



EuroClio

Inspiring History
and Citizenship Educators

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Position on the Digital Education Action Plan

The plan of the European Commission, Parliament and Council to work digital education in Europe is both **timely and needed** and we applaud the rapid response by the European Commission to call for new strategic partnerships in response of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has greatly accelerated the need for modernisation and digital transformation of education and training systems across Europe. It has also shown the limitations of educational that is fully digital, made sure that virtually all teachers gained experience in using digital means for their teaching practices, and increased the influence of big tech on education.

Digital education has the potential to **enrich** learning in various ways and can make quality education more accessible to all learners. Digital education is also needed for students to develop themselves as **active and critical** citizens, especially as they access more and more information online and through digital means. Therefore, digital education should be part of regular education.

The **priorities** set in the action plan are highly relevant and well chosen. *Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning* put the emphasis on improving the quality of education. It also recognizes that using digital technology does not necessarily improve the quality of education per se. In the case of history and citizenship education, we have seen examples where the use of digital technology led to a type of education where students were only required to memorize and recall the historical facts, instead of applying their knowledge and develop their critical thinking skills.

Developing relevant digital competences and skills for the digital transformation puts the emphasis on the people who need to make the transformation work: These are learners, but also teachers, teacher trainers, developers of educational resources, assessment experts, educational decision makers, educators and curators working at cultural heritage institutes and members of teachers' associations. Especially in a scenario where much or most of the education will happen online it is crucial that these educators are able to create and use online learning resources that meet the needs and interests of their students. Also in an online mode, students should be an active participant, and contributor to their own learning process.



Improving education through better data analysis and foresight is crucial to ensure effort to improve education are rooted in evidence and based on facts rather than opinions.

The proposed **ways forward** in the action plan, however, will **not be sufficient** to achieve the goals and tackle the challenges, that these people face.

To *make better use of digital technologies for teaching and learning*, access to internet, reduced administration, improved authentication procedures, access to computers, are important preconditions or assets for the use of digital technology in educational technologies, but without qualified teachers and well-designed educational resources, will not lead to quality education. At the same time, some obstacles, such as copyright restrictions that prevent the use of digital sources in education, are not addressed.

Therefore, we suggest to invest in:

- The development or improvement of easy to use tools that educators can use to create, share and adapt their own open education learning resource.
- The development high quality open education
- Research to identify and share strategies for the use of effective digital technologies for teaching and learning, especially in the humanities.

Improving quality of education is needed to change educational on all levels and all students. This is recognized in the introduction of the Action Plan, but the suggested ways forward under these priorities, only mention higher education, not primary and secondary education, adult education and VET. There is attention for science education and programming, but the humanities are not mentioned.

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- The identification and continued support of initiatives that have been supported by the Erasmus+ and Connecting Europe Facilities, that have the potential to transform education, such as [Historiana](#) and [Europeana](#).
- Professional development of teacher trainers, and other educators in the use of digital technologies through the exchange of best practices, development of online training courses, and peer learning.

In order to reach its ambition for digital education to help empower young people to articulate and engage, participate and shape the future of Europe characterized by democracy, solidarity and inclusion, investing in social science teaching is needed. These are subjects that help students to learn about other cultures, to think about social issues, to form opinions, to look for evidence, to debate and discuss, to propose solutions, and work together. Investment in the use of digital technology for these subjects is lacking behind.

To improve education systems through better data analysis and foresight is also important. However, data analysis is not only useful to improve educational systems as a whole, it can be also being used to improve teaching practices, educational tools and professional development courses. Therefore, would like to suggest this as a way forward as well.

Finally, we would like to add the potential risk that due to the rapid transformation to digital education, where teachers are not sufficiently supported and skilled, students who are now learning, don't get the same quality of education as the students before them.

We hope that these inputs are useful and remain at your disposal in case there is anything EuroClio can do to shape or realise this action plan.

4 September 2020

Steven Stegers

Executive Director



About EuroClio

EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators, was established in 1992 with support of the Council of Europe to build bridges between history education professionals from all parts of the then recently reunited Europe. EuroClio inspires and empowers educators to engage learners in innovative and responsible history and citizenship education. It does so through research, the design of educational resources in cross-border teams, offering opportunities for professional development and network, and outreach and exchange.

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About Historiana

Historiana is an online resources developed by EuroClio, Webtic and Use Media with and for history and citizenship educators from Europe and beyond. Historiana offers free access to historical content resources that are curated, contextualized and licenses for educational use, teaching and learning resources that are piloted, peer-reviewed and free to adapt, and the digital collections from Europeana. On Historiana, educators can find, create, copy and adapt eLearning Activities, using a variety of interactive tools, which they can share with their students and colleagues. Several museums, archives, and teacher training institutes have joined Historiana and are making their own resources available to use.

Historiana.eu