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Labour Mobility and International Affairs
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MEMBER STATES WORKING GROUP ON ESCO

Plenary meeting

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Workshop: how to improve sharing of data between the national level and ESCO

BACKGROUND

Over the past years, ESCO has played an important role in addressing labour market imbalances and promoting fair mobility, thanks to its uptake by the EU Member States in the context of the EURES Regulation and by a multitude of different public and private implementers.

However, **ESCO gains further value when it is connected to external information** and when **using up-to-date information and data**, such as other classification systems or other frameworks. New data sharing possibilities and cross walks between ESCO and other stakeholders/taxonomies are of great importance to **support interoperability within the labour market and the educational field**, supporting a multitude of public and private stakeholders to provide services such as job matching, matching people with the right training opportunity, statistical analysis, and other use cases.

The [PES Network work programme](#) overview for 2023 focuses in particular on the use of experience-based models, more data and exchange on labour market taxonomies in the twin transition, all of which highlight the importance of interoperability and data sharing. For 2024, a greater emphasis will be placed on skills and labour market intelligence, as well as data-driven PES and digitalization strategies.

In line with these developments, it is important that the ESCO classification reflects the most recent trends in employment across the Member States and is updated on a regular basis. This includes capturing all available occupations and skills, maintaining the taxonomy in orderly format, and ensuring the correct use of language and comprehensiveness of the dataset.

For this reason, the ESCO Secretariat proposes a workshop to understand the possibilities of concrete data exchange with the Member States and support a structured, mutually enhancing communication channel between the involved parties.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop aims:

- To highlight the importance of sharing labour market data between national authorities and ESCO that benefits all stakeholders;
- To streamline the collection of feedback on the current and upcoming versions of ESCO and make ESCO more suitable and aligned with national taxonomies;
- To explore new avenues of collaboration between Member States and ESCO to further enhance interoperability and peer learning opportunities on labour market services;
- To jointly reflect on a continuous process to exchange labour market data.

The workshop will focus on three main topics: a) sharing quantitative data available at national level b) sharing qualitative data based on the usage of ESCO in concrete services and c) peer learning and knowledge exchange on ontology management. Each topic is further described below:

1. Sharing quantitative data available at national level

As ESCO continues to be updated and further developed into a knowledge graph, the Commission would like to explore potential data flows that can support this process. For example, the topic of skills relevance and skills proficiency levels are important elements for the future of ESCO and it is crucial to understand if Member States already have such information available and ready to be shared. Additionally, while national taxonomies are mapped to ESCO, there is added value in having direct access to these taxonomies and understand the process for their continuous improvement.

The following questions will guide the discussion on this topic:

- How to facilitate access to national classifications (some are not public) and inform the ESCO Secretariat of their updates and future versions?
- What is the most efficient way to share up-to-date information other than through mapping tables and are there APIs available for some of the classifications?
- What type of data do you currently have at national level on occupations and skills? Green skills or digital skills, skills relevance, work context?
- Are national taxonomies used to run surveys at national level? If yes, how these findings feed into the update process?

2. Sharing qualitative data based on the usage of ESCO in concrete services

Feedback from ESCO implementers and domain experts is vital to capture precise input on topics such as terminology and translations, descriptions, less frequently used terms, etc. which then can be taken into account for the new ESCO major versions. In 2018, the Commission designed a KPI framework for the continuous improvement of ESCO, which placed great emphasis on the use of ESCO as a de-facto standard. This considers usage data from implementers such as: the most used concepts, the least used concepts, alternative labels and new concepts which are useful for the upcoming versions of ESCO. The relevance of these key performance indicators is undoubted: however, challengers persist on how to systematically collect this information.

The following questions will guide the discussion on this topic:

- One of the primary focus of ESCO is gathering feedback regarding translations. In your opinion, how could this process be improved?
- How can feedback from organisations using ESCO in your country be collected and shared with the Commission?
- If you identify new concepts that are not present in ESCO, how do you prefer to share that information with us and how often? What are some of the obstacles in doing this?
- What aspects of the consultation process for new ESCO versions could be improved, and how could the information be best gathered?

3. Peer learning and knowledge exchange on maintaining taxonomies

Knowledge exchange sessions are very important when working on similar topics such as managing a taxonomy and especially since artificial intelligence methods and skills intelligence can be used to enhance this process.

As more and more Member States are using a data-driven approach on gathering labour market information and skills intelligence to update their classifications, there are common challenges we face concerning the methodology, manual validation, quality assurance mechanisms and the overall governance structure.

Therefore, the ESCO team suggests organising technical peer learning sessions on a regular basis. To this end, the Commission will explore potential synergies between the ESCO Member States Working Group and the PES Network Working group on taxonomies.

The following questions will guide the discussion on this topic:

- Are you interested in such peer learning sessions? If not, what are the reasons? If yes, on which selection criteria should this be organised?
- What are some of the most important topics we could address? E.g sharing information on the processes and technologies used in the teams working on the classification updates; sharing information on other ongoing projects in your countries or latest published research papers that could be of use for other MS and ESCO team; sharing updates from other institutions like statistical offices, universities, research groups.
- Would you welcome a short survey on this topic to better understand the availability and technical capabilities in the Member States?

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop will last one hour and the participants will be divided in three groups in order to discuss the above mentioned objectives. Each group will have two facilitators to steer the discussions and reach practical conclusions. The facilitators will report on the conclusion of each group in the plenary session.