

**Question for oral answer O-000133/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 128

Thomas Händel

on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Subject: Establishing a Skills Guarantee

In an increasingly digitalised world, low-qualified people have reduced employment opportunities, are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment, and have more difficulties in participating fully in society. According to the OECD, high shares of adults with low proficiency in basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and digital skills are linked to lower levels of productivity and prospects for growth and competitiveness. This is not only detrimental to the individuals but also highly costly to the economy and society as a whole. Nevertheless, the development of new ways of working and future-oriented sectors has a key role regarding the types of skills needed. Skills mismatches/shortages can negatively affect not only productivity and growth, but also the social situation within and across Member States. The Commission proposal recommends that they build on existing initiatives or policies and set up a Skills Guarantee allowing those who have left the educational system without completing upper secondary education or equivalent, and who are not eligible for support under the Youth Guarantee, to access upskilling pathways.

1. The Commission calls on Member States to swiftly draw up an action plan for implementation. Has the Commission foreseen a mechanism or a body to support them in the preparation and monitoring of this plan? Several stakeholders should be associated in the preparation of the plan: how will Member States be encouraged to involve civil society, education providers, trade unions and employers (businesses and industry) in the decision-making process?
2. Does the Commission believe it is possible to cover this initiative without additional funding? The use of different EU funds (e.g. ESF and Erasmus+), is mentioned. Will the Commission then envisage issuing appropriate procedures to enable the combination of different funds without creating red tape?
3. What strategy will the Commission use for the involvement of Member States in this non-legally binding initiative?
4. One of the main reasons for illiteracy is early school leaving: how does the Commission envisage tackling this issue through its recommendation?

Tabled: 8.11.2016

Forwarded: 10.11.2016

Deadline for reply: 17.11.2016