ASEM Education 2030

Draft Strategy Paper *(Draft 3)*

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1. Global Context

Global Challenges and Opportunities

The 21st century is facing a **paradigm-shift**. Technological, demographic, social, environmental, economic and political shifts are forcing education actors to rethink their methodologies and structures. **Global challenges,** such as globalisation, internationalisation, climate change, persisting gender inequalities, demographic evolutions[[1]](#footnote-2), technological shifts[[2]](#footnote-3) and more recently the COVID-19 crisis have put traditional **education and training systems under increased pressure to adapt** while identifying untapped opportunities.

By preparing education and training institutions to address change and anticipate developmental trends, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders can help them **embrace new opportunities** arising in times of change and crises, while **mitigating associated risks.** In turn education and training systems have a **pivotal role to prepare all learners** for fast-paced, demanding environments and to help them becoming active, responsible and engaged citizens.

Through the ASEM Education Strategy 2030, ASEM partners and stakeholders stress the importance of Asia-Europe collaboration to share good practices, to tackle similar issues, as well as to redefine international exchanges in education.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a powerful reminder of the disruptive potential of global crises. In just a few weeks’ time, entire societies and most notably education and training systems have been destabilized and forced to rethink their working modalities. Education and training institutions in Europe and Asia were **impacted in similar ways** and had **to cope with the same challenges.** Most educational institutions had to make a sudden transition towards **online education** which revealed both its **advantages as well as its pitfalls**. Many educational actors seized the opportunity to learn and explore new tools and systems, which contributed towards more acceptance for online and blended learning. Apart from this changing mindset, the fast acceleration towards online education also brought several limitations and issues to the surface. Due to many students lacking access to proper infrastructure and technology at home, many schools and universities noticed that **inequalities of chances and** opportunities related to teaching and learning **have been exacerbated**. [[3]](#footnote-4)

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders acknowledge that such **challenges cannot be tackled in isolation** and recognise the role the ASEM Education Process can play as a transregional platform for dialogue and cooperation. ASEM Ministers for Foreign Affairs reiterated the **need for interconnectedness between Asia and Europe** in their Ministerial Statement from September 2020.[[4]](#footnote-5) An international crisis such as COVID-19 requires interregional cooperation and multilateralism in **putting forces together** to overcome its consequences and challenges.

Sustainable Development Goals

Since 2018, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have repeatedly stressed the importance of **ASEM Education contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda** 2030[[5]](#footnote-6). During ASEMME7, Ministers officially welcomed the suggestion to link the ASEM Education Process more explicitly to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 by **introducing “Sustainable Development” as a transversal** theme within the 4 priority areas of the ASEM Education Process.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Ministers underlined the importance of achieving the sustainable development goals with a focus on SDG4 (’[Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/)’)[[7]](#footnote-8) and agreed that the ASEM Education Process could contribute to realising the SDGs[[8]](#footnote-9).

1. ASEM Education Context

During the seventh ASEM Education Ministers’ Meeting, ASEM Education Ministers decided to formulate an **ASEM Education Strategy for 2030 in order to provide a framework for collaboration with common objectives** to encourage international exchanges, share good practices, help partners cope with similar issues and contribute to sustainable development goals (ASEMME7 2019; Bucharest Statement)[[9]](#footnote-10).

In that meeting, it was decided to set up a **Standing Working Group** (SWG)[[10]](#footnote-11) to assist the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) in the development of a Strategy Document for the next decade. The SWG met for the first time in December 2019 to define aims, drafting modalities, as well as the general outline for the vision and mission statement. In their terms of reference, the SWG formulated the following aims for the Strategy 2030:

* *“To provide a common* ***long-term strategy*** *for the AEP for* ***enhanced connectivity*** *between Asia and Europe including relevant values, vision, mission, strategies and objectives in line with international and regional frameworks and strategies;*
* *To increase* ***visibility and recognition*** *for more commitment of ASEM Education partners and stakeholders;*
* *To provide a framework for developing and implementing* ***result-oriented initiatives & projects*** *(Chair’s Conclusions and/or action plan) and for analysis, monitoring and evaluation (Stocktaking Report)”.*

The ASEM Education Strategy 2030 builds on the **four thematic priorities** (Quality Assurance and Recognition, Engaging Business and Industry in Education, Balanced Mobility, Lifelong Learning (including TVET))[[11]](#footnote-12) and **two transversal themes** (Digitalisation and Sustainable Development)[[12]](#footnote-13) identified in the framework of the ASEM Education Process.

Staying true to the key characteristics of the overall ASEM process[[13]](#footnote-14) , the Strategy Paper takes into account previously issued recommendations, in particular: the **Seoul Declaration** (ASEMME 6), the **Bucharest Statement** (ASEMME 7), the **Stocktaking Report “From Seoul to Bucharest”**, as well as the publication **“Looking Back and Looking Ahead: The ASEM Education Process – History and Vision”**.

The ASEM Education Strategy reaffirms the need for synergies with other multilateral political processes to pool resources, where appropriate, and avoid duplication of efforts.

1. Vision and Mission Statement

The ASEM Education Process (AEP) strives to a **more prosperous and sustainable Asia-Europe region** with better equipped individuals able to navigate through rapidly changing, complex and uncertain societies and labour markets. To reach this overarching goal, the AEP will contribute to **prepare the education sector for existing and forthcoming challenges** related to globalization, climate change, new technologies, pandemics and demographic changes.

By 2030, the AEP sees itself as an **advanced transregional dialogue and cooperation platform to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and training** through an equal and mutually beneficial Asia-Europe partnership. This strong partnership between Asian and European partners and stakeholders will be leveraged **through people-to-people connectivity**.

In order to realize this vision and mission statement, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have not only identified **strategic objectives, instruments and working methods**, but also developed an Action Plan[[14]](#footnote-15) to ensure effective implementation and tangible results.

1. Strategic Objectives for the Next Decade

The strategic objectives, identified by ASEM Education partners and stakeholders, will shape the **thematic focus** of the ASEM Education Process for the next decade by outlining **what** the ASEM Education partners and stakeholders aim to achieve.

* 1. Creating More Transparency and Mutual Understanding on Recognition, Validation and Quality

**To Support and Promote Interregional Cooperation, Mobility and Exchanges**

Reliable and transparent information is a prerequisite to establish robust relationships between ASEM partners that will encourage cooperation and exchange agreements. In order to promote, support and **advance interregional cooperation and build up trust** across Asian and European education systems and institutions, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will further contribute to **foster transparency** on quality assurance systems, learning outcomes, credit systems, recognition and validation mechanisms, as well as qualifications frameworks of the two regions, while respecting their national and local systems and practices.

In recent years, virtual and blended formats of exchanges have become increasingly common in international cooperation. This shift towards **virtual and blended exchanges and mobility** has gained even more momentum during the COVID-19 crisis. Against this backdrop, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders acknowledge the need for more transparency and understanding on recognition, validation and quality assurance. They will, therefore, seek to reinforce recognition, crediting and quality assurance processes and mechanisms **related to digital formats**, such as digital credentialing, micro-credentials or digital badges.

 **To Support and Promote Flexible Learning Pathways**

Establishing transparency, recognition and understanding is not only important to stimulate cooperation and exchanges between regions, but also to **create flexible and diversified learning pathways**. As a matter of fact, learning is increasingly taking place in diverse contexts (both formal and non-formal settings) through various channels and methodologies (online, blended, physical) and is offered by different types of institutions (schools, HE institutions, private providers and companies, civil society actors, non-profit organisations, ...) throughout a person’s life.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will continue to support the lifelong learning paradigm **by developing transparency on validation and recognition mechanisms** in order to promote and encourage the creation of personalised and relevant learning pathways.

* 1. Enhancing Connectivity between Asia and Europe by Boosting Inclusive and Balanced Mobility and Exchanges

Enhancing connectivity between Asia and Europe has always been at the heart of the ASEM Education Process. In the next decade, ASEM partners and stakeholders will continue to foster mobility and exchanges between both regions: not only **physical mobility, but also virtual mobility and exchanges, as well as blended mobility.**

Through the 2030 Strategy, ASEM partners and stakeholders will **further promote and encourage exchanges in all their forms**, as well as **in various contexts**: (higher) education institutions, workplaces, non-formal settings, short exchange programmes and projects, etc). Furthermore, taking into account the specificities of the ASEM Education context and recent developments, they will dedicate special attention to several aspects listed below.

**To Strive for Inclusive Exchanges**

In line with their contribution to SDG4 and ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will further strive to create exchange opportunities for all, regardless of their gender, country of origin or background.

Bearing this objective in mind, ASEM partners and stakeholders will seek to harness the full potential of digital and new communication tools to foster a **more equitable access** to mobility and exchange opportunities.

While online and digital technologies bear a **great potential to create better conditions for more inclusive international exchanges.** ASEM partners and stakeholders acknowledge the existing digital divide[[15]](#footnote-16) and the need for special measures to make sure no one is left behind due to inadequate access (or lack thereof) to new technologies.

**To Stimulate Balanced Exchanges and Mobility**

ASEM partners and stakeholders recognize that the reciprocity of exchanges between Asia and Europe could still be improved. At this point it time, the incoming and outgoing flows of students, faculty members and researchers between both continents are still imbalanced; the incoming flow still being heavily biased in favour of Europe. To reduce this imbalance in incoming and outgoing flows and reach a more **balanced two-way mobility** **between both continents, scholarships and mobility programmes will be promoted.**

**To Promote and Support Virtual Mobility and Exchanges[[16]](#footnote-17)**

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders acknowledge that while virtual mobility and exchanges are not meant to replace physical mobility they open up new interesting avenues for collaboration.

As shown by numerous internationalisation at home practices, internationalisation of the education sector does not necessarily imply that the participants have to be physically mobile to benefit from international or intercultural experiences.

**Virtual mobility and exchanges** will be promoted as part of wider efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of higher education international programmes, as they represent an **ecological alternative** to physical mobility, especially for short-term exchanges.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many institutions have tried out new forms of online collaboration and virtual mobility to offer their students an international experience while staying in their own country[[17]](#footnote-18), thereby demonstrating that online learning formats and virtual exchanges can provide a robust and viable **alternative when physical mobility is restricted**. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders wish to build on this experience and new practices, using the momentum to rethink internationalisation in education.

In the next decade, they will use the platform provided by the ASEM Education Process to share **good practices on methodologies and formats** for virtual exchanges and mobility, as well as to **promote and stimulate partnerships** between European and Asian institutions in order to develop more structural and efficient virtual exchanges and mobility programmes.

* 1. Fostering Transversal Skills

The ASEM Education partners and stakeholders recognize the **ever-growing importance of transversal skills** in enabling individuals to navigate through the increasingly globalised, interconnected, fast-changing and uncertain times. Exchanges in all forms between Asia and Europe can create avenues for learners to develop their transversal skills. Through the AEP, ASEM Education Process will promote and support the development of transversal skills in order to **contribute to the well-being, lifelong development and employability** of Asian and European individuals, as well as **to sustainable societies**.

**Description of Transversal Skills**

The ASEM Education partners and stakeholders’ conception of transversal skills is in line with **UNESCO’s definition**, which describes transversal skills as skills that are *“not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge but […] can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings”*[[18]](#footnote-19).

Following UNESCO’s classification of transversal skills in six categories[[19]](#footnote-20), the ASEM Education partners and stakeholders aim to foster **opportunities** for learners to develop critical and innovative thinking skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, media and information literacy, as well as skills, attitudes and values related to **global citizenship**, including tolerance, openness, respect and understanding for diversity, different cultures and sustainable development. It is generally accepted and demonstrated that (virtual) **mobility and exchanges** have a positive influence on the acquisition of such transversal skills. It will hence help learners to become active, **multilingual**, responsible and engaged citizens, while promoting global citizenship.

**Education for Sustainable Development**

In order to contribute to SDG 4, and to target 4.7[[20]](#footnote-21) in particular, the AEP provides a good platform to promote and support **Education for Sustainable Development** which *”empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity”*.[[21]](#footnote-22) In this respect, Asia-Europe collaboration and will play a pivotal role in promoting **values and knowledge for sustainable development** to encourage citizens to adopt attitudes and behaviours contributing to a more sustainable future.

**Digital Skills**

The digital transformation is impacting society, the education sector and the workplace, forcing everyone into continuous development and improvement of digital skills, not only to embrace the opportunities these new technologies bring, but also to better cope with their inherent challenges and potential risks[[22]](#footnote-23). The ASEM Education Process will provide a platform for partners and stakeholders to **exchange on policies and practices related to digital skills development** and to create opportunities for enhancing digital skills with a focus on bridging the digital divide.

* 1. Promoting Lifelong Learning (LLL), Including Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)

**To Raise the Profile of LLL and TVET**

Lifelong learning, in particular technical and vocational education and training, has been identified by ASEM Education Ministers as a crucial mechanism for enhancing the employability of current and future generations.

In light of emerging and existing challenges, such as industry 4.0, aging societies, technological evolution and the massive growth of the service economy, **the profile of LLL and** in particular **TVET should be raised** in order to offer **all learners** education, training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities to equip them for transformations and disruptive events both on the **labour market and in society in general**.

TVET should not be perceived as a parallel education and training system but rather as part of a lifelong learning **continuum providing citizens not only initial training, but also upskilling and reskilling opportunities.**

In addition to being inclusive as advocated by SDG 4, LLL and TVET systems should also provide **flexible learning pathways** in which learning in both formal and non-formal settings can be facilitated and recognized as part of professional and/or personal development. Learners should be encouraged to be proactive in shaping their learning pathways, while relying on support and guidance structures when needed.

**To Collaborate with Business and Industry**

**Engaging business and industry** is essential to understand current trends, as well as technical and transversal skills in-demand. Working closely with industry and business partners is of paramount importance to design innovative, fit-for-purpose and qualitative education and training curricula. Technological advancements related to robotization, automatization, AI and machine learning in particular will need to be closely monitored in order to keep education and training relevant.

The AEP will, therefore, provide a platform to **support partners and stakeholders** in the development, improvement and actualization of their respective lifelong learning and TVET systems in order to make them more inclusive, flexible and relevant.

1. Instruments and Working Methods

This section details **how** ASEM partners and stakeholders will strive to realize the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 vision and mission statement and describes the various instruments and working methods to implement.

* 1. People-to-people Connectivity

People-to-people connectivity has been established as a central component of the AEP vision and mission. People-to-people contacts have become a “critical form of cooperation to **promote connectivity** between Asia and Europe”.[[23]](#footnote-24)

In ASEM Education meetings, projects and initiatives, direct contacts between people foster institutional cooperation and **strengthen both personal and structural relations** between Asian and European partners and stakeholders. These people-to-people contacts facilitate mutual understanding and contribute to building **lasting relationships** between the various actors.

ASEM partners and stakeholders will identify common interests and joint endeavours to further develop collaborative projects and initiatives.

* 1. Policy Dialogue

ASEM Education will continue to provide an **informal dialogue platform for policy makers** active at different levels in the education sector. The ASEM Education political meetings (senior officials’ and ministers’ meetings) and the various working groups allow partners to develop and discuss innovative ideas and exchange good practices for future policies.

Through political meetings, joint initiatives and projects **policy makers** will interact with **a wide variety of actors**, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, such as students, education institutions’ representatives, to researchers, academics, representatives from civil society organisations, youth, as well as business and industry partners.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will identify more opportunities for dialogue and more **systematic exchanges with the overall ASEM process** in order to guarantee better follow-up and coherence of activities, projects and initiatives carried out.

* 1. Exchanges of Knowledge, Expertise and Good Practices

Within the AEP, differences have long been perceived as enriching the dialogue rather than hampering it. ASEM Partners and stakeholders are very diverse in terms of cultural, historical and political traditions, demography, level of industrialisation, etc. providing a very compelling environment for peer-learning and exchanges of knowledge.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should capitalize on partners’ strengths and **share good practices -** both from the educational field as from policy level **-** that could be used by others as sources of inspiration, thereby contributing to fostering mutual understanding. Knowledge, expertise and research capacity should be pooled in order to allow for **capacity building and peer-learning.**

Experiences and lessons learned should serve **to develop inspirational models and pilot projects** adapted to each country’s context. Good practices cannot be merely copy-pasted: adapting them to very diverse national contexts is part of a lengthier process of deep and meaningful peer-learning. Experimentation is often a necessary step in order to contextualise practices.

The AEP is a good avenue for the development of innovative models in the education sector that draw their inspiration from different good practices and leading trends stemming from two continents.

* 1. Collaborative Research on Education

In order to face challenges that cannot be tackled in isolation, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should not only share experiences, lessons learned and good practices, but also rely on collaborative research to come up with **common innovative answers and solutions** to educational challenges.

Collecting evidence is of utmost importance to allow decision-makers to make informed decisions and formulate **research-based policy recommendations** concerning education and training.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will stimulate research and innovation, as well as seek to increase the collaborative engagement of researchers from both continents. They welcome initiatives and projects at the national and international level that **connect researchers and innovators** from Asia and Europe and endeavour to further collaborative innovation and research in the field of education.

* 1. Synergies with other Multilateral Organisations and Processes

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will foster synergies with other multilateral organisations and processes to serve common goals and pool resources and capacities, where possible, to avoid duplication of efforts, as well as to **establish more systematic collaboration**. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will do so, by identifying areas of common interest and shared objectives, and subsequently intensify relations among partners and stakeholders, as well as with multilateral processes.

Through policy dialogue, partnerships and concrete collaboration between institutions, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will strive, on the one hand, to build on existing projects and programmes and, on the other, to **launch joint projects and initiatives** in the field of mobility and international exchanges, transversal skills development and lifelong learning including TVET.

Closer cooperation should not only be fostered with existing partners such as the EU and its agencies (e.g. ETF, CEDEFOP), but should also be encouraged with other relevant multilateral processes, such as the Bologna Process (especially in the framework of the Bologna Global Policy Forum), ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers, APEC, …

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will continue to closely monitor relevant initiatives in its field of expertise and strive to be as proactive as possible to contribute where appropriate.

* 1. Visibility and Communication

**Improving the AEP’s visibility and raising awareness** about ASEM Education initiatives and projects by **sharing success stories** is crucial for several reasons.

First of all, highlighting good practices within the AEP demonstrates that it continues to be relevant and legitimates its existence. Secondly, broadcasting the benefits of actively taking part in ASEM Education activities can, on the one hand, further deepen Asia-Europe collaboration within ASEM and on the other, **encourage more partners and stakeholders to contribute**. Finally, stronger commitment and deeper collaboration as a result of increased visibility, could have a positive effect on the other 3 strategic objectives, thereby allowing them to yield better results.

**Communication** is the core issue and needs to be enhanced both within the AEP and the ASEM Political Process and with external partners and stakeholders. The AEP should use all the tools at its disposal, such as documentation, website and newsletter, to better disseminate flagship initiatives, results and information. Nevertheless, the AEP cannot act in isolation and should remind its partners and members to advertise the process within their own structures in order to create a **multiplier effect**.

If communication material is deemed insufficient, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should contemplate the possibility of **developing new formats and tools** where needed.

Finally, multiplying and combining communication tools and channels could be beneficial not only to **reach a larger audience, but also to target specific underrepresented groups of beneficiaries.**

1. E.g. migration and aging societies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In particular: digitalisation (taking into account the digital divide), robotisation, automatisation, artificial intelligence and machine learning. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. IAU Global Survey Report *”,* IAU Global Survey Report, G. Marioni, H. van ‘t Land, T. Jensen, p. 24-26 (2020), G. Marioni, H. van ‘t Land, T. Jensen, p. 24-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Statement on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)](https://cdn.aseminfoboard.org/documents/1-Final_Version_of_the_Ministerial_Statement_on_COVID_19.pdf) (Ministers of Foreign Affairs, ASEM SOM in preparation of the ASEM13 Summit, 2020, hosted online by Cambodia). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. ISOM in 2018 (Jakarta, Indonesia), SOM1 in 2018 (Krems, Austria), as well as during SOM2 and ASEMME7 in 2019 (Bucharest, Romania). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [ASEMME7 Chair’s Conclusions](https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/asemme7-bucharest/546-conclusions-by-the-chair-asemme7/file), (2019, Bucharest, Romania). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. More specifically on the following [**SDG 4** **targets**](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/): **4.3**. *“Equal Access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education[…]”*, **4.4**. *“Increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills […]”*, **4.5.** *“Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all level of education and vocational training […]”*, **4.7.** *“All learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, through education for sustainable development”*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The following goals have been identified as relevant for the ASEM Education Process: **SDG5** [*"Gender Equality and empowering of women and girls"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/) (5.1 and 5.B), **SDG8** [*"Decent work and economic growth"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/)(8.2., 8.3. and 8.5.), **SDG 9** [*"Industries, innovation and infrastructure"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/)(9.2.), **SDG 10** [*"Reduce inequalities"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/) 10.2.), **SDG12** [*"responsible consumption and production"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/)(12.8.), **SDG 13** [*"climate action"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/)(13.3.) and **SDG 17** [*"Partnerships"*](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/) (17.9, 17.16 and 17.17). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. [ASEMME 7 Statement](https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/asemme7-bucharest/559-bucharest-statement-final/file) (Education Ministers, 2019, Bucharest, Romania). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Composed of representatives of 8 ASEM partners countries (Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French-speaking Community, France, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, The Netherlands), as well as representatives from ASEM stakeholders (DAAD, ESN, EUA, ASEF, ETF, AEI, IAU, AUN, UNESCO, SEAMEO RIHED). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. The four ASEM Education priority areas were identified and adopted during ASEMME3 in 2011 (Copenhagen, Denmark). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The two transversal themes were identified and adopted during ASEMME7 in 2019 (Bucharest, Romania). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Informality, multi-dimensionality, equal partnership, high-level & people-to-people ([https://www.aseminfoboard.org/about/overview).](https://www.aseminfoboard.org/about/overview) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The Action Plan will be attached to this Strategy Paper after inputs from partners and stakeholders have been collected. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. *”The term ‘****digital divide’*** *refers to the difference between those who have access to the Internet and are able to make use of new services offered on the World Wide Web, and those excluded. The term explicitly includes access to information and communication technologies, as well as the skills needed to take part in the information society. The digital divide can be classified according to criteria that describe differences in participation according to gender, age, education, income, social groups or geographic location”*. (Eurostat, Regional Yearbook 2010, p. 120). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *”The following* ***distinction between the concepts Virtual Mobility (VM) an Virtual Exchanges (VE)*** *is made:* ***Virtual Mobility*** *implies that a student takes an online course/module/study programme from a university in another country. The international experience takes place by taking part in a progamme from a foreign university.*

***Virtual exchange programmes*** *involve online exchange, communication and collaboration between students and lecturers from universities in different countries (for example ‘COIL’ (Collaborative Online International Learning))”* (Source: Evolve Project, <https://evolve-erasmus.eu/about-evolve/what-is-virtual-exchange/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. *”COVID-19 has had an impact on international student mobility at 89% of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The type of the impact is diverse and varies from institution to institution but everywhere it has been negative. The 60% of the higher education institutions reported that they have increased virtual mobility and/or collaborative online learning as alternatives to physical student mobility”* (IAU Global Survey Report ”The impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the world” (2020), G. Marioni, H. van ‘t Land, T. Jensen, p. 27-29). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. UNESCO International Bureau of Education, IBE Glossary of Curriculum Terminology (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. *”1) critical and innovative thinking, 2) interpersonal skills (e.g. presentation and communication skills, organizational skills, teamwork, etc.), 3) intrapersonal skills (e.g. self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.), 4) global citizenship (e.g. tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, etc.), 5) media and information literacy (e.g. ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyse and evaluate media content), 6) others (competencies, such as physical health or religious values, that may not fall into one of the other)”* (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, IBE Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, 2013).

Most of these transversal skills are also included in [the EU’s Recommendation of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF) (adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. [*SDG4*](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4)*, Target 4.7: ”By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”* . [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. 21 Source: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. such as discriminatory algorithms in artificial intelligence, overload of information, misinformation and fake news, potential misuse of digital tools or data privacy awareness (to be added later on: reference to the Digitalisation Expert Group’s Position Paper). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. “*Enhancing Collaboration between Asia and Europe in Education and Training*” ([Seoul Declaration](https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/asemme6-seoul-2017/51-seoul-declaration/file) , 2017, p 2.). The importance of people-to-people connectivity was also stressed during the [ASEM Summit in 2018](https://www.aseminfoboard.org/events/12th-asem-summit-asem12), in Brussels and is part of the [EU’s Strategy for EU-Asia collaboration](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_communication_-_connecting_europe_and_asia_-_building_blocks_for_an_eu_strategy_2018-09-19.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)