

European Year of Skills 2023

Madam, Sir,

First of all, thank you very much for your consultation allowing us to take part to your reflections about the European Year of Skills.

Let me share with you the thoughts of [EFPA Europe](#), the leading professional standards setting body for financial advisors and planners in Europe. Our aim is to build public confidence and trust in finance, to improve the skills of financial market professionals in order to improve the service to clients, to enhance the skills of individuals and to support them throughout their professional careers. Our project is European and inclusive, carried out in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

The European Year of Competences 2023 is of course a great idea and can be an important lever for finding solutions and actors to update and improve people's skills. This year will start in a context where the labor markets of EU countries are increasingly faced with the need for new talents, in all sectors of activity. Such leverage can only be constructive.

It will also begin in a context of perpetual technological disruption and in an environment where working life is increasingly changing, with individuals changing occupations more than once in their careers.

Among the different initiatives to be taken during the European Year of Skills 2023, EFPA could submit:

1/ Better define the competences and knowledge needed to practice a particular activity.

A higher level of competency allow a better level of protection and service to the clients. In that framework, a European Year of Skills should be the opportunity to identify the competencies needed to advice/serve/support a client following the level of service/support required by the client and the different business line.

Customer surveys, by industry, could allow to better identify their needs and the skills required to well address these demands.

This could allow to establish a register of the skills needed to practice an activity to adapt the existing professional certifications and to allow the regulators to better identify the potential lacks of knowledge and skills of the labor force.

This reference framework could also enable individuals to understand where they stand in terms of competences.

2/ The establishment of a register of existing European certifications by industry and/or services and/or business lines.

It could enable the establishment of training and certification paths by business line or between different business lines.

It could help to structure vocational training paths to accompany individuals throughout their career. Such a reference framework could make it possible to enhance the value of professional experience and achievements through the recognition of the latter by means of professional certifications.

Finally, this referential could orient the individuals in their training paths, allowing them to identify where they stand in an objective framework.

3/ The creation of Continuous Professional Development Program obligations.

Technologies, regulations, industrial processes evolve. To avoid obsolescence, the workforce must also be able to adapt.

The inclusion of compulsory training hours on an annual frequency could help people to improve their skills and employability.

It could also facilitate job transitions and improve job flexibility in the face of technological and/or non-technological disruptions.

4/ Create European Common Standard for Professional Certifications

A lot of associations, chartered, training centers... already work on the field of education. They can be used to define European Standard of certification recognized at European and national levels.

Like the famous ISO norms for industrial processes and products, such a standard system could make it possible to define equivalences for diplomas obtained abroad for immigrant workers and thus to enhance the value of skills obtained abroad. It could also contribute to combating and/or reducing wage inequalities and gender inequalities.

5/ And probably the most important, raising people's awareness of financial literacy.

To raise this awareness, training programs should be built through multidisciplinary teaching and based on a selected set of competences which individuals need to develop in order for them to be financially healthy (to understand how to use the different forms of money, how to manage a budget, what is a sustainable preference when talking about finance...).

As mentioned by different association such as the [Česka Spořitelna Foundation](#), this set of competences, i.e. combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, should be defined on the basis of relevant national and international strategical documents (as e.g. [Key competences for lifelong learning](#), [Financial competence framework for adults in the European Union](#) or the National strategy of financial education or National standard of financial literacy):

- **Knowledge** which individual needs in various life situations related to finance - especially the use of different forms of money, management and awareness of basic financial products and financial risks.
- **Skills and analysis** represent the ability to apply acquired knowledge – in the case of financial health competences, the ability to apply it to financial decision-making and planning.
- **Attitudes and application** are tendencies toward certain thinking and behavior. They influence how an individual reacts in various life situations, how he uses his knowledge and skills to solve them successfully.

Of course, such a program can only be defined according to the EC and OECD - in cooperation with the Member States - joint financial competence framework for children and youth next year.

It would be interesting to know when exactly shall this framework be published? Would it be possible to see the draft version of the framework?

In all cases, the national EFPAs, present in 11 countries, would be glad to be in contact with the national/local coordinators to give feedback and bring constructive inputs.

EPPA Europe, at its level, would be ready to participate to the different working group where it can be useful for the Commission.