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General Secretariat

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INFORMATION

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Youth Working Party

Subject: Action Plan on Basic Skills - Presentation by the Commission

Delegations will find attached a presentation by the Commission for the meeting of the Youth working Party on 31 March 2025.

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Action Plan on Basic Skills

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

31 March 2025

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An initiative of the Union of Skills

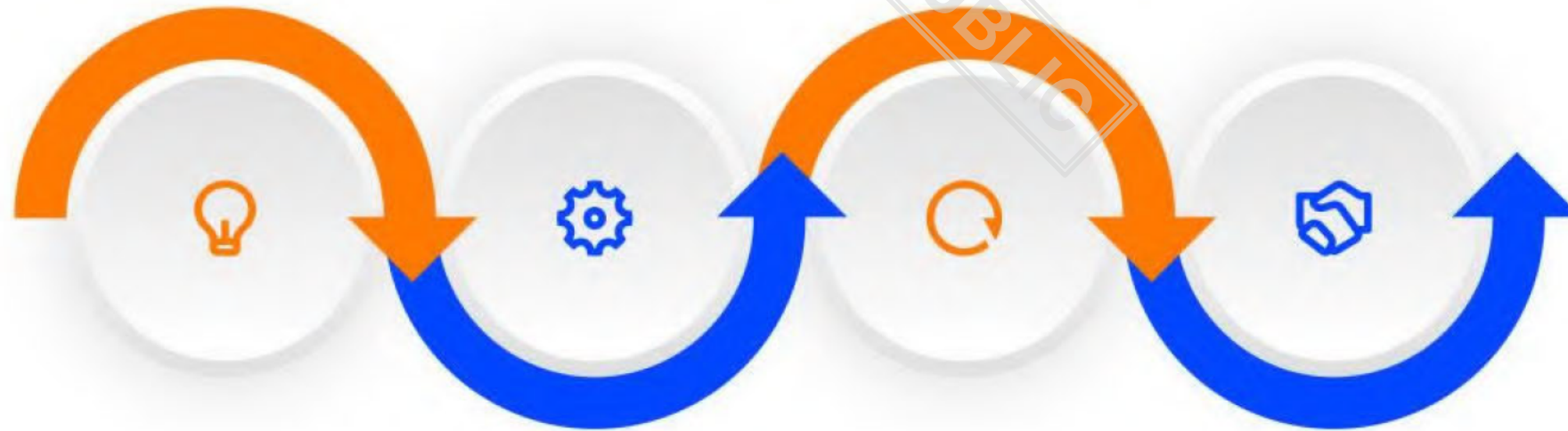
The need for more and better skills

Skill shortages and gaps in Europe – Europe does not produce enough skilled workers in both quality and quantity.

Transformation speed gap – Education and training systems and providers struggle to keep pace with rapid technological transformations and the changing skills needed.

Fragmented governance and skills intelligence – Multitude of stakeholders with variety of perspectives and insufficient consolidation and coordination.

Union of Skills



Build skills
for quality
lives and jobs

**Upskill and
reskills**
for the digital &
green transition

Circulate skills
across the EU for
competitiveness

**Attract, develop
and retain talent**
for Europe's
future

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Action Plan on Basic Skills

What are the basic skills?



Literacy



Numeracy



Science



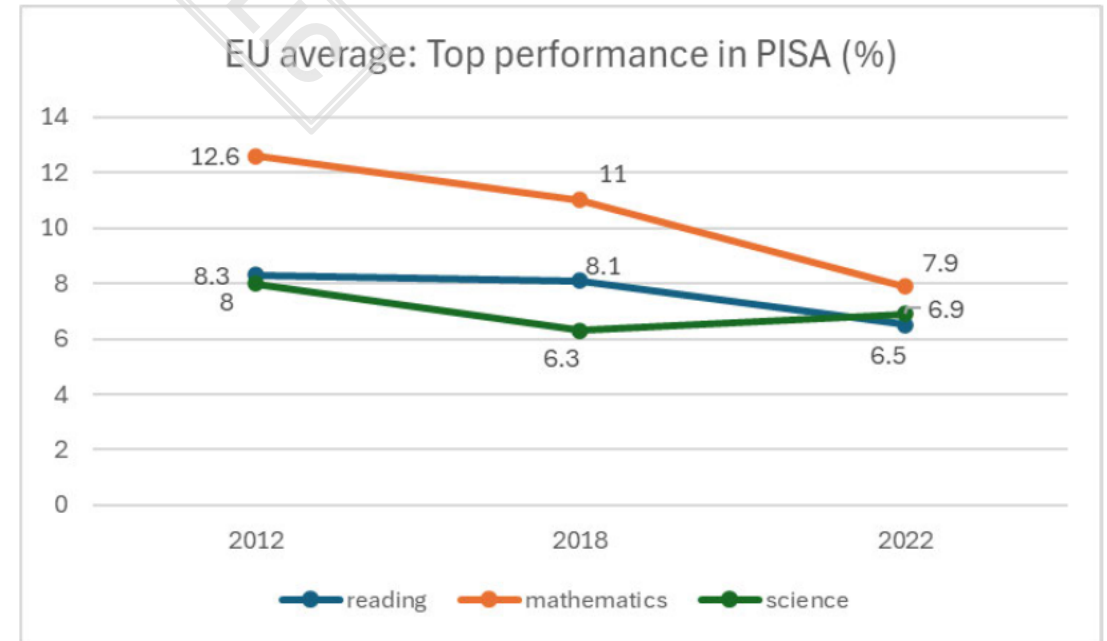
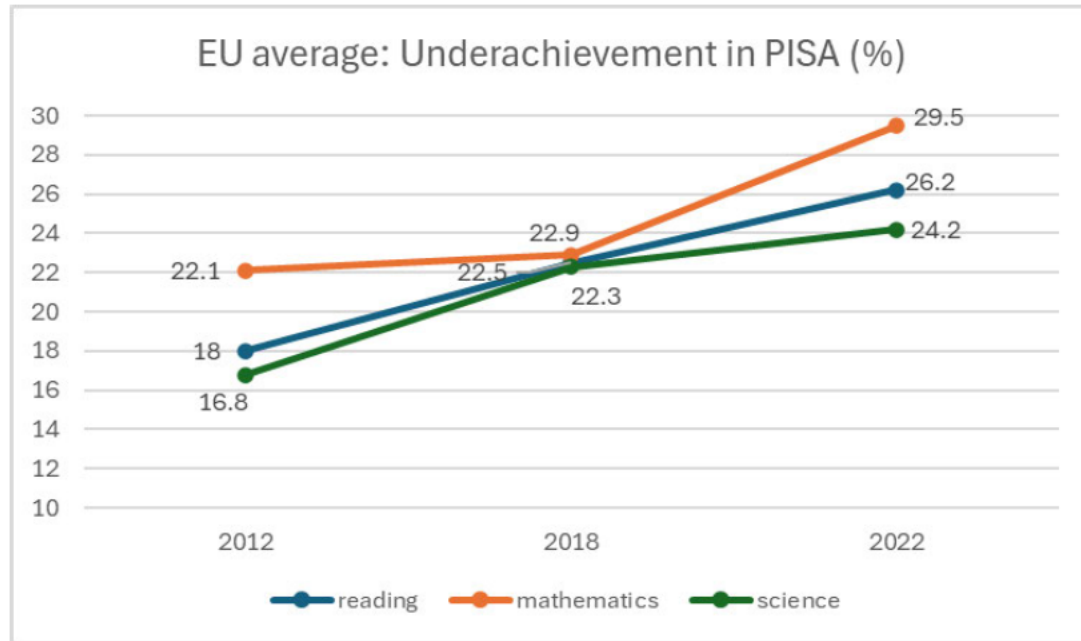
Digital



Citizenship

- Based on PISA, ICILS, ICCS (performance of 13-15 year olds) and PIAAC (16-65 years)
- Foundational (esp. literacy and numeracy) for more complex tasks and competences
- Increasing performance in basic skills at both ends → **reducing share of underachievers and increasing share of top performers**

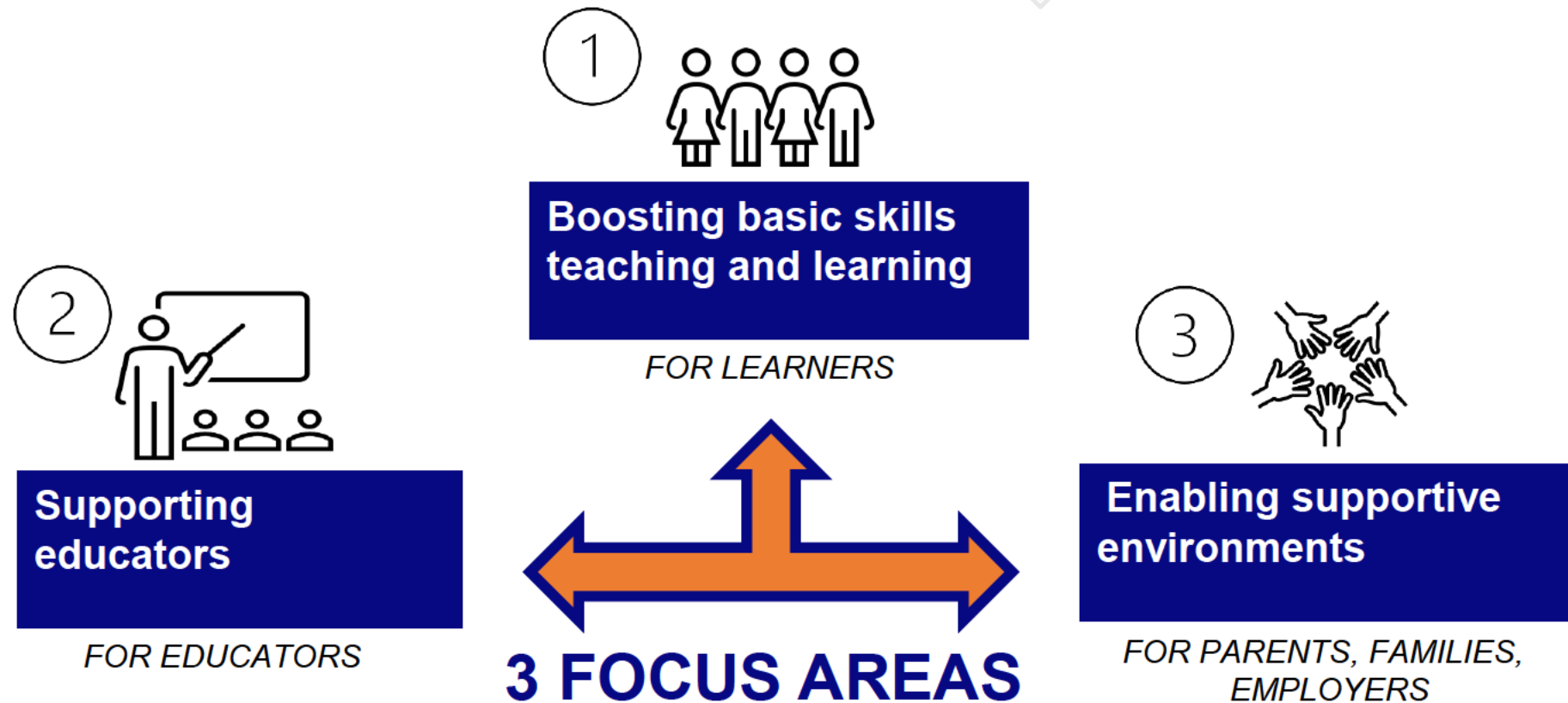
Where do we stand now?



- Underachievement is increasing in all domains – at the same time top performance declines
- Similar picture for digital (43% below basic level in ICILS 2023) and citizenship skills (36.9% below basic level in ICCS 2022)

Action Plan on Basic Skills

- to improve basic reading, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship skills and
- to promote excellence, from early years through all stages of school education, and upskilling and reskilling among adults.



Action Plan on Basic Skills – For Learners

Boosting basic skills teaching and learning

Supporting educators

Enabling supportive environments

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Key action:

- A **Basic Skills Support Scheme** to help underachieving children and young people reach an adequate level of basic skills through early intervention and individual, tailor-made support, from school to initial VET.
 - early identification of learning difficulties; personalised support and extra learning time; specialist roles at schools
 - 2025: develop **guidelines for Member States** on the most impactful reforms.
 - 2025: Erasmus+ call for forward looking projects (3 Mio EUR), call deadline 27 May → schools and other partners to **design and test innovative teaching practices of basic skills** (project start 2026)
 - In parallel, **Member States are invited use available EU funding** to implement the guidelines and **further develop the scheme.**



Action Plan on Basic Skills – For Learners

Boosting basic skills teaching and learning

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Other actions:

- Pilot the first **European School Alliances** through the Erasmus+ programme in 2026. The Alliances will support participating schools in becoming learning organisations for effective basic skills teaching.
- Develop **guidelines for curriculum development** in early childhood education and care, which support the acquisition of basic skills early on.
- Pilot **personalised learning pathways in basic skills development** through AI, building on 2026 Erasmus+ policy experimentations, to support top-performing and underachieving learners.
- Create a **toolkit for basic skills**, including basic digital skills, **in apprenticeships** in 2026 to provide hands-on guidance for VET schools and employers to integrate basic skills in their apprenticeship programmes.



Action Plan on Basic Skills – For Educators

Boosting basic skills
teaching and learning

Supporting
educators

Enabling supportive
environments

- Set out an **EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda** in 2026.
- **EU online communities** for educators
 - 2025: the European School Education Platform and eTwinning will provide enhanced professional learning opportunities, evidence-based tools, material and resources on effective basic skills teaching and assessment.
 - 2025-2026: 7000 new eTwinning cooperations are to be created around basic skills
- Pilot a **mentoring system for early career teachers** to integrate basic skills teaching in the teaching practice.
 - 2026: pilot project with 50 teachers in eTwinning to develop guidance materials.
 - 2027: scale up the project to 1000 teachers



Action Plan on Basic Skills – For Everyone

Boosting basic skills
teaching and learning

Supporting
educators

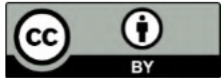
Enabling supportive
environments

- Engage **volunteers under the European Solidarity Corps in 2026 for mentoring and tutoring activities** for underachieving children and adults.
 - Volunteers will assist and inspire children in their academic and social development while also promoting intergenerational solidarity.
 - 2026: these activities will tap into funding of a minimum of 4.5 Mio EUR under the European Solidarity Corps.
- **EU literacy coalition.**
 - 2026: create a community of public and private actors from education, culture and youth to raise awareness about the literacy crisis and encourage young people, in particular boys, to read for pleasure.



Thank you

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