# Information on recent developments

## MAI 32-02

*12 November 2019*

## Purpose of the document

This document provides information on the latest developments in ESCO, as follows:

- Information on testing the use of ESCO in Europass
- Knowledge exchange with VDAB
- Country visit to Italy
- ESCO Linking Pilot- Webinar to present the linking tool
- Update on the pilot project for the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)
- MSWG and MAI work programme for 2020

## Information on testing the use of ESCO in Europass

The Europass Decision (Recital 17) stipulates: "Following appropriate testing, and having due regard for the position of Member States, ESCO could be used by the Commission within the Europass framework; the use of ESCO by Member States is on a voluntary basis, following testing with, and evaluation by, the Member States".

Testing of the first release of the Europass platform began on Thursday 5 September. ESCO skills and occupations are used in the following ways in this release:

➢ In the "Europass Profile" part of the Europass platform:
- Work experience: End-users can either select an ESCO occupation or use free text to fill the field "occupation or position held" for a specific work experience.
- Language skills: End-users can either select a language from an ESCO list or use free text to fill the fields "mother tongue" and "other languages".

➢ In the "My Skills" part of the Europass platform:
- Skills suggestions: End-users receive ESCO skills as skills suggestions to build their skills profile. These skills suggestions have been generated through analysis of the e-Portfolio content.
- Manually adding ESCO skills: End-users use the search field fed by ESCO skills to manually add ESCO skills to their skills profile.

➢ In the "My Interests" part of the Europass platform: End-users specify their interests in the form of interest tags. Next to free text, end-user can use controlled lists of ESCO occupations and skills to create interest tags. The interest tags will serve as inputs to offer tailored suggestions for courses and jobs.

Users will provide feedback on their experience with using all elements of the current release. The Commission will review all user feedback, identify any necessary changes and enhancements and will present a full report of the results of testing to the Europass Advisory Group. This first release is available in English only. Testing of other language variants is scheduled for January 2020.

## Knowledge exchange with VDAB

On 21 October 2019, ESCO, Europass and VDAB met for a workshop aiming to better understand the goals, structure, use cases and challenges of the ESCO and Competent classifications and to learn from each other.

The ESCO team presented an overview of the ESCO occupations and skills pillars and their development and the plan for creating and updating a structure for the ESCO

skills pillar. VDAB presented the structure and evolution of Competent. Both teams discussed respective challenges in managing the classification (i.e. keeping the classification up to date, involving stakeholders, introducing Artificial Intelligence, determining the desired level of granularity in skills, etc) and exchanged experiences on how to tackle them.

Special focus was put on practical applications to give more insight into the practical needs of the classifications. In particular, the Europass team presented the objectives and structure of the new Europass, which will be launched before mid-2020 and explained how ESCO could be used in this particular use case.

## Country visit to Italy

On 24-25 October 2019, the ESCO, Europass and EQF teams participated in the conference "Putting skills to work in the digital labour market: ESCO, EQF, Europass" in Rome, Italy. The event was organised by ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies – under the direction of the Ministry of Labour) in cooperation with the Skills and Qualifications Unit of DG EMPL (Unit E2).

The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about the EU Digital Labour Market tools with emphasis on ESCO, Europass, the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI) and the EQF.

During the event, four ESCO implementers (Coordinamento regioni, Università di Padova, ADECCO Italy and Università Milano-Bicocca) presented how they use ESCO in their projects/services. Two of these projects are listed below:

• WollyBi: a software tool that collects and classifies job vacancies and uses ESCO to extract information on the most frequent skills of job descriptions.

• Adecco Italy presented the PHYD project in which they use ESCO to create a skills index in Italy based on an Artificial Intelligence (AI) matching algorithm.  The aim of PHYD is to offer suggestions for acquiring skills for academic and professional purposes in order to increase the employability of jobseekers and learners.

The outcome of this two-days meeting was very positive and allowed to raise awareness among participants on the developments of the Commission's Digital Labour Market policies.

## ESCO Linking Pilot - webinar to present the IT tool

On 14 October 2019, the IT tool for linking learning outcomes of qualifications to ESCO skills was presented to the Member States participating in the pilot project (Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia and Romania). The Members of the ESCO Maintenance Committee were also invited to join the webinar.

The participating Member States are now to start linking learning outcomes of their selected qualifications to ESCO skills. The results of the linking exercise will be presented during a workshop that will take place in Brussels on 10 December 2019.

## Update on the Pilot project for the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)

The European Commission is developing an infrastructure for **digital credentials** – a set of tools, services and software to support the issuance of authentic and tamper-

proof digital credentials (such as qualifications at all levels and other learning achievements) as part of the **new Europass Framework**.

Digital credentials can increase efficiency and portability of qualifications and skills between countries. Digital credentials can reduce administrative burden for citizens, learning providers and businesses; decrease credential-fraud; empower citizens to own and control their own credentials; and contribute towards digitisation of government processes. The Commission aims to deliver a set of tools, services and software to make digital credentials a reality.

Work is ongoing on the development of the framework and so far **16 countries**[1] have expressed interest in piloting the framework with an aim to issue the first digital qualifications in early 2020.

The Commission has developed a draft data model for a learning credential. The draft data model is now available for consultation until the end of 2019.

The data model aims to capture the outcomes of any non-formal, informal and formal learning across Europe. It is designed to provide a single format to describe certificates of attendance, examination results, degrees and diplomas, diploma supplements, professional certifications, employer recommendations and any other kind of claims that are related to learning.

The consultation was launched simultaneously on two platforms to reach a wide group of interested parties and **feedback is welcome until end-2019** via:

- JoinUp (the Commission's collaboration platform for the promotion of interoperability: https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/solution/european-digital-credentials-infrastructure-data-model/release/020); or

- GitHub (a collaborative site used for consultation on open source projects: https://github.com/european-commission-europass/EDCI-Data-Model).

## MSWG and MAI work programme for 2020

**The MSWG 2020 work programme**

The Commission proposes to organise two MSWG meetings in Brussels in 2020 (see table below). The Commission also suggests organising ad-hoc information webinars when new information for the work of the group is available without requiring consultation in a physical meeting in Brussels. The main topics for the MSWG meetings in 2020 would be:
- Preparation of ESCO version 1.1 and the results of the work on a structure for the skills pillar of ESCO and on transversal skills.
- Following the state of play of the mapping exercise according to the EURES Regulation.
- The outcomes of the pilot project for linking qualifications to ESCO skills, and further discussions with the European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group (EQF AG) and with the Europass AG on this matter.
- Promoting the dissemination and use cases of ESCO.

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[1] Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Spain.

- Following up on the potential use of ESCO in Europass.

**The MAI 2020 work programme**

The MAI is expected to meet twice in 2020 (see table below). The Commission proposes the following (main) topics for the MAI work programme in 2020:
- Advice on the refinement of the skills hierarchy, the skills allocation exercise and the clean-up work in the skills pillar (solving duplicates, inconsistencies, improving the first version of the hierarchy).
- Advice on the design of the usability test for the final ESCO skills hierarchy.
- Following up and support to the implementation of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) framework for ESCO, in particular to measure how well ESCO performs in specific use cases.
- Advice on the approach for continuous improvement (creation of new occupations, solving inconsistencies, adopting feedback from stakeholders): intervene to solve difficult cases in case of diverging opinions/feedback from stakeholders.
- Technical advice on the linking of the skills pillar with qualifications.
- Advice and support on the use of ESCO in concrete use cases.
- Present best practices that can support the further development of ESCO.
- Support the ESCO team in outreach and communication activities.

**Articulation of the MSWG and MAI work programmes for 2020**

The table below indicates the provisional work programmes of both groups and how they could be coordinated in 2020. The Commission invites MAI feedback on this proposal.

**Work programmes ESCO Maintenance Committee and ESCO Member States Working Group, 2020**

| Meetings (dates tbc) | ESCO adoption | ESCO implementation in EURES | Structuring the skills pillar | Develop ESCO v1.1 | ESCO and qualifications | Communication |
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| **MSWG 20 February** | ESCO in Europass: state of play. ESCO implementers: state of play. | Mapping: state of play. Results of the call for proposals VC-2019-010 on financial support for mapping/adopting ESCO. | ESCO skills pillar: results of the work on a structure for the skills pillar and on transversal skills. | ESCO v1.1: state of play | Results of the pilot project for linking qualifications and ESCO skills. | Update on outreach and communication actions. |
| **MAI 17 March** | Evaluating the use of ESCO by its implementers: Europass and other specific use cases. Evaluation of KPIs: Presentation of the KPI | Update on the mapping process. Consultation on the use of mapping tables for the continuous improvement of ESCO. | Review of the work on a skills hierarchy and on transversal skills: refinement of the hierarchy and clean-up of the pillar | Consultation on feedback received and implementation. Consultation on new-version related issues (scoping, translations, knowledge engineering). | Results of the pilot project for linking qualifications and ESCO skills: way forward to link learning outcomes of qualifications to skills . | Consultation on the ESCO Communication Plan 2018-2022. |

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| **MSWG 29 September** | ESCO implementers: state of play. | Mapping: state of play. | ESCO skills structure and transversal skills: state of play. | ESCO v1.1: state of play. | Qualifications and ESCO skills: state of play. | Update on outreach and communication actions. |
| **MAI 27 October** | Evaluating the use of ESCO by its implementers: Europass and other specific use cases. | Evaluation of KPIs: Presentation of preliminary data. | | Consultation on feedback received and implementation. Consultation on new version-related issues (scoping, translations, knowledge engineering). | | |