DRAFT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B9-xxxx/2020

pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/xxxx(RSP))

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová
on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
European Parliament resolution on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions European on a Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/xxxx(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 166 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Articles 14 and 15 thereof,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed by the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission in November 2017, and in particular its principles 1 ‘education, training and lifelong learning’ and 4 ‘active support to employment’,
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’ (COM(2020) 274) and to the accompanying Commission staff working documents (SWD(2020) 121) and (SWD(2020) 122),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a ‘Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’ (COM(2020) 275 final),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘achieving the European Education Area by 2025’, (COM(2020) 625) and to the accompanying Commission staff working document (SWD(2020) 212),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Digital Education Plan 2021-2027. Resetting education and training for the digital age’, (COM 2020) 624) and to the accompanying Commission staff working document (SWD(2020) 209),
- having regard to the European Commission report entitled ‘Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 Human capital’1,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 June 2020 on Reskilling and upskilling as a basis for increasing sustainability and employability, in the context of supporting economic recovery and social cohesion,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 June 2020 on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 8 November 2019 on further developing the

European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems²,

– having regard to the Council conclusions of 3 March 2017 on Enhancing the Skills of Women and Men in the EU Labour Market³,

– having regard to the Council recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults⁴,

– having regard to Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC⁵,

– having regard to the policy framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020),

– having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 5 May 2020 on ‘Sustainable funding for lifelong learning and development of skills, in the context of a shortage of skilled labour’ (Exploratory opinion at the request of the Croatian presidency)⁶,

– having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the ‘Future of work — acquiring of appropriate knowledge and skills to meet the needs of future jobs’ (Exploratory opinion requested by the Bulgarian Presidency)⁷,

– having regard to the Cedefop study entitled ‘Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways’, volumes 1 and 2,

– having regard to Cedefop’s report entitled ‘Skills forecast trends and challenges to 2030’⁸,

– having regard the Skills Panorama⁹ and the European Skills Index¹⁰,

– having regard to the OECD Skills for jobs database¹¹,

– having regard to the OECD study entitled ‘Getting Skills Right. Increasing Adult Learning Participation. Learning from successful reforms¹²,

– having regard to the OECD policy brief of 10 July 2020, entitled ‘Skill measures to
mobilise the workforce during the COVID-19 crisis,'

– having regard to its Resolution of 8 October 2020 on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee,

– having regard to its Resolution of 12 June 2018 on modernisation of education in the EU,

– having regard to its Resolution of 14 September 2017 on a new skills agenda for Europe,

– having regard to its Resolution of 19 January 2016 on skills policies for fighting youth unemployment,

– having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2015 on creating a competitive EU labour market for the 21st century: matching skills and qualifications with demand and job opportunities, as a way to recover from the crisis,

– having regard to the question to the Commission on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (O-0005/2020 – B9-xxxx/2020),

– having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,

A. whereas the green and digital transitions as well as demographic trends and globalisation are changing the nature of work, the content of jobs and the skills and qualifications required;

B. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has changed the world of work and reinforced the need to update the skills sets of the European workforce, in particular as regards digital and technological skills as well as resilience and adaptability;

C. whereas individuals need to be equipped with the skills required by the labour market and the ability to quickly adapt to changing skills demands throughout their lifetime; whereas 37% to 69% of tasks in the EU could be automated throughout many sectors, leading to a significant change in the performance on the job;

D. whereas skills mismatches and skills shortages present important challenges to the EU’s labour market and education systems; whereas there is an immense lack of digital skills amongst the workforce and 42% of EU citizens lack basic digital skills; whereas significant investments are needed to tackle the digital skills gap;

E. whereas equal access to skilling, upskilling and re-skilling opportunities for all people,
including for vulnerable groups and people living in rural or remote areas, is crucial for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience;

F. whereas education, training and skills policies are in the competence of the Member States; whereas the EU plays an important role in supporting, coordinating and complementing the actions of the Member States in these areas;

1. Welcomes the Commission Communication entitled ‘European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’, which places skills at the heart of the EU policy agenda and ensures that the right to training and lifelong learning, enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, becomes a reality across the Union; welcomes the 12 flagship actions set out in the Communication;

2. Emphasises that close cooperation and exchange of best practices between all relevant actors involved in skills development is crucial to ensure that the workforce has the skills needed on the labour market; in this regard, highlights the need to collect up-to-date data and information regarding skills needs and demand on the labour market; supports the launch of the Pact for Skills, aiming to bring together all stakeholders which share the objective of upskilling and re-skilling Europe’s workforce;

3. Recalls that modernizing vocational education and training systems is key to prepare young people and adults for the green and digital transitions and to contribute to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; welcomes the Commission proposal for a ‘Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’; stresses that VET programmes need to be targeted, providing learners with the skills set to thrive in the labour market;

4. Stresses the need to improve the system of skills anticipation to better identify emerging changes in skills needs, deliver training relevant for the labour market and minimise skills bottlenecks and skills imbalances; welcomes in this respect the Commission’s proposed actions to improve skills intelligence; underlines that strengthening career guidance and access to information for students and adult learners can help reduce skills mismatches;

5. Is of the opinion that the mutual recognition of qualifications will help to overcome skills shortages and skills mismatches;

6. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the importance of digital skills, changed the skills demand on the labour market thus increasing the digital skills gap, and exacerbated pre-existing education inequalities;

7. Calls for immediate and bold European and national measures to put digital skills at the heart of the education and training policies, making digital skills available for all, improving digital skills of teachers and trainers and equipping schools, training institutions and universities with the technologies necessary to allow for online and distance learning; supports the envisaged actions by the Commission as set out in the Skills Agenda and the Digital Education Plan 2021-2027;

8. Notes that the green transition is an important driver of labour demand across all sectors and can create millions of jobs; recalls that a successful transition to a green economy needs to go hand in hand with skilling, re-skilling and upskilling measures to develop
the skills, knowledge and competence required by a green economy; welcomes in this respect the Commission’s actions to support the acquisition of skills for the green transition; calls for swift action to avoid skills bottlenecks in this area and allow the EU to remain a global leader in the green economy;

9. Stresses that the implementation of the Skills Agenda requires appropriate funding both on the European and national level; expects that the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU will provide for significant resources for skills development; recalls that the main competence for up- and reskilling lies with the Member States and calls therefore on Member States to invest more in skills development and education budgets since important human capital investment is key to ensure sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience;

10. Underlines the need for education and lifelong learning systems to be inclusive and accessible for all to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities; calls on the Commission and in particular the Member States to ensure equal access to quality education and to facilitate access to skills development for disadvantaged groups and vulnerable citizens;

11. Notes the Commission’s envisaged actions to promote Skills for Life, in particular the updating of the European Agenda for Adult Learning; calls on the Commission and Member States to give specific attention to the development of soft skills such as analytical skills, emotional intelligence, leadership, entrepreneurship skills, teamwork, communication, adaptability, creativity, innovation and critical thinking, which will become even more important in the post-COVID-19 world of work;

12. Points out that in an ageing society, it is crucial to ensure learning throughout life, including at an older age; calls on the Commission and Member States to give greater attention to older workers and to ensure that they can participate in upskilling and reskilling programmes allowing them to adapt themselves to changing skills needs and stay in the labour market;

13. Highlights the need for a swift implementation of the actions announced by the Commission to meet the skills needs of the labour market and to contribute to a swift recovery from the COVID-19 crisis;

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.