European Commission

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Skills Portability Initiative: Helping skills and qualifications travel across borders

September 2026

The skills portability initiative will make it easier for professionals, employers and public authorities to understand and recognise qualifications from another EU country and, for the first time, qualifications from outside the EU. This initiative will reduce skills shortages and mismatches while helping the EU attract global talent.

What will change

Your qualifications in digital form: New Regulation on digital qualifications

- An **EU digital standard for qualifications** in the **EU Digital Identity Wallet**.
- New and existing qualifications, available in seconds and verified at source.
- EU online tool linking national qualification databases to help **compare qualifications across the EU**.

Faster recognition: Amending Directive on faster and secure recognition of qualifications for EU citizens

- Simpler and faster **recognition procedures for regulated professions**.
- Reduced costs and processing times thanks to a new **digital workflow in all EU countries**.
- **Automatic recognition** extended to more professions, starting with physiotherapists.
- No translations or certified copies required, and **binding deadlines apply**.
- New rules for recognition of qualifications acquired by EU citizens outside the EU.

Common rules for qualifications from outside the EU: New Directive on simpler rules for non-EU citizens

- Easier and faster recognition of **qualifications held by non-EU nationals**.
- **Automatic recognition** of qualifications that meet EU minimum training requirements and that are issued by training institutions verified by European quality assurance agencies.

Why it matters

74%

of SMEs face skills gaps

14%

of SMEs employ workers from another EU country, compared with 33% of large companies

Only 2

Member States offer fully digital qualification recognition without requiring physical paperwork

Who will benefit

- **Workers** will find jobs that match their skills and qualifications, with easier access to regulated professions. **Non-EU nationals and EU nationals with non-EU qualifications** will benefit for the first time from clear recognition procedures.
- **Businesses** will recruit across border more easily and verify qualifications reliably.
- **National administrations** will process recognition applications more efficiently, exchange information more easily with applicants and other authorities, and reduce administrative workload.
- **Everyone** will rely on recognition procedures that ensure their doctor, nurse, and other health professionals are well qualified.

Before	After
Diplomas are in **different formats and can be hard to check abroad.**	New and recent qualifications will be **issued digitally in the EU Digital Identity Wallet**, standardised, verifiable in real time and linked to a **European qualification level**.
Workers, including people with non-EU qualifications, must navigate **27 different national recognition systems**, often facing language barriers, duplicate checks and extra fees.	**One European digital entry point**, available in all EU languages, will apply the **same rules, requirements and deadlines** across the EU, making professional recognition clearer, faster and easier.
Recognition of qualifications and skills can take **up to 4 months**.	Recognition will take no more than **11 weeks**, with deadlines for each step of the process.
Automatic recognition for regulated professions can take **up to 3 months**.	It will take **up to 5 weeks**, with clear deadlines for administrations.
Employers and workers can struggle to understand skills from another country. Digital certificates can also come **with fees**.	A **Europass comparison tool** will make qualifications easier to compare, and **digital qualification attestations will be free**.

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