



EfVET & EARLALL Joint Position Paper on Green Skills



Lifelong learning and Vocational Education and Training (VET) can make a vital contribution to the delivering of the European Green Deal: by helping define and implementing the so-called **green skills**. This concept was already defined by Cedefop (2012) as “the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable resource-efficient society.”

EARLALL (European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning) and **EfVET** (European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and their members play an important role in equipping citizens with the requisite skills for their **personal and professional development**. In the quest for sustainable solutions, it is important to recognize two complementary areas where the provision of new skills is needed:

- **Skills for the green economy**¹ (as a result of sector transformation – e.g. the shift from mining to service sectors –, circular economy, and a [just] green transition), in line with the New Industrial Strategy for Europe (European Commission, March 2020), and
- **General green skills for all citizens**, as a key aspect of a *green culture*² and a green future. European citizens (including young people, employees, adult learners, etc.) need to be equipped with the necessary competences to face current environmental challenges and to gain capacity and confidence to deal with transitions in the most appropriate way.

21st century challenges, such as climate change, digitalisation, and ageing societies, among others, are having an immense impact on the labour market and, hence, on society. In this context, EARLALL and EfVET can positively contribute to the dialogue with **a human capital agenda that is aligned with the European Green Deal**. We can provide recommendations and actions that are focused on the citizen and that can serve as a source of inspiration for national and regional education systems and European cooperation in education and training.

Responding to the health crisis: the **recovery paths drawn up to address the COVID-19 crisis**, with millions of jobs at stake, have brought about a change of paradigm, placing sustainability at the heart of the recovery. This must be acknowledged and embraced by all citizens. The shared ambition of all European institutions to make the **European Green Deal the basis for growth and job creation** leads us to strongly reiterate that support to the development of the aforementioned skills must be a fundamental pillar in this process, guaranteeing also the wellbeing of all citizens.

¹ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/skills-green-economy>.

² We understand the term green culture to signify the promotion and adoption of environmentally friendly values across society.



Through a lifelong learning perspective, green skills need to be mainstreamed and incorporated into education policies and practices, including VET, as one of the measures to provide a skilled labour force that is also **an agent of sustainable development and growth**.

In fact, this *cultural shift* towards a greener way of living and working should be promoted from a very early age for it to actually happen.

EARLALL, EfVET, and their commitment

EARLALL and EfVET believe in the importance of developing **active and effective policies and practices to provide workers and citizens with the green skills that are needed to help deliver the European Green Deal**. Through their regular meetings, our two organisations and our members will internally discuss the issue and will **draw recommendations** to the attention of the EU institutions, national and regional leaders, the industry, civil society organisations and education providers.

EfVET and EARALL are influential, dynamic and relevant European organisations with a wide outreach that actively take part in high-level events and discussions at EU level. It is also in this context, and taking advantage of the successful workshop on the topic of green skills (“Greencomp?”) that we organised in December 2019 with the support of the European Parliament, that the organisations are **fully committed** to continue the valuable work carried out so far by engaging with **new stakeholders**, proposing an attractive **calendar of activities** and drawing practical **recommendations** to different stakeholders.

EU agenda on green skills

The EU has targeted delivering the **UN’s Sustainable Development Goals** and combating **Climate Change**³, as well as promoting European education systems that are capable of supporting these aims.

We also support the implementation of the **EU Education Ministers’ Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education**⁴ (2015). Indeed, responsible citizenship and civic education are fundamental aspects to be taken into account in the aforementioned context in order to build resilient and sustainable societies and, in this regard, equality and social inclusion will remain a key enabler for a sustainable future. Therefore, the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, the upcoming **Skills Agenda for Europe** (May 2020) and a **European Pact for Skills** need also to inform the concept of green skills and any future decisions taken in this respect.

In addition to having an impact in everyone’s daily life, the **European Green Deal** affects many industries that will have to change the way in which they work, the technology that they use and the interactions that they have with their local and regional actors. As reflected by the **New Industrial Strategy for Europe**, moving towards a low carbon economy will create more than 1 million jobs by 2030, and, what is more, industrial transitions will require reskilling and upskilling more than 120 million Europeans in the next five years.

³ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

⁴ https://eu2015.lv/images/notikumi/2015-3-10_Declaration_EN.pdf.



These changes are already pushing the acquisition of a **whole new set of skills, from technical to soft ones**, that allow full participation in the economic activity and the labour market but, beyond them, **a green culture needs to be developed also in the workplace** by introducing **small but significant changes** in the way people interact with each other and with technology.

The acquisition of green skills in the workplace will increase resilience and adaptability of workers, managers and stakeholders, while contributing to green growth.

Recommendations

To EU institutions

- Develop a specific **European framework** for green skills or integrate the development and acquisition of green skills into existing ones, in accordance with SDG17, aimed at establishing a sustainable partnership.
- Advocate the alignment of Member State education policies with the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **Sustainable Development Goals**.
- Promote green approaches and green skills in **EU programmes** (ESF+, Erasmus+, ERDF, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Life, etc.).
- Promote research on the topic of green skills' acquisition and green culture in order to produce high quality evidence-based policies.
- Promote cooperation among different **stakeholders** – e.g., national/regional TVET organisations, who are at present setting up networks among educational institutions.
- Support **intersectoral career research** in EU research assignments, and **labour market information** in Member States.
- **Invest** in a supportive learning culture for lifelong learning and new technology.

To public authorities at national/regional level

- Raise **awareness at local level** about the urgency to provide citizens with the right level of green skills needed for their personal and professional development.
- Increase optimize and (where necessary) create **funding mechanisms** to support green skills' provision.
- Promote research on the topic of green skills' acquisition and green culture in order to produce high quality evidence-based policies.
- Facilitate and improve the implementation of **work-based learning and work-placed learning, peer-learning and training opportunities** for VET practitioners and administrators.
- **Invest** in a supportive learning culture for lifelong learning and new digital technology.
- **Find** innovative solutions so **COVID-19 measures (e.g. single-use plastics, etc.)** are in line with promoting green growth and a green culture, ensuring always citizens' safety and health.

To education providers

- Contribute to develop and promote a **green culture among education establishments**.
- Develop **curricula and programmes** that include and mainstream green skills.



- Ensure that **COVID-19 measures** at education centres are also in line with promoting a green way of life among staff and students, ensuring always their safety and health.
- Create new cooperation and **collaboration ties with stakeholders** in the field.
- Promote **green mobility** exchanges.
- Mainstream the **2030 Agenda and SDGs** into the mission of education establishments across Europe.
- Facilitate **training opportunities** for staff (academic, administrative and others) about implementing green principles and practices.

To the industry/economic sector/company representatives

- Promote a green culture in their sectors/industries/enterprises.
- Facilitate the **upskilling and reskilling of employees** not only in industries dealing with the green economy, but also for the entire workforce with respect to green competences, policies, standards, etc. In this respect, key issues will be energy efficiency, energy production and sector coupling.
- Introduce **work standards and principles** in line with the UN 2030 Agenda and SDGs.
- Prioritize **collaboration with stakeholders** that respect sustainability principles and the environment.

To civil society organisations

- **Promote** a green culture among **citizens**
- Facilitate the provision of (non-formal) **training** in green-related issues with a lifelong learning perspective.
- Promote collaboration with stakeholders in green-skills-related issues
- Engage in **active promotion campaigns** in cooperation with other **stakeholders**
- Promote the **European Green Deal, the UN 2030 Agenda and SDGs**, and support the need for skills provision as a crucial element. Carry out surveys and small-scale research that contribute to assessing the situation and the impact of green culture.

Action Plan 2020-2021

Greencomp Platform

The ultimate aim of this joint initiative is to set up a multi-stakeholder platform that will promote dialogue, peer learning and the taking up of common actions. Regular meetings will be set up where participants will be invited to share their practices and promote innovative joint measures to tackle environmental challenges related to the provision of the right skills needed.

The platform will set up internal rules for its membership, running and working methods.

Active campaign – dialogue with stakeholders

Meetings with relevant organisations will be set up throughout 2020 and 2021. These can include a long-lasting dialogue with industry and social partners representatives; MEPs; organisations dealing with the protection of the environment; European Commission, etc.



Workshops

Workshops will be key to facilitate peer learning and deepen knowledge about relevant topics and aspects related to green skills. Whenever possible the workshops will coincide or will be framed within the context of major European events: European Week of Regions and Cities, European Vocational Skills Week, Lifelong Learning Week, European Green Week, European Sustainable Energy Week, European Week for Waste Reduction, European Industry Days, etc.

Topics could include green skills' acquisition in the workplace, reskilling and upskilling with a green mindset, regional skills policies' contribution to the development of a green culture, among others.

Promotional material, social media and videos

Attractive promotional material will be designed to address different target groups in the most appropriate way. Videos will be broadcasted showcasing good examples from different education providers and main industry sectors (construction, textile, electricity companies, water, etc.).

Social media will be used as a way to raise awareness on green skills matters, by means of the **#GreenComp** hashtag.

Website

A dedicated website will be created in 2021 once the platform's initiatives and actions need to be communicated and visualised through this media. The website will act as a window towards the platform and its activities, and will improve community-building and the use of a common language, featuring definitions, references to policy papers, workshop materials, etc.

Projects

EU- and/or nationally funded projects dealing with the provision of green skills will be promoted. These could be dealing with developing a green culture or with different sectors and/or industries.

Furthermore, the platform could facilitate project matchmaking opportunities among stakeholders. Project ideas could also be shared through newsletters and stakeholders' regular communication channels.



About us

EfVET is an umbrella organization which has been created by, and for, Vocational Education and Training providers. EfVET's missions to enhance VET provision across all member colleges and educational institution through an active network of training providers, employers and practitioners in vocational education and training and lifelong learning. Its goal is to offer a network and for professionals to foster connection between digital skills, research, European Green deal subjects and practitioners in Vocational Education Training.

EARLALL is a Brussels-based network of regions aiming to contribute to EU policy making and cooperate in projects in the field of lifelong learning. Based on the unique strengths of every region and local authority, EARLALL facilitates regional collaborations and partnerships, as well as an open and rapid exchange of knowledge in a context of trust and confidence. The network was established in 2001 under the initiative of regional governments willing to build a solid cooperation in the field of lifelong learning. Indeed, EARLALL believes that regions and local authorities have a privileged role in designing and implementing strategies related to it, since they are in direct contact with educational institutions, the business environment and, most notably, citizens.