance.
- **Europass Western Cluster Meeting report;** 8 and 9 April 2019, Bordeaux, France

The Commission attended a Europass Western Cluster Meeting hosted by the French National Europass Centre (NEC) on 8 and 9 April 2019 in Bordeaux, France. Representatives from other NECs: AT, BE, CH, DE, IE, LU, UK, NL, as well as Cedefop, attended the meeting.

The Commission presented updates on ongoing work including:

- the Learning Opportunities subgroup of the [Europass Advisory Group](#);
- responses to the expression of interest in piloting [digitally-signed credentials](#);
- communication of the [new Europass](#); Member State tasks; and
- a discussion of the recent [consultation on mock-ups](#) of the new Europass e-Portfolio.

The NECs requested that the Commission share as much information as possible with them, including planned events/activities in participating countries as well as the work of the Europass AG. They also advised on the importance of having effective testing of the Europass platform by representatives of all potential users with sufficient time for preparation.

- [EURES Co-ordination Group](#); 11 and 12 April, Bucharest
- [Groningen Declaration Network \(GDN\) Annual Meeting](#); 24/25 April, 2019, Puebla, Mexico

The Commission presented the new Europass including the framework for digitally-signed credentials at the Groningen Declaration Network (GDN)⁴ Annual Meeting on 24 and 25 April, 2019 in Puebla, Mexico. The GDN works to support academic and professional mobility needs of citizens world-wide by bringing together key stakeholders in the area of digital student data to share experiences and build co-operation. Over 70 organisations were represented at the event.

There was positive reaction and interest from attendees to the concept for the framework. Attendees in particular appreciated the openness of the framework which will allow the Europass standards, services and software to be used within existing systems. Attendees were interested in how the Commission will develop the standards to be used within the framework and their relationship with existing standards; the Commission advised that the framework will be built using existing standards where possible and that the Commission is actively consulting with stakeholders and experts to align the framework with current practices and innovations in the area of digital credentials.

- [Digirec Mini-Conference](#) (Erasmus+ digital credentials project); 9 May, Tallinn; COM presentation of the Europass framework for digitally-signed credentials
- [Blockchain, Open Education & Digital Citizenship Conference](#); 27 May, Lille: COM presentation of the Europass framework for digitally-signed credentials
- [Netherlands Europass policy event](#); 23 May: event hosted by the Dutch education ministry, with a broad range of stakeholders and policy makers from education and training, employment and qualification recognition

In addition, [within the European Commission](#), cooperation is underway with services including [EPSO](#), [DG HOME](#) (information to support integration of third country nationals), [DG EAC](#) (languages, Higher Education and Training – including the EU Student Card Initiative and co-operation with ENIC-NARIC, Youthpass, Solidarity Corps, Graduate Tracking Initiative), [EMPL](#) (VET and Adult Education, Employment Strategy), [CNECT](#) (digital skills).

Upcoming:

- [Europass Network Meeting](#) (meeting of National Europass Centres); 5/6 June, Budapest.
- [28th Eden Annual Conference \(European Distance and E-Learning Network\)](#); Brugges, Belgium, 16 June - 19 June, 2019
- [High level group on ESCO and Europass](#); Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 and 27 June 2019
- [26th Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks](#); 16 to 18 June, Germany, from 2019

⁴ <http://www.groningendeclaration.org/>