

# COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

## BACKGROUND

Published in May 2023, the European Commission's European Semester Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) and Country Reports (CRs), known as the 'Spring Package', ensure coordination across economic and social policies amongst Member States. The 2023 Semester guides Member States' investment and reforming of education and training systems.

Despite some – relatively small – differences between the countries, the common themes in 2023 include the importance of addressing skills gaps, promoting inclusivity in education and the labour market, and implementing effective measures for upskilling and reskilling in the context of the green and digital transitions. Since 2023, the reports and recommendations seem to have replaced the analysis of education systems with a focus on skills (see also the reaction of the Lifelong Learning Platform).

## COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

### Green transition and occupational shortages



All countries face challenges related to **skills shortages** in sectors crucial for the green transition. High-quality education and targeted upskilling and reskilling measures are considered key to addressing these challenges.

Each country reports **shortages in specific occupations** related to the green transition. For example, Denmark reports shortages in environmental engineers and building architects, Estonia and Romania shortages in refuse sorters, insulation workers, civil engineers, and construction managers, France lists shortages in civil engineering technicians and power production plant operators, and Greece mentions shortages of plumbers, pipe fitters, and electricians. Slovenia reports shortages in as many as 66 occupations linked to the green transition.

### Education systems, digitalisation, and inclusion



The significance of **high-quality education and training systems** that respond to changing labour market needs is emphasised across all countries. This includes efforts to unlock untapped labour supply, particularly in regions most affected by the green transition.

Several countries, including Finland and Germany, stress the importance of **improving digital skills** to address skilled worker shortages and raise productivity. Efforts to **tackle teacher shortages** and enhance digital education at all educational levels are considered essential.

The reports highlight the need to **improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups**, including low-skilled workers, migrants, and individuals with disabilities. Inclusivity in education and the labour market is a common focus.

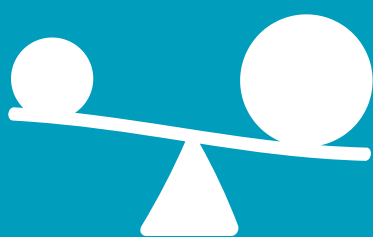


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## DIFFERENCES

### Specific challenges



Each country report addresses unique challenges within its context. For example, Belgium and Italy emphasise **regional disparities**, Austria focuses on **intergenerational educational outcomes**, and France underscores the **shortage of skills and inequalities in the education system**.

### Specific target groups and STEM learners



Hungary specifically highlights the need for better inclusion of **Roma, low-skilled people, women with caring responsibilities, and people with disabilities** in education and training. Furthermore, there is a need to improve basic skills provision as the share of jobseekers with low basic skills is more than double compared to the national average. Sweden reports continuing challenges in reducing skills gaps of **people with disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds**.

Belgium specifically highlights the **low number of learners and graduates, especially women, in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)**, whereas this is not explicitly mentioned in other reports.

### Initial and continuous teacher training



Austria, France, Germany and Sweden emphasise the need for further efforts to **tackle teacher shortages and training teachers and educators at all educational levels**. Austria and France also mention the **need for better working conditions of teachers and educators**.

### Participation in Adult Learning and Education



Germany specifically highlights the need to promote **participation in initial and continuous vocational education and adult learning programmes** to support the green transition, particularly for low-qualified workers.

## FURTHER READING

EAEA (2023): The EESC's recommendations for a solid reform of the European Semester: The missing voice of adult learning and education organisations. [Response to the Open Public Consultation](#).

EAEA (2018): European Semester and Adult Education. [Infographic](#).

More information also at [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org).



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