



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION

Labour Mobility and International Affairs  
Labour Mobility, Public Employment Services, ELA

Brussels, 17 June 2022  
EMPL.E.1/FL

## Member States Working Group on ESCO

First meeting

Brussels (online), 15 June 2022

---

### Minutes

#### 1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with no further changes.

#### 2. Nature of the meeting

The first meeting of the Member States Working Group on ESCO (MSWG) was attended by:

- representatives of 22 Member States' (MS) authorities on labour market and education and training (AU, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SE, SL).
- representatives of one observer country (IS),
- representatives of European social partners (ETUC, SME UNITED),
- Commission and CEDEFOP services.

The Commission (COM) chaired and opened the meeting.

The main goals of the meeting were: a) to approve the Group's rules of procedure, b) to report on key ESCO developments, c) to discuss the Group's Work Plan and the list of topics for the future focus meetings.

The meeting was hold online, and recorded for internal purposes.

### **3. List of points discussed**

#### **3.1 Approval of the rules of procedure**

The draft Rules of Procedure were submitted to all delegations prior to the meeting. No comments were sent to the Commission within the requested deadline of 31 May 2022. The Rules of Procedure were approved by the Group without further comments.

#### **3.2 Update on ESCO developments**

COM provided an update on most recent ESCO developments. COM introduced ESCO and explained its role in supporting competence-based job matching, transparency of labour market information and better labour market intelligence. COM stressed the importance of ESCO as a terminological bridge between the domains of the labour market and education and training. It provided an overview of the ESCO's development process and use cases, and presented the main features of the current version of ESCO (ESCO version 1.0), which include an updated model for transversal skills, a list of skills for the green transition and a list of skills for researchers.

COM presented the upcoming release of ESCO version 1.1.1, which will feature quality improvements to the translation of preferred labels and descriptions of occupations and skills terms, additional non-preferred terms in all languages, a revised hierarchy for the skills pillar, a review of the allocation of ESCO occupations to ISCO and a list of digital skills. COM informed participants that the ESCO classification is now available in Ukrainian.

COM informed the Group on planned improvements and scoping of the next major version of ESCO and discussed the role of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science in supporting the maintenance and the evolution of the classification. Finally, COM showcased the revamped ESCO website.

During the subsequent discussion, members made the following comments:

- Members asked about the cooperation between ESCO and the Skills OVATE project managed by CEDEFOP.
- Members stressed that job vacancies do not fully represent the reality of the labour market and underlined the important role played by sectoral experts in updating the content of the classification.
- Members asked whether the labelling of skills in ESCO is to be considered as a formal recognition.
- Members asked how the list of digital skills will relate to the list of DigComp 2.0 competences currently part of ESCO.
- Members asked for more details about the ESCO release calendar.
- Members asked for more information about the planned update of the mapping tables for EURES job vacancies.

COM and CEDEFOP explained the existing collaboration between CEDEFOP's led Skills OVATE projects and ESCO, where results of the matching of ESCO terms to raw text found in vacancies support the continuous improvement of the classification.

COM stressed how sectoral experts are a key source for updating ESCO and that online vacancies are one among the different sources used to maintain the classification.

COM confirmed that the labelling of skills in ESCO is an informal process. COM explained that for the moment there is no connection between the labelling of digital skills and DigComp 2.0, and that this will be explored in the near future.

COM presented the release cycle of ESCO. COM underlined the differences between minor releases, which address quality improvements to ESCO concepts in all languages without modifying the list of occupations and skills, and major releases which imply the addition or removal of occupations and skills concepts. Minor releases are published minimum twice a year, while major releases follow a longer timeline and are published every 2 years.

Finally, COM explained that the mapping of national classifications to ESCO is based on an Implementing Decision<sup>1</sup> which refers to ESCO v1.0, and that the update of this legislation is not foreseen in 2022. COM would reflect on this issue based on the maturity of the EURES network and on the quality of the mapping process.

### **3.3 Debate based on remarks and questions received prior to the meeting**

COM presented the draft calendar of the Group for the second half of 2022.

As foreseen in its Terms of Reference, the ESCO Member States Working Group will meet whenever required but at least once a year. In addition to the traditional meetings the Commission will organise focus meetings to discuss specific topics of interest in three areas: ESCO maintenance, ESCO evolution, peer learning.

A tentative calendar for the second half of 2022 is provided below.

1/06/22 MSWG kick off meeting

14/09/22 Focus meeting

05/10/22 Focus meeting

09/11/22 Focus meeting

07/12/22 MSWG plenary meeting

COM presented a tentative list of topics for the next focus meetings. The list can be found in below:

---

<sup>1</sup> [COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION \(EU\) 2018/ 1020 - of 18 July 2018 - on the adoption and updating of the list of skills, competences and occupations of the European classification for the purpose of automated matching through the EURES common IT platform \(europa.eu\)](#)

Classification maintenance	ESCO evolution
Improving skills-occupations relations	Skills representativeness
Skills contextualisation/granularity	Skills levelling
Results from the M&E exercise	Skills vs tasks/work activities
Strategies to improve the representativeness of multilingual content	NACE and alternative mappings of occupations and skills
Improvements to the organization of the skills pillar (alternative hierarchies)	Connection to EURES vacancies
Skills labelling	Emerging concepts (occupations, skills and/or knowledge)
Skills reusability level	Employment and/or wage statistics such as salary ranges associated to given occupations and employment rates related to gender or age
Review of existing skills relations (essential/optional, broader/narrower)	
Identify skills (and occupations) duplicate labels and descriptions	

Members discussed the proposed list of topics. The following additional topics were suggested as a result of the discussion:

- Techniques to ensure quality of skills allocation.
- Introducing the notion of work context.
- Use of action verbs to better specify skills descriptions, detect duplications and avoid ambiguities.
- Communication activities to explain the ESCO's structure to its end users.
- Use cases for the ESCO skills pillar.
- Differences in the matching rate of ESCO skills across languages.
- Matching ESCO to national labour markets.

#### **4. Next steps**

The Commission will finalise the list of topics for the focus meetings based on the comments provided by the Group. The first focus meeting is tentatively scheduled for 14 September 2022.

COM closed the meeting and thanked the participants for their active participation.