Council of the European Union

Brussels, 19 November 2026
(OR. en)

15402/26

EDUC 438
DIGIT 290
JEUN 242
SOC 715
EMPL 416
TELECOM 530

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council conclusions on skills and competences to engage with artificial intelligence (AI)

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned conclusions approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its session on 19 November 2026.

ANNEX

Council conclusions on skills and competences to engage with artificial intelligence (AI)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLS the political background to the European Education Area and its full achievement, as well as texts adopted within the Union on digital education, digital skills and competences and artificial intelligence.

RECOGNISES that

1. rapid and evolving developments in AI and AI technologies are impacting on and becoming part of citizens' everyday lives;

2. AI and AI technologies have the potential to deliver many benefits and transform the ways in which knowledge is accessed and represented, and how we learn and teach across all levels and types of education and training;

3. there is an increased pressure to address rapidly advancing digital and AI capabilities by ensuring that all citizens are equipped with the skills and competences necessary to understand, use and engage critically and responsibly with AI and AI technologies, in an age-appropriate manner;

4. AI and AI technologies are also posing many challenges for education and training; key among these are the need to ensure that learning outcomes remain meaningful, academic integrity is upheld, essential human cognitive processes are safeguarded and efforts are made to strengthen digital sovereignty;

5. further challenges include the need to ensure that where AI is used, it is used ethically, responsibly, transparently, sustainably and in an inclusive and human-centred way, ensuring full respect for fundamental rights and the mitigation of harmful biases, and to enhance the learning process, all of which require continued evaluation;

6. AI and AI technologies are reshaping many occupations and careers, and have also resulted in new, emerging and evolving sectors that require skilled and specialised workforces;

7. across the Union, this has prompted reflections on curriculum, learning programmes, and methods of teaching and assessment, including new opportunities for pedagogical innovation and personalisation of learning.

CONSIDERS THAT SKILLS AND COMPETENCES FOR AI

8. are diverse in nature and are continuing to emerge, evolve and be defined;

9. build on existing digital skills and also transversal competences, critical thinking, ethical awareness, responsible decision-making, empathy and other socio-emotional skills, creativity, and resilience;

10. combine digital competence, including data and media literacies, algorithmic understanding and the ability to critically evaluate and interpret the impacts, outputs and limitations of AI and AI technologies;

11. include new skills such as prompting, critical evaluation and verification of AI-generated outputs, the use of AI for problem posing and problem-solving, creating, designing and shaping AI, the ability to recognise when not to use AI and understanding the impact of AI and AI technologies on society and the environment;

12. need to be developed in an age-appropriate way across all stages of life and are relevant to all levels and types of education and training;

13. are important for citizens to access, engage in, and adapt to a changing labour market that is responding to the use of AI and AI technologies;

14. require continued reflection, cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between policymakers, learners, educators, education and training providers, research institutions, social and economic partners and all relevant stakeholders to facilitate evidence-informed evaluation, the sharing of best practices and fostering shared responsibility.

HIGHLIGHTS the importance of Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Artificial Intelligence Act'), which establishes a framework for the safe, ethical and trustworthy use of AI, including in education and training.

CALLS ATTENTION to digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy as essential for Europe, noting that reducing dependencies associated with AI tools and technologies developed outside Europe, including in education and training, is critical.

WELCOMES

15. DigComp 3.0 (2025), the fifth version of the European Digital Competence Framework, which reflects the skills implications for recent and emerging digital technological trends, including AI;

16. Empowering learners for the age of AI: An AI literacy framework for primary and secondary education (2026, OECD/European Union), which provides a framework for the development of AI-related skills and competences across primary and secondary education and promotes a shared understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes learners need to engage, create, manage and shape AI in education, work and society.

AGREES that

17. there is an ongoing need for all levels and types of education and training to reflect and respond appropriately and responsibly to the development and use of AI and AI technologies;

18. a coherent and evidence-informed approach is required to support the development of the skills and competences needed by citizens in the context of AI and AI technologies;

19. teaching and learning across all levels and types of education and training should remain human-centred and attention needs to be paid to the potential negative impacts of AI and AI technologies, such as overdependence on AI tools, misinformation, disinformation and the malicious use of content, cyberbullying, algorithmic biases, discrimination, learning loss, cognitive offloading, concerns about data protection and privacy, the threat to academic integrity, as well as the social and environmental impacts;

20. attention should be paid to the responsible, safe and transparent use of data, in accordance with Union data protection law and it is necessary for citizens to understand the implications of sharing data with AI and AI technologies;

21. providing a sufficient level of literacy, mathematics and science for all is the foundation for all further learning; this foundation enables learners to develop both wider and more specialised competences, including for AI;

22. early childhood education and care is important in supporting the early development of critical thinking and other foundational skills, which are essential for children and young people to engage safely and effectively with digital technologies and AI as they grow older;

23. school education plays an important role in the development of skills and competences related to AI and AI technologies to support learners in an age-appropriate way to engage, create, manage and shape AI in a responsible, safe and ethical manner while fostering their digital competence;

24. parents, caregivers and families play a very important role in supporting children and young people to develop the early skills and competences for AI and to understand the opportunities and risks of digitalisation;

25. given the impact that AI and AI technologies are having on many disciplines, learning programmes in higher education, vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning can support all learners to develop the skills and competences to use AI and AI technologies effectively and responsibly;

26. higher education and VET play an important role in developing the advanced digital skills required for new, emerging and evolving occupations and careers in sectors that use AI technologies and are of significant importance for innovation and competitiveness;

27. higher education institutions play a leading role in advancing research that contributes to the further development of safe and reliable AI and AI technologies, supports innovation to leverage the competitive benefits that AI can offer, and that evaluates the societal, environmental and economic impacts of AI and AI technologies;

28. assessment practices across all levels and types of education and training require reflection in a context where AI is widely available, in order to ensure that learning outcomes and academic integrity are safeguarded;

29. lifelong learning, including adult learning, is essential to enable all citizens to continue to learn about AI and AI technologies and build on their skills and competences in response to technological change, including through upskilling and reskilling, as well as through flexible, agile and short courses, such as micro-credentials;

30. non-formal and informal learning experiences can contribute to the development of skills and competences relevant to AI and AI technologies for citizens of all ages.

STRESSES that

31. targeted measures are required to strengthen skills and competences for AI and AI technologies for all citizens at all stages of life and, in particular, those with low levels of digital skills;

32. inclusive approaches are needed to enable citizens, regardless of gender, age, diverse needs, geographical location or socio-economic background, to engage in AI-related learning opportunities, including by addressing barriers related to accessibility, mobility, participation and language, and by mitigating the risk of widening the digital divide or other existing inequalities;

33. there is an ongoing need to promote well-being and digital balance enabling citizens to develop a healthy and responsible relationship with AI and AI technologies;

34. lifelong guidance needs to evolve in the context of AI and AI technologies, while remaining human-centred, to help citizens make informed choices about learning opportunities, fulfilment of personal potential and career pathways;

35. as part of initial education and training and continuous professional development, teachers, trainers, educators and leaders need to be supported to adapt to technological change, regardless of their level of digital readiness, to develop sufficient levels of AI literacy, including understanding the opportunities, risks, and potential harms associated with AI and AI technologies, to use AI to enhance their pedagogical approaches, and to support the acquisition of skills and competences for AI and AI technologies;

36. education and training providers require support to develop and implement policies on the use of AI and AI technologies, including on issues such as academic integrity, plagiarism, copyright, transparency, disclosure of AI use, governance, human oversight, security, privacy and ethical matters;

37. given the rapid pace of change in the area of AI and AI technologies, it is essential to identify, anticipate and respond to evolving skills needs, including for advanced digital skills, in the context of the Union's overall competitiveness.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES to

38. take a coherent, inclusive and evidence-informed approach to support the development of skills and competences needed by citizens in the context of AI and AI technologies, through continued reflection, exchange of best practices, cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between policymakers and all relevant stakeholders;

39. make use of relevant existing EU tools, such as DigComp 3.0, the AI literacy framework for primary and secondary education and the updated Guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning for educators when developing and updating national and/or regional curricula, frameworks and programmes of learning and assessment that involve the skills and competences required for AI;

40. support teachers, trainers, educators and leaders to develop sufficient levels of AI literacy and learn about the acquisition of skills and competences for AI and AI technologies as part of initial education and training and continuous professional development; encourage them to embrace the opportunities offered by AI and make informed decisions on the use of AI where it enhances pedagogy and takes learners' needs and stage of development into account;

41. provide support and guidance to schools and education and training providers on the development of skills and competences related to AI and AI technologies, in an age-appropriate manner; as well as on the development and implementation of policies, through whole-institution approaches, on the use of AI and AI technologies that safeguards human agency, inclusion, equity and well-being;

42. encourage VET and higher education providers to update existing and develop new learning programmes for the advanced knowledge, skills and competences for AI and AI technologies required for new and evolving occupations and careers;

43. promote a lifelong learning approach to enable citizens of all ages to develop skills and competences for AI and AI technologies, including through upskilling and reskilling, as well as flexible, agile and short courses, such as micro-credentials;

44. consider incorporating AI and AI technologies including AI literacy and advanced digital skills into national and regional skills planning;

45. evaluate the impact of AI and AI technologies on education and training at all levels, including the impacts on existing inequalities such as gender, disability, socio-economic background and geographical location, making use, where possible, of existing data and evaluation tools;

46. take full advantage of existing EU funds, cooperation tools and programmes, frameworks and guidelines to support developments and reforms related to skills and competences for AI and AI technologies and work together to develop solutions, including those that leverage European open-source options.

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, within its sphere of competence and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, to

47. facilitate cooperation, the sharing of good practices, policy exchange and capacity building among the relevant stakeholders on human-centred approaches to AI, including skills and competences for AI and AI technologies and engage with the Member States on its planned activities in the area of skills and competences for AI and AI technologies;

48. strengthen the evidence base, with particular attention to learning outcomes, on the impact of AI and AI technologies on all levels and types of education and training, including by working with other international organisations such as OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe;

49. promote tools such as DigComp 3.0, the AI literacy framework for primary and secondary education and the updated Guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning for educators as resources to support policymaking for Member States, as well as among teachers, trainers, educators and leaders, and education and training providers;

50. take steps to build on the work of the AI literacy framework for primary and secondary education to develop AI literacy frameworks for citizens at other stages of life;

51. continue to work on and disseminate resources to support ethical, responsible, inclusive, safe and transparent use of AI tools in education and training that keep pace with the rate of change and support citizens at all stages of their lives;

52. continue to develop and offer relevant professional learning opportunities for teachers, trainers, educators and leaders, such as through peer-learning networks and communities of practice including the European Digital Education Hub, the European School Education Platform and the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE);

53. prepare and implement initiatives in collaboration with the Member States to enhance Europe's future-readiness, to support them to adapt to AI and AI technologies, and consider developing policy initiatives to test, evaluate, and scale innovative approaches for the effective, safe and responsible integration of AI in education and training including through European open-source options.