

**Question for oral answer O-000006/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 136

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on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
Andrea Bocskor (PPE)

Subject: European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience

The EMPL Committee would like to ask the Commission the following questions regarding the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience:

1. In order to meet the skills needs of the labour market and contribute to a swift recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the actions proposed in the Skills Agenda need to be implemented swiftly. Can the Commission provide an overview of when the various actions will be implemented?
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the digital skills gap and exacerbated pre-existing education inequalities, including gender inequalities. It has also increased the number of dropouts, especially from disadvantaged groups. How will the Commission ensure that education and lifelong learning systems place special focus on digital education, are of high quality and inclusive, and offer equal opportunities to all, in particular vulnerable groups and those living in rural or remote areas? How will it support the Member States (MS) in their efforts to do so? How will it support MS to help them bring dropouts back into the education system?
3. The implementation of the Skills Agenda requires appropriate funding in order to be delivered. In addition to the funding envisaged at EU level, considerable public and private investment is needed at national level. What concrete measures will the Commission take to encourage national public and private investment and reduce the striking disparities between MS in lifelong learning? How can the objectives of the Skills Agenda be met if national funding is below the expected level? How will the Commission encourage companies to provide and finance training for workers and apprentices? How will it ensure that the EU's main policy and financial instruments for education and training ensure the development of quality skills and the promotion of learning mobility and opportunities?
4. What could be done to help MS to align their national education systems with labour market needs across the EU in order to attract and develop the talents and skills that are vital for personal development and to enable European companies to stay competitive?

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